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War on Iraq



The Grave Consequences of Supporting War in Lebanon

By [Scott Ritter](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted [August 9, 2006](#).

The longer we underwrite the ongoing Israeli slaughter of the Lebanese people, the more the United States becomes a legitimate military target.

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With Israel waging an all-out war against the forces of Hezbollah, and the death toll in terms of civilian casualties mounting on a daily basis, the question of a diplomatic resolution to the crisis takes on an urgency that is being felt around the world. Everywhere, it seems, except in Israel and the United States. One should not be fooled by the "false" diplomacy being waged by the United States, fronted by Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton.

The draft Security Council resolution co-sponsored between the United States and France is but a tragic farce, a smoke screen designed to unilaterally protect Israeli interests at the expense of all others that is so transparent no Arab nation takes it seriously (it has been rejected outright by Lebanon, Syria and Hezbollah).

There are several reasons for this apparent lack of concern on the part of the primary belligerent (Israel) and its No. 1 underwriter (the United States). First and foremost is the fact that the ongoing violence being waged against Hezbollah is not, contrary to popular opinion, a knee-jerk reaction to the attack against Israel by Hezbollah that resulted in several dead Israeli soldiers and two taken prisoner. It is rather part and parcel of a long-planned strike designed not only to neutralize Hezbollah, but also its largest international supporters, namely Syria and Iran. As such, Israel (and by extension, the United States) has certain predesignated goals and objectives that need to be reached, and no cease-fire will be willingly undertaken until they are. These include the military destruction of Hezbollah and its political isolation, along with its major supporter Iran.

But as the global hue and cry over the indiscriminate death and destruction being inflicted on the innocent civilians of Lebanon by the Israeli Defense Force continues to mount, drowning out any legitimate counter Israel may have by citing similar indiscriminate loss of life and property caused by Hezbollah rockets, Israel and its supporters in Washington, D.C., recognize that there is a limit to what the world will be willing to tolerate.

Already Israel and the United States are feeling the brunt of a diplomatic backlash resulting from the horrific devastation rained down on the people of Lebanon as a result of Israel's blind rage and America's misguided support of everything that is done in the name of Israel.

This does not mean that America's support of Israel's legitimate security concerns is bad policy; just the opposite. Supporting Israel's right to exist, and its right to defend itself against those who wish to do it harm, is the soundest possible policy a democracy such as America could embrace. But as a nation built on the belief that all humans are created equal, and that oppression of one party by another represents a tyranny that must be opposed, it is high time that the United States learn to differentiate between what constitutes legitimate Israeli security concerns, and what constitutes regional hegemony, tyranny and oppression.

Knee-jerk reactions aside, there is really no foundation upon which Americans can morally continue to support the Israeli actions in Lebanon. Indeed, many Americans, joined by like-minded people around the world, are increasingly taking a position that opposes the Israeli military assault on Lebanon.

There is a difference between being opposed to Israeli action, and having a viable plan on what to do instead. One of the main

problems is the fact that Israel (and its supporters here in the United States) have sagely exploited the lexicon of terror, a politically savvy move in post 9/11 America that makes the formulation of any viable opposition to what the Israelis claim to be a legitimate response in the face of terror virtually impossible.

When evaluating the Israeli position on Hezbollah, we should never forget that it was Hezbollah, alone among the forces in the Arab world, that defeated Israel, compelling the Israeli Defense Force to withdraw from southern Lebanon in May 2000 after a disastrous 18-year occupation. National pride, combined with hegemonic hubris born of out-of-control Zionism, prevents Israel from ever accepting this result or forgiving Hasan Nasrullah or his followers for this "crime."

Israel claims the moral high ground in this current round of conflict, citing the July 12 attack by Hezbollah on an Israeli Army patrol that left eight IDF soldiers dead and two captured. The disproportionality of response aside (Hezbollah fires hundreds of rockets into Israel, and gets thousands of artillery shells and aerial bombs in return; Israel's civilian casualties run in the scores, Lebanon's in the hundreds), Israel's claim as the aggrieved party simply does not withstand the test of history and fact.

