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Robert Fisk: This draft shows who is running America's policy... Israel

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So the great and the good on the East River laboured at the United Nations Security Council - and brought forth a lemon. You could almost hear the Lebanese groan at this draft resolution, a document of such bias and mendacity that a close Lebanese friend read carefully through it yesterday, cursed and uttered the immortal question: "Don't these bastards learn anything from history?"

And there it all was again, the warmed-up peace proposals of Israel's 1982 invasion, full of buffer zones and disarmament and "strict respect by all parties" - a rousing chortle here, no doubt, from Hizbollah members - and the need for Lebanese sovereignty. It didn't even demand the withdrawal of Israeli forces, a point that Walid Moallem, Syria's Foreign Minister - and the man the Americans will eventually have to negotiate with - seized upon with more than alacrity. It was a dead UN resolution without a total Israeli retreat, he said on a strategic trip to Beirut.

A close analysis of the American-French draft - the fingerprints of John Bolton, the US ambassador to the UN, were almost smudging the paragraphs - showed just who is running Washington's Middle East policy: Israel. And one wondered how even Tony Blair would want to associate himself with this nonsense. It made no reference to the obscenely disproportionate violence employed by Israel - just a sleek reference to "hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides" - and it made only passing reference to Hizbollah's demand that it would only release the two Israeli soldiers it captured on 12 July in return for Lebanese and other Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.

The Security Council said it was "mindful of the sensitivity of the issue of prisoners and encouraging the efforts aimed at settling the issue [sic] of the Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel". I bet Hizbollah were impressed by the "mindful" bit, not to mention the "sensitivity" and the soft, slippery word "settle" - an issue which can be "settled" in maybe 20 years' time. Then came the real coup de grâce. A demand for the "total cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks" and the "immediate cessation" by Israel of "all offensive military operations". Bit of a problem there, as Hizbollah spotted at once. They have to lay down their arms.

Had the council demanded an immediate resolution on the future of the Shebaa farms, the Israeli-occupied territory which once belonged to mandate Lebanon - and for whose "liberation" the Hizbollah have fought - the whole fandango might have stood a chance. After all, Shebaa is the only *raison d'être* that the Hizbollah can produce for continuing their reckless, ruthless, illegal war across the UN blue line in southern Lebanon. But the UN document wished only to see a delineation of Lebanon's borders "including in the Shebaa farms area". There was even a wonderful paragraph - Number 9 for aficionados of UN bumf - which "calls on all parties to co-operate ... with the Security Council". So the Hizbollah are to co-operate, are they, with the austere diplomats of this august and wise body? Isn't that exalting a guerrilla army a little bit more upmarket than it deserves?

No one was fooled and few disagreed with Syria's Walid Moallem when he said the UN's draft resolution was "a recipe for continuing the war". As both the Hizbollah and the Israelis did yesterday, the former killing 13 Israelis and the latter bombing houses in Ansar - once an Israeli POW camp - which destroyed five more Lebanese civilian lives. Mohamed Fneish, a Hizbollah government minister - who scarcely represents all Lebanese but talks as if he does - thundered away about how "we" [presumably the Hizbollah, rather than the Lebanese] will abide by it [the resolution] on condition that no Israeli soldiers remains inside Lebanese land."

There were more Israeli air attacks on Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday - though heaven knows what is left there to destroy - ensuring that even more Shia Muslim civilians will remain refugees. Fearful that the Israelis will bomb their trucks and claim they were carrying missiles, the garbage collectors of this city have abandoned their vehicles and the familiar 1982 stench of burning rubbish now drifts through the evening streets. Petrol is now so scarce that a tank-full yesterday cost £250.

About the only gift to Lebanon in the UN resolution was the expressed need to provide the UN with remaining Israeli maps of landmines in Lebanon. But Israel has again dropped lethal ordnance all over southern Lebanon. Oh yes, and as usual, the UN draft on these ambitious, hopelessly conceived ideas "decides to remain actively seized of the matter". You bet it does. And so, as they say, the war goes on.

What the UN wants...

* A full cessation of hostilities based upon, in particular, the cessation by Hizbollah of all attacks and the cessation by Israel of all offensive

military operations;

- * Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution based on the following principles and elements:
- * Strict respect by all parties for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Israel and Lebanon;
- * Full respect for the Blue Line by both parties;
- * Delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain, including in the Shebaa farms area;
- * Security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities, including the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Lebanese armed and security forces, and of UN-mandated international forces;
- * Full implementation of the relevant provisions ... that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon;
- * Deployment of an international force in Lebanon;
- * The Secretary General to develop, in liaison with key international actors and the concerned parties, proposals to implement the relevant provisions ... and to present those proposals to the Security Council within 30 days;
- * The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), upon cessation of hostilities, to monitor its implementation and extend assistance to ensure humanitarian access to civilians and the safe return of displaced persons;
- * The government of Lebanon to ensure arms or related material are not imported into Lebanon without its consent and requests UNIFIL, conditions permitting, to assist the government of Lebanon at its request;
- * The Secretary-General to report to the Council within one week on the implementation and provide any relevant information in light of the Council's intention to adopt a further resolution.