

Another View of the UNIFIL Mission in Lebanon

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Interview with Marie NASSIF-DEBS, member of the political bureau of the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), in Beirut, Monday September 25, 2006. Originally published in [Solidaire](#), a publication of the Workers Party of Belgium.

1. What is your opinion of the presence of UNIFIL 2 [the new UN contingent] in Lebanon?

UNIFIL 2 as it is currently made up is much different from what has been present at Lebanon for more than 30 years, following Resolution 425 of the Security Council of the UN.

The differences between the two UNIFIL are notably:

- First of all, the reinforced presence of troops belonging to member states of NATO and, therefore, placed indirectly under U.S. command. And even if the States to which these troops belong are great powers, they nevertheless on several occasions have yielded to the U.S. administration regarding the manner of solving conflicts militarily, especially in the Middle East where the experience of Iraq is still an open wound.

- Then, certain leaders of these countries, Italy for example, signed military agreements with Israel; and that causes us to think that the representatives of these countries will in no way possess the impartiality necessary to carry out their mission properly.

- Moreover, the representatives of France helped, on several occasions these last years, the administration directed by George Bush, to satisfy the goals of Israel and certain Lebanese factions. This includes their [France's] participation in the development of Resolution 1559, which was and remains one of the points of contention among Lebanese concerning the weapons held by the Resistance, and by their support of Resolution 1701, which gave to Israel what it had lost during its aggression of July 12, 2006, against Lebanon, namely: the possibility of continuing its violations of the resolutions and of continuing to commit crimes against Lebanese civilians under the pretext of preventing Hezbollah from reinforcing its military arsenal.

2. What is your opinion of the behavior of the UNIFIL contingents? Is it correct to say that the European countries present in Lebanon want to recolonize the country to their profit?

During the latest Israeli aggression against Lebanon, certain troops of UNIFIL had refused to help Lebanese civilians; the inhabitants of Marwahine, the first village martyred, suffered from it and 28 died close to the UNIFIL base.

Currently also, we are disappointed, to say the least, by certain behaviors. Thus, at the

Beirut airport the UNIFIL representatives got involved in dealing with the “Security of the territory”; in South Lebanon, the international troops are very discrete regarding Israeli violations of our territory: they “did not see” and they, therefore, did not say anything concerning the changes of the “blue line” in the villages of Kfarkela and Chebaa, and they also keep silent regarding the “passage” of the bombers in our sky and also on the decision of the government of Ehud Olmert to delay the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the places still occupied.

Can these behaviors be regarded as an attempt at “Re”colonization on behalf of certain great powers? That is possible, especially since certain European statesmen think that in this way they could still have their (small) share of the pie in the region

3. What is your opinion of the position of these European countries compared to that of infernal duo: Israel-USA?

I already drew attention to the subordinate position of these countries to the U.S. administration, because of their behavior during the Bush’s war in Iraq, even if France and Germany had, at a given time, rejected the last war.

It should be said that some of these countries have, not only helped to the creation of the State of Israel (driving out the Palestinians of their country), but they made wars to help it; for example, the three-part aggression of 1956 and all the ambiguous resolutions which were voted “in favor” of Israel, including Resolution 242 written by the representative of the United Kingdom in the United Nations

Thus, their partiality with respect to the Arabs and of Israel appears, even when Israel is declared responsible for massacres against the civilian populations, as in Lebanon and in Palestine where the names of Qana and Jenin went around the world.

In light, we can say that the new world order can be summarized as follows: a superpower that dominates all the others and pressures them to do what it wants, including participating in destructive wars (as in Bosnia) and the unconditional support with its policy of death (Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine), so that its oil companies and its arms dealers make larger profits and can continue to steal the wealth of the planet.

These “others” are satisfied with the crumbs which the “sovereign of the new world” wants to leave them.

In this light, we can better understand the speed with which [German Chancellor] Angela Merkel delivered the three “nuclear” submarines to Israel, even before the blood of the 600 children of Lebanon crushed in the shelters and on the roads had dried, just as we understand her declarations concerning the German presence in Lebanon, whose “goal” is to protect Israel We must to say, finally, that the West thereby tries to resolve the crimes of the Second World War by new crimes. The Arab people never made pogroms or crimes against humanity with regard to the Jews.

4. Is it correct of saying that the countries of NATO want to use the United Nations like a Trojan horse to intervene in Lebanon?

The United States has already on several occasions during these last 10 years used the United Nations to facilitate their interventions and their aggressions against sovereign

states on all the continents without any exception, from Somalia and to Lebanon, while passing by Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq.

We think that this international organization is getting increasingly weaker, especially since it is not even it [the UN] which makes the decisions, as all authority is transferred to its "Security Council." And sometimes when the Secretary-General of this organization tries to be objective, as happened in 1996, following the massacre of Qana (which had been done inside a position of UNIFIL), he is quickly dismissed.

