

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Brigadier General Francois El Hajj of Lebanon December 13, 2007

I strongly condemn yesterday's assassination of Lebanese Brigadier General Francois El Hajj and extend my condolences to his family and the families of the innocents who were murdered alongside him.

This assassination marks the 12th political assassination or attempted assassination Lebanon has suffered since October 2004. Like the many victims before him, General El Hajj was a supporter of Lebanon's independence and an opponent of Syria's interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. I call on the international community to support the Government of Lebanon in its efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of these vicious attacks and to stand with the citizens of Lebanon who continue to struggle to safeguard their freedom, sovereignty, and democracy.

This act of terrorism again reminds us of the importance of the international tribunal established by the U.N. Security Council earlier this year and of the urgency

of ensuring that the tribunal is fully funded and capable of commencing its operations as soon as possible, to begin holding accountable those responsible for this systematic campaign of murder against Lebanon's most ardent patriots. We must work together to support and strengthen an independent and democratic Lebanon.

This attack comes as Lebanon is seeking to choose a new President. The United States supports the efforts of the democratically elected Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces to maintain the sovereignty and stability of Lebanon before the Presidential elections. As Lebanon seeks to select a President democratically and in accordance with its Constitution, interference by the Syrian regime and its allies, aimed at intimidating the Lebanese people, must end. The people of Lebanon deserve the opportunity to choose their leaders in freedom and without fear.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters December 14, 2007

The President. Good morning. I just finished meeting with members of my Cabinet. I am proud of this team. I appreciate their service to the country. We discussed the priorities that we're working on to meet the needs of the American people. We're talking about the business that remains on Capitol Hill.

I want to thank the Senate and congratulate the Senate for passing a good energy bill, and now the House must act. Congress

also must move quickly to pass legislation to protect middle class families from the burden of the Alternative Minimum Tax, without raising taxes. And Congress must pass legislation to ensure our intelligence professionals can continue to effectively monitor terrorist communications.

And Congress must move forward with spending legislation to fund the day-to-day operations of the Federal Government so