Hezbollah is a direct byproduct of the 1982 Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation of Lebanon. In the chaos and anarchy that followed, Israel helped facilitate disunity and dysfunction within Lebanon by promoting the interests of the Lebanese Christian minority over Lebanese Muslims, Sunni and Shi'a alike. Hezbollah as an organization grew from this political morass, representing the legitimate aspirations of the Shi'a Lebanese of southern and eastern Lebanon. Albeit largely funded and supplied by Iran and Syria, Hezbollah is not an international organization, but one distinctly Lebanese. Its function has been to liberate Lebanon from Israeli aggression. To call Hezbollah a terrorist organization is not only a misuse of terminology, but also symptomatic of the larger problem that plagues both Israel and the United States when it comes to dealing with the Middle East as a whole.

Israel and the United States have become trapped by the lexicon born of the so-called "Global War on Terror." These two nations have collectively painted in their mind's eye a world of distinct black and white, or good and evil. In doing so, the reality that is the Middle East goes unrecognized, and as such, no viable solution can be found. If Hezbollah were a genuine non-state terror group, one could make an argument that direct military confrontation designed to isolate and destroy that group was viable. But Hezbollah is not a non-state player, but rather a legitimate expression of the legitimate desires of a not-insignificant percentage of the people of Lebanon.

Hezbollah is decidedly anti-Israel, as only a group born from the oppression of Israeli occupation of their homeland could be. This has led to fiery rhetoric on the part of Hezbollah and its supporters, which has been exploited by Israel and the United States to paint Hezbollah as an organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hezbollah has stated that its goals are the removal of all Israeli forces from Lebanon, the Golan Heights and the return of Palestinian refugees to Palestine. Hezbollah also continues to demand the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, some of whom have been imprisoned for nearly 20 years.

It was the prisoner issue that led to the most recent outbreak of violence between Israel and Hezbollah. Following Israel's retreat from southern Lebanon in May 2000, hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners were still held by Israel, which refused to release them. In October 2000, Hezbollah fighters disguised as U.N. soldiers captured three Israeli soldiers, as well as an Israeli reserve officer who was in Beirut on private business. Hassan Nasrullah declared that Hezbollah would exchange the Israelis for the Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. In a deal brokered by the German government, Israel agreed to release 430 prisoners in exchange for the bodies of the three captured Israeli soldiers (they had been killed shortly after their capture) and the Israeli reservist.

However, Hezbollah claims that Israel had agreed to release three specific prisoners -- Samir Kuntar (captured in a raid on an Israeli settlement in which four Israelis died, including a 4-year-old girl), Yahye Skaff (captured in 1978 after an attack on Israel by Fatah guerillas left 35 Israelis dead and over 100 wounded) and Nissim Mousa N'isr (an Israeli-Arab accused of spying on behalf of Hezbollah). Israeli Ariel Sharon apparently reneged on the deal at the last second, prompting Hassan Nasrullah to declare that Hezbollah retained the right to capture Israeli soldiers at any time in order to secure the release of these three prisoners. The July 12 attack by Hezbollah was nothing more than Nasrullah keeping his word.

Contrary to popular opinion, Hezbollah is not an "international terrorist organization." It has not been linked to any acts of terror outside the borders of Lebanon (the current shelling of Israel notwithstanding, Hezbollah claims these are legitimate military actions in response to Israeli "aggression"). The United States and Israel often speak of "Hezbollah terror attacks" outside of Lebanon, but in the end cannot trace these attacks to Hezbollah with anything stronger than circumstance and rhetoric. The reality of Hezbollah is that it is a decidedly nationalistic organization that has gone on record condemning the September 2001 terror attacks against the United States, rejecting Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda, as well as any killing of innocent civilians in the name of Islam. If it were not for the Israeli angle, the irony is that Hezbollah actually represents the kind of home-grown political party that the United States should be supporting.

Hezbollah is very much a political reality. It is woven into the daily reality of the lives of Lebanese Shi'a, providing medical and education support to impoverished civilians who otherwise would have to go without. Hezbollah has participated in the legitimate political processes of the Lebanese democracy, winning over a dozen seats in the Lebanese Parliament, and holding several cabinet-level positions. The Lebanese government itself recognizes the unique character of Hezbollah, rejecting any notion that it is an illegitimate militia, but rather a legitimate national resistance movement that will continue to exist until Israel stops meddling in Lebanese affairs.

