

## Rice Attacks 'Power-Hungry' Hizbullah, Says Doha Accord Was 'Necessary'

Contributed by State Department, Naharnet  
Wednesday, 04 June 2008

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has slammed "power-hungry" Hizbullah for using arms against the Lebanese but lauded the Doha accord which she said was the result of the Shiite group's "violent actions."

"Hizbullah's recent use of violence against fellow Lebanese has exposed that group for what it really is: selfish, power-hungry extremists who will do anything, with the backing of Iran and Syria, to impose their will on their fellow citizens," Rice said in a speech to a pro-Israel lobbying group in Washington Tuesday.

"The Doha agreement was a necessary and even positive step. It is true that the conditions were created by Hizbullah's violent actions, but there is an opening for Lebanese patriots to bolster their nation's independence, expand its sovereignty, and strengthen the democratic state," Rice said.

The Secretary of State also said in her speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) that the U.S. had a challenge to help the Lebanese government in keeping security.

"Our challenge now is to help Lebanon's decent leaders and citizens take advantage of this moment — to help them continue building a government in Beirut that embodies aspirations, advances interests, ensures the security of Lebanon and its neighbors," Rice said.

She said there was an opportunity for peace in the Middle East and building a Palestinian state.

"A comprehensive peace, including Lebanon, Syria, and other members of the Arab League, is a worthy goal. And we do appreciate the effort that our ally, Turkey, is making to support a peace between Israel and Syria," Rice said.

She also escalated the Bush administration's anti-Iran rhetoric, accusing Tehran of pursuing nuclear weapons and saying there was no point in engaging the regime until it changes its behavior.

"We would be willing to meet with them, but not while they continue to inch closer to a nuclear weapon under the cover of talk," Rice said.

Beirut, 04 Jun 08, 05:11

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&112743B609171B2FC225745E000B8A8A>

-----  
From the State Department, - June 3, 2008

In Lebanon, the Doha agreement was a necessary and even positive step. It is true that the conditions were created by Hezbollah's violent actions, but there is an opening for Lebanese patriots to bolster their nation's independence, expand its sovereignty, and strengthen the democratic state. And Hezbollah's recent use of violence against fellow Lebanese has exposed that group for what it really is: selfish, power-hungry extremists who do not represent the interests of their fellow Lebanese, who will do anything, with the backing of Iran and Syria, to impose their will on their fellow citizens. Our challenge now is to help Lebanon's decent leaders and citizens take advantage of this moment — to help them continue building a government in Beirut that embodies aspirations, advances interests, ensures the security of Lebanon and its neighbors, and delivers for the Lebanese people, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged.

This brings us to another such opportunity, and that is with the Palestinians and the current effort to end the conflict and build an effective, peaceful Palestinian state. A comprehensive peace, including Lebanon, Syria, and other members of the Arab League, is a worthy goal. And we do appreciate the effort that our ally, Turkey, is making to support a peace between Israel and Syria. The key is to pursue all avenues of peace, but while maintaining focus on the Palestinian track because it is the most advanced and because it is supported by the community, the international community, as a whole.