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U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman said Washington was eager to cooperate with the Hariri Cabinet, but warned that arms export from Iran to Hizbullah "puts Lebanon at great risk."

"The United States is looking forward to cooperating with the new Lebanon government in a spirit of partnership in various fields after it obtains confidence," Feltman said in an interview published Sunday by the daily An-Nahar.

His remarks were translated into English by Naharnet.

Feltman said he congratulated Prime Minister Saad Hariri on his new post and denied accusations by some Lebanese political leaders who charges that the U.S. administration had intervened in the government formation process.

He accused Iran of continuing to export arms to Hizbullah and hoped that the Lebanese government would realize the "risk" of Israeli attacks in response to firing of rockets from Lebanon into the Jewish state.

Feltman said delay in the appointment of a new U.S. ambassador to Damascus was due to "political and bureaucratic reasons."

While acknowledging that a visit to Washington by Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad was "positive and constructive," he described the differences between the U.S. and Syria as "profound."

Feltman said peace efforts have so far not led to find the "key to open the door to negotiations in order to reach constructive talks between Syria and Israel."

"But we are committed to achieve peace," he said, adding that there was a "high degree of cooperation" between the U.S. and France on peace in the Middle East.

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<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&C023D9DEA38CE40BC225766F001CB745>

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BEIRUT: The United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman said Washington was eager to cooperate with the cabinet of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, but warned that arms export from Iran to Hizbullah "puts Lebanon at great risk." "The United States is looking forward to cooperating with the new Lebanese government in a spirit of partnership in various fields after it obtains confidence," Feltman said in an exclusive interview published in Arabic on Sunday in An-Nahar newspaper.

Feltman said he congratulated Prime Minister Hariri on his new post and denied accusations by some Lebanese political leaders who charged that the US administration had intervened in the government formation process.

The former US ambassador to Lebanon accused Iran of continuing to export arms to Hizbullah and hoped that the Lebanese government would realize the "risk" of Israeli attacks in response to firing of rockets from Lebanon into the Jewish state.

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"But we are committed to achieve peace," he said, adding that there was a "high degree of cooperation" between the US and France on issues such as peace in the Middle East. — Naharnet, with The Daily Star

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