The United States and Israel continue to quote U.N. Security Council resolution 1559, which calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, as well as the disarming of Lebanese militias. However, resolution 1559 does not mention Hezbollah by name, and the Lebanese government itself refuses to categorize Hezbollah as an illegal militia, but rather as a legitimate defender of Lebanese interests. As a result, there is a huge disconnect between the United States and Israel on the one hand, and Lebanon and Hezbollah on the other, in regard to the basic foundational element of any diplomatic resolution to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Lebanon. The fact of the matter is, Hezbollah is a reality that neither the United States nor Israel can negotiate away. To attempt to bomb Lebanon into submission as a proxy for its inability to militarily defeat Hezbollah is not only criminal, but counterproductive.

Hezbollah today has the support of nearly 90 percent of the Lebanese population. Hassan Nasrullah has taken on legendary proportions throughout the Arab world, where his and Hezbollah's ongoing stout resistance to Israel's mighty military stands in stark contrast to the impotence of the rest of the Arab world and its leaders.

If anything, the United States should be well-positioned to whisper advice to Israel as to the futility of its current operations in Lebanon. The United States has for more than three years now conducted similar military operations in Iraq, only to find that not only has the vaunted U.S. military been unable to defeat a popular-based resistance, but that the resistance has grown.

Worse, the misguided policies that embrace a unilaterally military solution have destroyed the basic social framework of Iraq, creating a seething morass of anarchy and chaos from which violence erupts that has no center or focus upon which to zero in for a solution. Iraq is very much a dead country, which exists only for the purpose of killing Americans and its own citizens. If Israel were to ponder its folly in Lebanon, it would realize that its actions, if continued, will ultimately result in a similar outcome for the Lebanese -- a society that exists solely for the purpose of killing Israelis and each other. The difference between Iraq and Lebanon is that eventually America will be able to retreat away from the borders of Iraq. Israel will never be able to retreat away from the disaster it is creating in Lebanon today.

Of course, all of this is basic common sense for anyone who takes the time to study the facts. The problem is the predisposition of the respective publics in Israel and the United States to buy into an ideology based upon semantics that is divorced from reality. Once anything or anyone is labeled "terrorist," the game is pretty much up in so far as forming public opinion is concerned, which means, as an extension, any hope of changing governmental policy is likewise doomed. The actions of the Israeli Parliament and the U.S. Congress prove this point.

Their respective unanimity in supporting the daily murder of Lebanese, while casting the blame for the violence solely on the shoulders of Hezbollah and its supporters in Syria and Iran, are not only reflective of bad policy, but also bad thinking brought on by the inability and unwillingness of the people of Israel and the United States to think critically on any issue involving Israel. The U.S. media is particularly at fault in this regard (it is ironic that the Israeli media, and by extension the Israeli people, have been much more critical of the Lebanese operation than have their counterparts in the United States).

So long as the American media collectively continues to masquerade as journalists, when in fact it serves as little more than the propagandistic arm of the U.S. and Israeli governments, the American people will continue to wallow in their collective ignorance of the world they live in, unable to discern solutions to problems because they are for the most part unable to define the problem itself. This is a very serious matter, one with huge potential consequences.

Take, in closing, the manner in which Israel and the United States have painted Hezbollah's military underwriters in Iran and Syria. If Hezbollah resistance continues (as it seems likely to do), the United States and Israel have stated that Syria and Iran become, by extension, legitimate military targets.

This discussion is offered without any thought or recognition of the "other side of the coin," namely the mindset in much of the Arab and Muslim world that if Iran and Syria are targeted for providing military support for Hezbollah, then the No. 1 underwriter for the ongoing Israeli slaughter of Lebanese, the United States, likewise becomes a legitimate military target.

Every citizen in the United States should take a minute while they sit back and enjoy the relative peace of summer and reflect on what that would mean, and if it is really the direction they want the United States to be drifting at the moment. Just don't ask the mainstream American media to assist with any reflective analysis. It is too busy promoting a larger war.

Scott Ritter served as chief U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 until his resignation in 1998. He is the author of, most recently, "[Iraq Confidential: The Untold Story of the Intelligence Conspiracy to Undermine the U.N. and Overthrow Saddam Hussein](#)" (Nation Books, 2005).

