



## Remarks At the Lebanon Donors' Conference

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Paris, France  
January 25, 2007

**SECRETARY RICE:** I want to thank President Chirac and the French people for so graciously hosting us. Thank you, as well to Prime Minister Siniora for being here with your team. We've heard from you today and I hope that you know how much your steadfast dedication to the Lebanese people is appreciated by the international community.

I would also like to thank UN Secretary General Ban. It is very good to have you on on board. We look forward to working with you. And of course, European Commission President Barroso for being here as well.

I think this conference demonstrates the widespread international support for the people of Lebanon.

The United States remains committed to a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon, and we are grateful for the many private and public partners, throughout the world, who are supporting the efforts of this democratic government of Prime Minister Siniora to bring peace, and stability, and economic opportunity to its people.

A lot has happened since the convention of the conference in Stockholm last summer to discuss ways to hasten the recovery and bring relief to the Lebanese people after the tragic events of the summer. The outpouring of international support for Lebanon has been widespread, from the Red Cross, to UN agencies, to the nongovernmental NGO community, and of course, from the United States.

We are committed to building on this work. And so to support the Lebanese people's aspirations for peace, stability, and economic development, President Bush will request from Congress \$770 million for a new comprehensive package to assist Lebanon. This new package will include both economic and security assistance, and we will provide a substantial portion of this money in the form of grants, not loans.

This brings America's total post-conflict assistance to Lebanon to \$1 billion, including the \$230 million pledged at Stockholm. This major increase reflects our steadfast commitment to the Lebanese people, but also our faith in the Lebanese people and their ability to overcome their difficulties. The comprehensive aid package will continue to support security, reconstruction, and development efforts throughout the country. And let me add, most importantly: Our assistance will support the Lebanese government's own ambitious reform program, which demonstrates its commitment to reducing its debt and achieving economic and financial stability.

The reconstruction effort would not be possible without the help of the private sector. American businesses are delivering on their promise to support the Lebanese people by helping to create jobs, to train workers, to rebuild homes, schools and businesses, and to strengthen computer technology throughout Lebanon.

A key part of this public-private partnership is the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. This government agency has partnered with Citibank\* to extend up to \$120 million in new financing, through Lebanese banks, for loans to support Lebanese businesses and homeowners. Combined with the efforts of the U.S.-Lebanon Partnership -- with whose members of Prime Minister Siniora's team and Prime Minister Siniora we met this morning -- I believe these loans will encourage additional private investment and contribute to economic growth.

As we make steps forward in the reconstruction and development effort, we must not lose sight of the need to continue to fully implement all UN Security Council resolutions related to Lebanon, in particular UN Security Council Resolution 1701. This is just essential to the security of the region. We commend the Lebanese government for the steps it has taken to deploy the Lebanese armed forces to the south, and we applaud the international community, and particularly the contributors around this table, for the successful deployment of the enhanced UNIFIL forces to help Lebanon secure its sovereignty. But of course, much more work remains to be done. I look forward to the report of the UN Secretary General on important aspects of Resolution 1701 so that we can move forward on those important aspects. And I look forward to this conference providing to the Lebanese government the resources to see these jobs through.

Ladies and gentlemen, the people of Lebanon deserve to live in peace. They deserve to make decisions about their political future free from the threat of violence and free from political intimidation. The United States is dedicated to this task. We will help to defend democracy in Lebanon and remain grateful to all of our partners who have joined forces to improve the lives of the Lebanese people.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. (Applause.)

\*Citigroup

Released on January 25, 2007

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.