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Lebanon

Against resolution 1701, against the sending of NATO troops

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Lebanon has, in recent years, been a privileged terrain for the shift brought about by the ending of the very specific system of "balance of powers" mutually necessary for the two Cold War superpowers until 1990. Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004) on the subject of the Lebanon is both the most flagrant violation of the UN Charter and a monument to hypocrisy. Adopted without any submission to the SC from the Lebanese government, it proclaims its attachment to the sovereignty of Lebanon while interfering in its internal affairs in violation of article 2, point 7, of the Charter, which prohibits any intervention "in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state".

It would, moreover, require an extraordinary dose of naivety to believe for a single instant in the attachment of the permanent members of the SC to the sovereignty of any state other than their own. Resolution 1559 - and the fact that it was adopted in 2004, and not before, amply demonstrates it - fits in an obvious fashion into the US action against Iran in the course of their occupation of Iraq, targeting both of Teheran's allies: the Syrian regime and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Resolution 1701 of August 11, 2006 is every bit as flagrant in this respect. It was adopted after several weeks of stonewalling of the SC by Washington to allow Israel time to pursue its aggression. Its iniquity is blatant inasmuch as it fails to condemn Israel's criminal aggression, mentioning only "Hezbollah's attack on Israel" and the "hostilities in Lebanon and in Israel" (sic).

[<https://association-radar.org/IMG/jpg/unifil.jpg>]

It shows a flagrant hypocrisy in demanding that Israel "cease its offensive military operations" without even demanding the immediate lifting of the blockade it is imposing on Lebanon - as if a blockade was not an eminently offensive military operation.

The iniquity is just as flagrant when the new UNIFIL - which, remarkably, is deployed only on the territory of the occupied country - is supposed to ensure that its zone of deployment is not used for "hostile activities of any kind". Resolution 1701 does not say a word on the protection of Lebanese territory against the repeated aggression by Israel, occupying power in Lebanon for 18 years (without speaking of the portion of territory occupied since 1967).

To get an idea of the very biased character of the vision of UNIFIL upheld by the European states that will provide its backbone, read the interview given to the newspaper *Le Monde* (August 31, 2006) by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, head of the UN's peacekeeping operations. It requires no commentary.

"Could you be brought to use force against Hezbollah?"

We could be brought to do it with respect to any element that would hinder our freedom of movement or would represent a threat to the population or to peace. [...]

"What would UNIFIL do in the case of a raid by the Israeli army on the Lebanon?"

"Unhappily, since the cessation of hostilities, there have been more Israeli violations than violations by Lebanese armed elements. [...]"

Could it be brought to use force against Israel in this case?

I think that Israel wants international law to be upheld, and given that responsibility and sovereignty hand in hand in

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Lebanon, would assume its responsibilities in respecting international law.”

Resolution 1701 is filled with deliberately ambiguous formulations that raise the prospect of a combat mission coming under Chapter VII of the Charter, which Washington and Paris invoked directly in their draft resolution distributed on August 5 and rejected by Hezbollah and the Lebanese government. Before these objections, Washington and Paris abandoned the idea of a new international force in Lebanon, contenting themselves with the UNIFIL force already in position.

Nonetheless, the mandate of this latter has been profoundly altered, not only in the sense indicated above, but also as to its zone of activity, with UNIFIL II authorised to deploy along the Lebanese-Syrian border and control Lebanon's aerial and maritime access.

In sum, the spirit of this resolution is to treat Lebanon as if it was the aggressor! In this sense it represents an attempt to continue the Israeli war in the Lebanon in another fashion, which could imply war operations in the short or medium term. That is why it should be vigorously denounced and rejected by anybody who upholds the spirit of the UN Charter.

That does not mean rejecting the presence of UNIFIL along the Lebanese-Israeli frontier. UNIFIL has been in place since 1978 and is accepted by all the Lebanese political forces. In spite of its obvious ineffectiveness as to the protection of Lebanon against Israeli encroachments on its sovereignty, and its inaction in the face of the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982 and its occupation of south Lebanon for 18 years, it is a precious witness to these violations of sovereignty.

What is important is 1) to reject the profound and dangerous change in the UNIFIL mandate represented by resolution 1701, and 2) to oppose the use of UNIFIL II and the UN cover in order to continue the war for the common objectives of Israel, Washington and Paris in Lebanon. What is developing is the rehearsal of a practice symptomatic of the new era: the use of the UN as fig leaf for military operations led by Washington with NATO and other allies, as is the case in Afghanistan since December 2001.

In good logic, an intervention force should be made up of troops from neutral countries. Yet Washington and Paris are in no way neutral in the Lebanese conflict. No force allied to the US will be considered as neutral in a conflict between one of Washington's principal allies and another state. That is why all those who desire peace in the Middle East and are concerned by the US projects in this part of the world should energetically oppose the sending to and presence in Lebanon of troops from NATO member countries.

A protest movement in this sense has begun in the countries in question, from Germany to Turkey, via France, Italy and Spain. The task is all the more necessary in that Israel gives itself the “right of the strongest” to reject the participation in UNIFIL of troops from certain Muslim countries, on the pretext that they are not neutral in the Israeli-Arab conflict.