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zara

Posted by: zara on Aug 9, 2006 1:00 AM

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This is an excellent article. It is very incisive and gets to the heart of the real issues in this terrible and unnecessary war. It deserves to be circulated widely, particularly in the US. The media coverage in the US has been appallingly biased and skewed in favour of Israel. Ritter has been proved right time and time again on the Iraq war and he is right here too.

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The Hezbollah terrorists will be defeated like all others who tried to destroy Israel. Accept it.

Posted by: MTreich on Aug 9, 2006 2:03 AM

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‘Hezbollah’s function has been to liberate Lebanon from Israeli aggression.’

Next time the author should check with the terrorist organization Hezbollah. Their stated reason for existence, just like the terrorist organization Hamas is to DESTROY Israel. What part of DESTROY don’t people get?

Anyways look, the basic issue here is simple. Hezbollah exists to destroy Israel, not to push Israel back to some green line. Only ignorant fools who ignore Hezbollah’s own charter believe this. Now most of the Lebanese people don’t care about Israel but they would rather their country not be used as a target range for Israeli bombers which is the reason why Lebanon has tried to settle the issue. But their military is so weak it can’t stop Israel or Hezbollah, so the poor people of Lebanon are entirely

irrelevant.

So, logic concludes there are only a limited number of ways the conflict can be resolved. If Hezbollah gets what it wants (according to its official charter) and destroys Israel or if Israel destroys Hezbollah, if an international force disarms Hezbollah or if Hezbollah accepts Israel as its neighbor.

But a terrorist organization will not be allowed to sit on Israel's border. We have seen what happened to those who have tried to destroy Israel. Recall when every one of Israel's neighbors launched a war to destroy her completely unprovoked (and were beat back) and then again years later when three of Israel's Arab neighbors again tried to destroy her completely unprovoked (and were again beat back into humiliation).

Israel has a right to exist according to the nations of the world via UN sanction and Israel has exercised that right before. Hamas and Hezbollah should take note of what happened to those who tried to destroy Israel before them. For it is also their future to be beat back into humiliation.

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» [RE: The Hezbollah terrorists will be defeated like all others who tried to destroy Israel. Accept it.](#) Posted by: ankhet

» [RE: The Hezbollah terrorists will be defeated like all others who tried to destroy Israel. Accept it.](#) Posted by: rnagisetty

» [RE: The Hezbollah Freedom fighters have a right to defend themselves -You are an anti-Arab racist](#) Posted by: marklar

just wondering

Posted by: mokidugway on Aug 9, 2006 2:14 AM

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Ritter makes some strikingly accurate statements about the conditions that lead us to the brink of global war, and his conclusions are both reasonable and chilling.

I do take issue with his discussion of why Hezbollah took the soldiers captive, though. Timing is a big part of what has happened here, so I think Ritter is a bit disingenuous when he links Hezbollah's action to a precept handed down in 2000 and doesn't examine motives behind this particular raid. First the capture of Shalit in Gaza, then the capture of these (not nameless, I had to check on that) two soldiers in Lebanon. Both organizations demanded a prisoner exchange, which is normal when you look at similar conflicts in the past, but there are even more coincidences: military wings of resistance party represented with seats in Parliament; strictly military targets.

In other words, if you accuse Israel of having planned this engagement well in advance, which I have no problem believing, how to you account for the mirroring captures in Gaza and Lebanon?

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A pre-emptive strike

Posted by: HeroesAll on Aug 9, 2006 2:40 AM

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One last attempt at rationality, in the face of the posters who continue to post the same shrill accusations, repeated parrot-fashion in the face of any and all coherent argument. I'll try to keep it brief, although it'll be hard.

1) The Hezbollah charter: in the midst of a sea of people claiming things about the charter, I found what seems to be the document which has come to be referred to as the charter. Check it out [here](#). Here's an extract:

Our Objectives

Let us put it truthfully: the sons of Hizhallah know who are their major enemies in the Middle East - the Phalanges, Israel, France and the US. The sons of our umma are now in a state of growing confrontation with them, and will remain so until the realization of the following three objectives:

(a) to expel the Americans, the French and their allies definitely from Lebanon, putting an end to any colonialist entity on our land;

(b) to submit the Phalanges to a just power and bring them all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians;

(c) to permit all the sons of our people to determine their future and to choose in all the liberty the form of government they desire. We call upon all of them to pick the option of Islamic government which, alone, is capable of guaranteeing justice and liberty for all. Only an Islamic regime can stop any further tentative attempts of imperialistic infiltration into our country.