What the United States wants of this organization is docility - including today in Lebanon - or its dissolution pure and simple

As for the other countries of NATO, they follow in the same direction as the U.S. administration, which they aid in its strategy aimed at weakening any possibility of international assistance to the oppressed people. If not, they should have refused to vote for the ambiguities of Resolution 1701 and refused to send troops on the unilateral basis which this resolution states; as they should have refused the Israeli and American intervention in the domestic politics of Lebanon, as much through the diktats of the U.S. ambassador in Beirut as through Israeli aggression against this country. What the European governments "condemned" (this word is, moreover, very strong), is the "disproportionate" response of Israel, but not the military act in itself.

This policy is a double-edged sword, because its next victim will be Europe and its people, which has already suffered from U.S. economic pressures, and we think that, in the logic of the things, these pressures will not stop at the economic sector alone. The U.S. troops in Europe are capable of anything.

5. How the various sectors and classes of the Lebanese population consider UNIFIL?

The country is, in its majority, against the presence of the new "reinforced" UNIFIL, because this one comes "to protect" the attacker (Israel) against those which suffered from the aggression (the Lebanese). There are, of course, the Lebanese forces and the parties of Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblatt who want to eliminate the weapons of Hezbollah. But people, especially from the South, demand a balanced solution and reject the idea that Hezbollah should give up its weapons before Israel withdraws from the Chebaa farms and the Kfarchouba heights on the one hand, and releases the Lebanese prisoners on the other hand. Without forgetting, in the immediate future, new threats from Israel.

They remember the bad experience of what happened to Iraq and, also, what happened to Lebanon during the last Israeli aggression.

6. What are the demands of the Lebanese CP and the national resistance?

The "National Resistance" and the Lebanese Communist Party also demand a more balanced policy on behalf of the United Nations. They invite the European people to require from their respective governments a greater transparency and, especially, clear prerogatives regarding the role of the forces which they send to the South of Lebanon.

The new UNIFIL, to be effective and work for peace, must be spread on the two sides of the "blue line"; it must also be very firm towards the Israeli infringements and aggressions against Lebanon, and not simply to count those, as it had done before while being satisfied to say that the "Israelis had committed 2,400 offenses in the year 2005 alone."

It is necessary that the role of this new UNIFIL is more precise. This, in the area regarding the presence of international troops.

From another point of view, we think that a political help on behalf of the European Union is necessary regarding the United Nations, especially that the secretary-general of this organization is mandated to formulate a proposal concerning the “Lebanon-ness” of the Chebaa farms. A Lebanese request on this subject has been recorded for several years in the United Nations and documents exist on this problem, as well as with the French government, which ran a mandate in Lebanon until the year 1945, as well as in Lebanon.

7. What do you think of the immense gathering convened by Hezbollah this Friday, Sept. 22 in Beirut? In particular the significance of the speech of H. Nasrallah?

The gathering of Hezbollah, Friday September 22, aims at expressing – as well by the range of the political forces present, as by the mass movement it created – a certain new dynamic on the Lebanese political arena. We had already called with a more precise position on behalf of this party concerning the formation of an opposition having a program for change.

The speech of H. Nasrallah is, for us, a new language on behalf of a “religious-based” political party, since it stressed the need for leaving the political confessionalism which debilitates Lebanon and makes it weak before the foreign rulers. It is true that the Secretary-general of Hezbollah also spoke about “the deterrent force” of this party, but that was directed towards the United States and Israel.

We had called for changes to the organization of the government, which had only envenomed the situation, and we think that the position advanced there too by Hezbollah goes in the direction that we want and that also the majority of the Lebanese people wants.

Of course, this speech opened the way for certain pro-U.S. forces to hold similar gatherings. However, the religious-based speech (Maronite, even) of Samir Geagea and the absence of any balance in its position between Syria and Israel very clearly show what the LCP said concerning the American plan for the area: the partition into antagonistic “confessional” mini-States and all of them asking assistance from Israel in order to continue to survive, while U.S. transnational monopolies continue their seizure of the wealth contained in the Arab world.

8. Which are the immediate needs for the inhabitants of South Lebanon and other devastated areas?

All is necessary for the inhabitants of the South which suffered from the war and the massacres as well as the South, because in this area Hezbollah and the Resistance in general (national and Islamic) are strong.

The damage is very great and the government has not done much up to now.

There is, as everyone knows, more than 18,000 homes destroyed, not mentioning the schools, stores, bridges, roads, harvests and without forgetting the mini-bombs and the cluster bombs spread throughout the cities, the villages and the fields.

Help is greatly needed before winter at the level of prefabricated homes, warm clothes, blankets and assistance for the schools of the communities. In the same way, medical help is necessary: traveling private clinics, ambulances

9. Who are the allies of the Lebanese people in the world? On whom can it count?

The Lebanese people must, initially, count on itself and its resistance and its national unity faced with the catastrophe and with what is still in preparation against it.

It counts, especially, on the Arab people, the movements against the wars and the aggressions in the world, but also on the people of the left from which it requires firmer positions, whether in the European Parliament or the national Parliaments in Europe, as well as from the governments of the anti-imperialist countries in the world: and, there, we can only salute the position of the Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez, as well as those of many other governments in the world.

Translated by John Catalinotto

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