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Rice on Crisis



US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Photo: Reuters

Rice: No point in temporary ceasefire

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice backs Israel's military operation in Lebanon; US government says it has agreed to supply Israel with jet fuel to feed its warplanes

Yitzhak Benhorin

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned that for the time being the United States is not interested to assist in negotiating a ceasefire.

There is no point in achieving a ceasefire so long as Hizbullah and Hamas are capable of firing rockets at Israel, and by doing so to breach it.

In a series of interviews to large American television channels, the secretary of state added that this is not the right time to make diplomatic trips to the region to solve the crisis.

"Extremists in Hamas, Hizbullah, and their supporters in Syria and Iran do not want to see a resolution of these situations on the basis of 1559 and the road map, because then they would have no reason for violence," Rice said.

The US government will object the reaching of a cease-fire at the G-8 summit or at the United Nations.

'Defend yourself'

Speaking to FoxNews, Rice reiterated the American stance which was voiced by President Bush since the crisis started.

"Our message to Israel is, look, defend yourself," Bush said. "But as you do so, be mindful of the consequences. So we've urged restraint."

"What you had in the Middle East before was American policies - bipartisan, by the way, it had been pursued by Democratic Presidents and by Republican Presidents - that engaged in so-called Middle East exceptionalism and was pursuing stability at the expense of democracy, and it turned out, as we learned on 9/11 or July 7th here, or in any - in London or across the world, was getting neither," she said.



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The Pentagon notified Congress of plans to sell Israel jet fuel valued at up to USD 210 million "to keep peace and security in the region".

"The proposed sale of the JP-8 aviation fuel will enable Israel to maintain the operational capability of its aircraft inventory," the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in notice required by law.

It said Israel had requested the sale, but did not say when the request was made.

"The jet fuel will be consumed while (Israel's) aircraft (are) in use to keep peace and security in the region," the notice to Congress said.

It said the sale - which Congress may block if both houses were to enact resolutions rejecting it within 30 days - would not affect the basic military balance in the region.

(07.16.06, 19:04)



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