Seems to me that what's most important to them is self-determination. And just in case you think I'm cherry-picking, it also says this in the last section:

Our primary assumption in our fight against Israel states that the Zionist entity is aggressive from its inception, and built on lands wrested from their owners, at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people. Therefore our struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. We recognize no treaty with it, no cease fire, and no peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated.

Now, a thoughtful reading of the whole text paints a somewhat different picture from the foaming-at-the-mouth, bearded, wild-eyed crazy men intent on nothing other than the destruction of Israel. I do urge people to read it, and think about it. It's clear that Hezbollah's main goal, like that of Hamas, is to drive the invading Israelis out of the occupied areas.

So I'm reasonably confident that, should Israel decide to actually withdraw, completely and in good faith, then Hezbollah and Hamas would continue down the path of moving from violence to politics. This has been demonstrated to some extent by the fact that, when the Israeli attacks drop, the Hezbollah and Hamas attacks drop also.

It's also clear to anyone with a brain that Israel has never really withdrawn from anywhere. Gaza, you say? They may have moved a few settlers out, but they kept the inhabitants penned, and made frequent incursions. It wasn't sovereign territory.

Please note, before you accuse me of all sorts of devilry, that I don't support anyone bombing anyone. I think innocent people everywhere should be able to live their lives without being killed by someone else's fight. I also think that innocent people should be able to live their lives without being driven out of their homes, or penned in ghettos, or kidnapped and imprisoned arbitrarily, in the cause of someone else's fight. I deplore the bombing of innocents on any side, so don't shriek that I'm supporting terrorists.

CONTINUED...

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» [A pre-emptive strike part deux](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

» [A pre-emptive strike part trois](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

» [Okay, one more brief comment](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

» [RE: A pre-emptive strike](#) Posted by: brunowe

» [RE: A pre-emptive strike](#) Posted by: HeroesAll

» [RE: A pre-emptive strike](#) Posted by: marklar

Israel the Terrorist State, USA the supporter

Posted by: IanA on Aug 9, 2006 3:25 AM

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We are told by American and Israeli governments and their obedient media that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization, which it is not, and that Israel cannot negotiate a future solution with the elected government of the Palestinian territories' people

because Hamas is a "terrorist" organization.

Although I posted this before, I would like all those who have appreciated the excellent article above, and those who will decry it as another misrepresentation in what they see as, "Israel's fight for survival against terrorist organizations and their state sponsors who's aim is irradiation of the state of Israel..." or something like that. Before anyone uses the word "terrorism" again. I would like so much for them to carefully read and understand the definitions and the meaning in terms of the on-going horrors meted out over the past 40 years in Gaza and the West Bank and the repeated destruction, violation and interference with Lebanon over 30 or more years.

“Terrorism” : Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law, © 1996 Merriam-Webster, Inc.

n : the calculated use of violence (or threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear.

"State terrorism": [Wikipedia definition](#) : violence against civilians perpetrated by a national government or proxy state. State terrorism, where applicable, may be directed toward the population or infrastructure of the state in question or towards the population of other states. Although attacks on non-combatant civilians may occur during a time of war, they are usually considered terrorism, especially if these are not attacks on the enemy's war fighting capacity (for example an industrial port).

What we appear to have in terms of Hezbollah and Hamas are organizations accepting the inevitable need for a political solution while the state of Israel with the sponsorship and support of the USA remains in denial preferring to use “terrorism”.

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[» That's why they call it Orwellian](#) Posted by: mokidugway

exactly

Posted by: rsaxto on Aug 9, 2006 3:59 AM

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Ritter has it exactly right: the excessive violence of the Bushies and the Israelis foretells the decline and fall of USA/Israel hegemony as most of the world is becoming increasingly concerned over the excessive violence, brutality and suffering the excess bombing campaigns are causing. The Bushies are causing the collapse of the American Empire.

