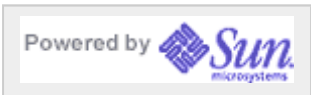


Sat Aug 5 06:30:43 2006

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Venezuela's Chavez compares Israel to Hitler

04 Aug 2006 18:03:03 GMT

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In an interview with Qatar-based Al Jazeera television, Chavez also slammed U.S. backing for Israel, describing Washington as a "Dracula always searching for oil and blood".

"The Israeli offensive against the Palestinians and Lebanon is an aggression that we feel targets us also. It is an unjustified aggression that is being carried out in the style of (Adolf) Hitler, in a Fascist fashion," he said, referring to the leader of Nazi Germany.

"They (Israelis) are doing what Hitler did against the Jews. They are killing innocent children and whole families," he said in the remarks dubbed in Arabic.

On Thursday, Chavez said he ordered the withdrawal of Venezuela's ambassador to Israel in protest.

The Lebanon war, which erupted after Hizbollah snatched two Israeli soldiers in a border raid on July 12, has coincided with an Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip to recover another captured soldier and halt Palestinian rocket fire.

Chavez, on a visit to Doha where Al Jazeera is based, said Israel was carrying out an "imperialist offensive" against Lebanon and the Palestinians that was orchestrated by the United States as part of a bid to control the energy-rich region.

"The American hand is pushing them. It is behind the Israeli aggression, it is an imperialist aggression ... and Israel is one of the imperialist tools."

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The bodies of Syrian kurd farm workers lie on the ground after an Israeli air raid on a farm in northeastern Lebanon, August 4, 2006. The raid on Qaa in the Bekaa Valley killed 33 and wounded 20. Israel struck four bridges linking Beirut to the north of the country earlier during the day.

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