



## One war . . .

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On September 11, 2001, a freedom-loving nation was attacked by a terrorist organization operating from the territory of a sovereign state with the acquiescence, if not the active complicity, of the latter's government. The United States retaliated with what can only be called a "disproportionate response."

America launched air and ground assaults on Afghanistan, aimed at destroying not only the al Qaeda safe havens but toppling the Taliban regime. We damaged or destroyed critical Afghan infrastructure so as to deny its use to the enemy. Civilian casualties occurred, as did refugee flows. At one point, the U.N. declared the resulting dislocation a humanitarian crisis.

Once the campaign to eliminate al Qaeda was launched, there was no consideration given to negotiating with the terrorists or the

government that afforded them protection. The United States would not have contemplated a U.N.-mandated cease-fire, let alone the insertion of an international peacekeeping force under a Chapter 7 mandate from the Security Council -- whose purpose, inevitably, would have been to protect the terrorists from our military, not the other way around.

And most especially, it would have been inconceivable that the U.S. could accede to one of its enemy's central demands -- for example, removal of all American forces from the Mideast -- as part of a negotiated cease-fire brokered by the U.N. and approved by the Taliban at the direction of al Qaeda.

It is therefore stunning, not to say depressing, to see how the Bush administration's early, strong support for Israel's response to the murderous attacks on its territory

by the terrorist group, Hezbollah, has morphed in recent days.

First, Israel was told it must not undermine the Lebanese government, even though the latter not only acquiesced to what amounts to a Hezbollah-controlled state-within-a-state in southern Lebanon. The government in Beirut actually has two Hezbollah ministers in its Cabinet -- a role al Qaeda never enjoyed in Taliban Afghanistan. This injunction had the practical effect of limiting Israeli efforts to press officials in Beirut to disassociate from the terrorists in their midst.

Then, the U.S. embraced the idea Israel must reward the government that has allowed Hezbollah to occupy and operate against the Jewish State from the part of south Lebanon the Israelis foolishly and unilaterally vacated in 2000. Where we destroyed the regime that afforded safe haven to our foes, Israel has been told it must make a further territorial concession to its counterpart by surrendering to Lebanon a small area known as Shebaa Farms that Israel has occupied since 1967.

Never mind that Shebaa Farms was not Lebanese territory to begin with; Israel conquered it from Syria in the Six-Day War. The character of this area was confirmed by none other than the United Nations. It certified in May 2000 that Israel had withdrawn from all Lebanese territory, that the Farms are not and have never been part of Lebanon and that their final status would ultimately have to be settled in

negotiations between Israel and Syria.

Now, however, Israel is told it must satisfy what amounts to a demand of Hezbollah -- a manufactured pretext for the Iranian-backed terrorist organization to continue its war against Israel, even after the Israelis had abandoned the security zone they had wisely maintained in Lebanon for 18 years (along with the erstwhile Lebanese allies who lived there).

It is bad enough Hezbollah will thus be rewarded for its terrorist attacks on Israel. The implications of this concession will prove much worse, however, to the extent the message is conveyed by it that Israel is not entitled to -- and cannot expect to enjoy -- inviolable, internationally recognized borders. To paraphrase an old saw: What belongs to the Arabs is the Arabs'; what belongs to Israel is extortable.

Even more problematic is the prospect that the United Nations will shortly mandate -- with U.S. backing and Israel's acquiescence -- the insertion into southern Lebanon of an armed international force. Its purpose, ostensibly, will be to enforce a cease-fire pursuant to a new Chapter 7 Security Council resolution. If its job is to "keep" the peace, not make it, such a force will by definition require Hezbollah's assent to enter. The peacekeepers will understand, moreover, that they will be allowed to remain there in safety only if they do not interfere with the terrorists' rebuilding and resupply activities in south Lebanon.

The make-up of this force may compound the problem. Under discussion are troop contributions from places like Turkey, Indonesia and France -- nations unlikely to prove unfriendly to Hezbollah and, to varying degrees, hostile to Israel. In short, this will be just another anti-Israel U.N. mission, providing protection to the Free World's terrorist foes and doing little if anything to keep them from readying new attacks on freedom-loving peoples.

For the United States, the current phase of this War for the Free World began on September 11, 2001. For others, like Israel, it has been ongoing for decades and represents an unmistakably existential threat. We cannot afford to pretend there is an appropriate way for the United States to fight Islamofascist totalitarians and the terror they wield against us, then insist our allies negotiate with and try to appease such groups when they are in the Islamofascists' cross-hairs.

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