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Unraveling the game...

Posted by: Captainmagic on Aug 9, 2006 4:10 AM

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Is a priority. Isreal is to draw them in and in will come the big US guns.....Smokescreens and lies...Ok we will do it but remember we must neutralise the Muslims or we will be pushed back into the sea from where we came.....We will come to your aid after all the trophy will be the oil and dominance of the ME....a small force of some 100+ thousand to Iraq...may, be overrun and then that will present us with the rationale for a tactical release of radiation, it's a broken arrow situation and they WILL use the mini nuke...I had said to some of my colleagues after the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon that something was up...I guess I am looking for straws and camels at the moment to see when and which way it will fall...One thing is for sure though the Arabs and Shiite are awake to it all....that is perhaps one reason why Shiites have not attacked the marines etc as aggressivley as they might otherwise choose to do. They are obviously very aware of the Idiot with the nukes..So it's just a big balancing act....one that slaughters innocents of any race.....it could be you or me couldn't it....they really don't care...Herosall you sound like one tuff lady...but I raise my glass to you. If when in the field with the green machine, you spoke with such clarity, you where said to be speaking gospel.

Regards Captain

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U.S. supplies warring nations

Posted by: Moonray on Aug 9, 2006 4:47 AM

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The Israel-Lebanon bloodbath underscores the need to stop the world's chief arms makers -- the U.S., Russia, China and a few others -- from supplying weapons to nations around the globe.

We agonize about the spread of nuclear weapons -- and rightly so -- but often forget that it's conventional weapons that are slaughtering thousands every year.

We need to turn off that spigot. The U.S. should lead the way with a new worldwide arms treaty to stop this trading in death-dealing technology.

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Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria, Iran & Lebanon have a right to defend themselves

Posted by: marklar on Aug 9, 2006 5:02 AM

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Every word Scott Ritter spoke prior to the folly if invading Iraq has been proven true. There's no reason to think that anything he says today is innacurate. In fact he' right on the money ech and every time he speaks or write.

He tells the truth, no flair, no bullshit. I've been in the room when he's appeared here several times and each time he is convincing and sincere. He bats away accusations and attacks leveid at him with the truth like it is. This is why you won't find him on TV very much - too much truth is bad for fascistic governance and America is currently a fascist state. Without the U. S. Izrael would be forced to make peace with its neighbors and that would be bad for Zionism. Excellent stuff yet agian by Ritter.

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august 9, 2006 WAWA blog

Posted by: wawa on Aug 9, 2006 5:02 AM

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August 9, 2006

I began writing about Paul Larudee on the WAWA blog in June.

Paul is an American citizen who spent two weeks in a Ben Gurion detention cell in June, had a 'trial' and was still deported without being able to enter Israel because he is a NONVIOLENT resister against the occupation in Palestine.

Paul is also a co-founder of ISM/International Solidarity Movement: grass roots that is spreading like a wild fire through the world and is now converging in Lebanon.

ISM co-founders (and husband and wife) Adam Shapiro and Huwaida Arraf, Paul Larudee, other internationals and Lebanese nonviolent resisters will be taking a caravan of 50-100 cars south from Beirut to southern Lebanon on Saturday to bring supplies to that devastated region.

To sign the petition of support of
NONVIOLENT Resistance please visit:

<http://www.lebanonsolidarity.org/>

Call for Action

August 7th, 2006

'Lebanon: An Open Country for Civil Resistance'

We, the people of Lebanon, call upon the local and international community to join a campaign of civil resistance to Israel's war against our country and our people. We declare Lebanon an open country for civil resistance.

In the face of Israel's systematic killing of our people, the indiscriminate bombing of our towns, the scorching of our villages, and the attempted destruction of our civil infrastructure, we say NO!

In the face of the forced expulsion of a quarter of our population from their homes throughout Lebanon, and the complicity of governments and international bodies, we re-affirm the acts of civil resistance that began from the first day of the Israeli assault, and we stress and add the urgent need TO ACT!

We urge you to join us in defying Israel's aggression against our country and in defending the rights of the inhabitants throughout Lebanon, and particularly in the South, to live on their land. When the United Nations, created to preserve peace and security in the world, is paralyzed; when governments become complicit in war crimes, then people must show their strength and rise up. When justice and human rights are scorned, those who care must unite in their defense.

