Ed Royce

Good evening –

It is an honor to join you today in commemoration of the anniversary of Lebanon's Cedar Revolution. About nine years ago today, Syria was completing the withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon's stunning mountains, valleys, cities and villages.

It was a triumph for Lebanese people of all ethnicities, religions and political affiliations and it was achieved not with violence, but with the power of the Lebanese people's resolve to reclaim the basic freedom of self-determination.

It is now the Syrian people themselves, who seek liberation from the domination of the very same brutal Assad family regime that occupied and then suffocated Lebanon for nearly 30 years. In the meantime, many have looked west to Lebanon for refuge.

Since the Revolution, Lebanon has continued to face challenges as external actors still attempt to highjack the future of its people for their own destructive pursuits and so our work is not finished.

We, as Americans, join the Lebanese people in calling for an end to the unhelpful role of sectarian militias and an end to the influence of those, who seek to destroy Lebanon's independence through the assassination of its leaders and political process.

In their place, we urge respect for Lebanon's sovereignty from those outside the country and, from those within, a complete embrace of a peaceful democratic process in which all Lebanese people participate.

In this election season, it will be in the best interests of Lebanon to select a President who will strengthen governmental institutions, expand state authority, secure borders, confront militias, implement national agreements, and respect international resolutions.

I urge Lebanese Ministers of Parliament to come together for this purpose.

Even with the serious challenges that lie ahead, the United States will remain an unwavering friend to the Lebanese people as they hopefully continue to progress towards a truly sovereign, secure and flourishing nation.

Thank you.

Ed Royce