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## Robert Fisk: WikiLeaks exposed US and Hillary's hopelessness

By Robert Fisk

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Almost 30 years ago, a British diplomat asked me to lunch in Beirut. In spite of rumours to the contrary, she told me on the phone, she was not a spy but a mere attache, wanting only to chat about the future of Lebanon.

These were kidnapping days in the Lebanese capital, when to be seen with the wrong luncheon companion could finish in a basement in south Beirut.

I trusted this woman. I was wrong. She arrived with two armed British bodyguards who sat at the next table.

Within minutes of sitting down at a fish restaurant, she started plying me with questions about Hezbollah's armaments in southern Lebanon. I stood up and walked out.

Hezbollah had two men at another neighbouring table. They called on me next morning. No problem, they said, they saw me walk out. But watch out.

Ever since this woman lied to me, I have avoided Western embassies throughout the world.

But, about the same time as this deceit was practised on me, the Iranians published in book form their massive, incredible volumes of US secret files from the American embassy in Iran.

Students had spent years since the 1979 Islamic revolution painstakingly sticking together the shredded diplomatic cables to Washington from the US mission in Tehran.

And, lo and behold, one of them is attache Bruce Laingen's conclusion that "the Persian psyche is an overriding egoism . . . The practical effect of it is an almost total Persian preoccupation with self and leaves little room for understanding points of view other than one's own".

And then up pops the very same cable last week on WikiLeaks, breathlessly highlighted by The New York Times as if this is an extraordinary scoop.

It was fascinating, though, to watch Hillary Clinton initially denouncing the WikiLeaks flood as an "attack on the international community".

No sooner had Clinton refused to confirm that the 250,000 perfectly genuine documents were real - she called them "alleged documents" - than the lady from the BBC piped up with a question, also referring to the "alleged documents"; as if the story the BBC were leading with might be a hoax.

The problem, of course, is that it is not a hoax. For this lady, who could not write her own autobiography, ordered - and I still have to shake my head at this - her flunkies to spy on the United Nations.

That Clinton should want her State Department slaves to play secret agents on the poor old UN shows what an utterly worthless institution the US State Department has become.

They were supposed to spy on the encryption details of delegates, credit card transactions, even frequent flyer cards. But who would want to read the nonsense that the UN's overpaid staff write, or how much they spend on lunch?

We now also know that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak "hates Hamas and considers them the same as Egypt's own Muslim Brotherhood, which he sees as his own most dangerous political threat".

Well, blow me down. Having watched Uncle Hosni's National Democratic Party hoodlums biffing the Brotherhood earlier this month, this doesn't come as much of a surprise.

When Mubarak hears the name of his presidential opponent Ayman Nour, he claims - according to the WikiLeaks cable - to "feel sick".

Which is just how Nour felt when Mubarak banged him up in the Tora prison complex after the 2005 election.

We are still waiting, naturally, to see what US diplomatic reports really said about the ghastly Yasser Arafat and - more importantly - the Israeli colonial Government in the West Bank.

But fear not. Any truth contained therein will not be reflected in those haughty policy papers churned out by Clinton and her predecessors.

More and more, WikiLeaks is exposing the hopeless nature of US foreign policy and that of its supposed 'allies'. Attack on the international community, indeed.