Building on our belief in our country, the efforts of the civil resistance, and on the arrival of the internationals coming to Lebanon for solidarity, we declare that Lebanon is an open country for civil resistance, starting from August 12.

On August 12 at 7 am, we will gather in Martyrs' Square to form a civilian convoy to the south of Lebanon. Hundreds of Lebanese and international civilians will carry relief as an expression of solidarity for the inhabitants of the heavily destroyed south who have been bravely withstanding the assault of the Israeli military.

After August 12th, the campaign will continue with a series of civil actions for which your presence and participation is needed. Working together in solidarity we will overcome the complacency, inaction, and complicity of the international community and we will deny Israel its goal of removing Lebanese from their land and destroying the fabric of our country.

public service message from the .org
WeAreWideAwake

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America at high risk, maybe worse than before 9/11

Posted by: Bobsays on Aug 9, 2006 5:28 AM

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Israel likes to say they won't tolerate a terrorist organisation on its border, but will not take responsibility for the consequences of their policies. The US is the same. There seems to be a disconnect between the rise of these groups and their grievances, and the foreign policy of the US and Israel.

As we can see in Iraq and Afghanistan, handing over the whole approach to this problem to right-wing militarists, rather than delivering victory and peace, have embroiled the whole west in horrible guerilla wars.

If this strategy and tactics worked, then we would have been victorious within four years (like WWII). But instead, it has been five years, and we seem to be just getting through the first phase (the second phase being things getting really bad, before we reach the third phase, peace?).

Israel is pursuing this same failed approach. They are making the same strident right wing noises, but are now finding on the battlefield that victory is harder than they thought.

Bush's 'long war' is the equivalent of a student saying the long-delayed essay they are working on is the 'long essay'. Without a deadline and timescale, we are facing war without end, like something out of George Orwell's 1984.

If we know what we want, then let's mobilise on a mass scale to get it done. Rumsfeld's 'war lite' is not working. This means we need to know what it is we are fighting over. What is the legitimacy? Is it about peace and freedom, or oil and economic security?

Here is my ten point plan to a better world:

1) Mass mobilisation in all western countries. This doesn't mean just for the military, but also for building the peace (NGOs,

business, culture etc.)

- 2) Scrap the current structure and staff of the UN agencies. We need new international bodies reflecting the challenges of our times, and we need new people free from today's corruption
- 3) Mass council of the learned. We need to develop coherent networks of intellectuals and cultural thinkers who are focused on the fight for freedom of expression and democracy. They should strategise the arguments to defeat the islamist fascists
- 4) We need to look at our societies with a clear head. In WWII, governments recognised that soldiers were fighting for countries fit for victory. It became obvious that there was much wrong with life in the western world, and that we couldn't defeat fascism without recognising our own societies had many failings. We are now in an age of rampant greed, social dislocation, lost identities, atomised populations, crumbling cities, bosses pitching workers against each other. We need to address these problems if we are to ask of this generation of people to make the sacrifices necessary to defeat islamic fascism.
- 5) Immigration: this issue must be discussed and we need to acknowledge its corrosive effects on social cohesion.
- 6) Environmental collapse: we can already see that wars for resources are happening
- 7) Global legal rights and responsibilities: we saw with the rise of the UN, the rise of global rights. But without responsibilities, these rights have become a farce, as governments kill and abuse their citizens without consequences
- 8) Technology: it is changing everything and giving rise to a new world. What does this mean for morality?
- 9) Space: while we are busing killing terrorists, the Chinese are making plans to dominate space.
- 10) All countries need to be equal. We need to end the unipolar, or multipolar world. The US clearly can't act as the hegemon without warping its values. The idea of US supremacy advocated by Bush, will just bring lots of wars. The US needs to forget its 'exceptionalism' and march hand in hand with other countries.

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Right (and write) on, Ritter

Posted by: Rod in 83706 on Aug 9, 2006 5:43 AM

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Ritter is right in most everything he says, and he writes very well. I only disagree when he says our support for Israel should be nuanced (as in we should oppose Israel's destruction of Lebanon, but in general support Israel). No, we should be neutral, it is none of our business.

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