

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 1, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton,

We write today to express our concerns about the growing risk to Lebanon's sovereignty and to Israel's security from the failure of the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to live up to both the letter and spirit of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701. We appreciate the strong message from the administration during Prime Minister Hariri's visit to Washington this week, and believe that it must be reinforced at the United Nations, with the Syrian government, and in our continued work with the Lebanese government to encourage more determined implementation of UNSCR 1701.

While the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has played an important role in helping to maintain relative stability in the region, as you know Hezbollah continues to amass increasingly dangerous weapons. The UN Secretary General reported as recently as February of this year that on 26 December 2009, a UNIFIL night patrol south of Khiam (Sector East) discovered 250 kilograms of explosives.

On 7 January 2010, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in identical letters addressed to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary General, expressed the belief of her Government that the types of explosives and manner in which they were deployed demonstrated that Hezbollah operatives had planted the explosives, and that further they would have been manufactured in Iran or Syria. The presence of unauthorized explosives in the area constitutes a violation of resolution 1701.

In the December report, the Secretary General further stated that "Hizbullah continues to maintain a substantial military capacity distinct from that of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006)." This is simply

unacceptable for either the security of Israel or the consolidation of Lebanon's sovereignty.

Furthermore, the Secretary General concluded that "Control by Lebanon over its borders is an important obligation under resolution 1701 (2006), the implementation of which requires both political commitment and strengthened capacity. I remain concerned about the ongoing reports that point to breaches of the arms embargo, which would be violations of resolution 1701 (2006). The presence of armed groups in Lebanon operating outside the control of the State constitutes a challenge to the ability of the State to exercise its full sovereignty and control over its territory in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006)."

We share these concerns, and we are growing even more troubled over recent reports of increasingly sophisticated and potent missile technology being transferred from or through Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Such transfers constitute a major threat to regional stability and must be stopped. We are particularly concerned about reports that Syria has helped provide Scud missiles to Hezbollah which, if true, would be a significant destabilizing new element in an already tense situation in Lebanon.

We urge you to redouble your efforts to address these issues through several channels. First and most important is to impress on the Syrian government in the strongest terms that the qualitative and quantitative increase in arms for Hezbollah will not be tolerated. It is in their interest not to destabilize Lebanon and the region or to invite international approbation. In that regard, we fully support the President's recent extension of sanctions against Syria as a "national emergency" because the country poses an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the United States."

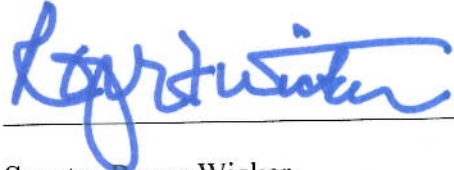
Second, enforcement of UNSCR 1701 ultimately requires political will. The Government of Lebanon must ensure that the Lebanese Armed Forces, including its Navy, make every effort to follow through on credible information about arms caches received from the Israeli Defense Forces or others in a timely manner, taking care not to alert Hezbollah before an inspection. We and the international community should continue to train and assist the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to ensure that the LAF will control its territory and the border more effectively. Finally, we must work within the United Nations to continue to strengthen UNIFIL, including through extensive oversight during Security Council briefings, to ensure that it is fully implementing its duties under UNSCR 1701 and the previous applicable resolutions.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We hope you will continue to make this issue a top priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten E. Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger Wicker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Roger Wicker

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Cardin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin