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زبانهای اروپایی

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26.10.2024

## ***Rewriting Resolution 1701:***

### ***Hochstein's diplomatic cover for Israeli expansion***

Amos Hochstein's latest diplomatic mission to Lebanon, far from fostering genuine peace, seems designed to use diplomacy as a covert strategy to achieve what military force could not.

On 21 October, Amos Hochstein, born in Israel in 1973 and once an Israeli tank crewman, returned to Lebanon as a US envoy, not to protect peace but to redefine it on Tel Aviv's terms.

The irony is undeniable: Israel, having lost 28 tanks in almost as many days during its latest invasion attempt, now sends one of its former tank crew members, not in battle, but in diplomacy – to achieve through words what military force could not secure: control over Lebanon through revisions to UN Resolution 1701.

Hochstein's mission may appear to be an act of diplomacy, but is it really about fostering peace? Or is he aligning with Israeli policy to reframe control while eroding Lebanon's sovereignty? The diplomatic veneer only thinly conceals the underlying agenda of control.

From Oslo to 1701: Reinterpreting peace for control

The Israeli playbook of manipulating peace processes is nothing new. In a 2001 leaked video, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu boasted about his manipulation of the Oslo Accords, using vague phrases like "military facilities" to tighten Israeli control over contested areas.

Netanyahu openly stated, “America is something that you can easily maneuver,” hinting at the ease with which Israeli influence shapes US diplomacy – a dynamic that is evident today in Hochstein’s actions.

The Israeli army veteran’s push for amendments to Resolution 1701 is a clear continuation of this strategy: advancing the occupation state’s interests under the guise of diplomacy from Washington. Just as Netanyahu reinterpreted the Oslo Accords to solidify Israeli control, Hochstein’s proposed changes to 1701 seek to turn it into a tool for extending Tel Aviv’s influence. This is not diplomacy for peace; it is diplomacy for power.

#### 1701: Israel’s unfinished battle

Resolution 1701, passed by the UN Security Council on 11 August 2006, marked a critical point for Israel, which found itself unable to defeat Hezbollah during the July War despite its advanced military capabilities.

Brokered by then-US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the ceasefire allowed Israel a face-saving exit under the guise of diplomacy rather than face a prolonged, unwinnable battle. But the resolution has since been a point of ongoing contention – one Israel has repeatedly violated.

One notable violation is Israel’s continued occupation of Shebaa Farms, which contravenes both Resolution 1701 and the earlier Resolution 425. Hezbollah’s decision to remain armed, often criticized internationally and in some quarters domestically, becomes a logical and legally justified response under international law, given Israel’s occupation of Lebanese land. The ongoing presence of Israeli forces undermines the very peace that Resolution 1701 aimed to establish.

Tel Aviv’s disregard for the resolution extends beyond territorial occupation. Since 2013, Israel has repeatedly violated Lebanese airspace to conduct strikes on Syria, treating Lebanon’s skies like an unguarded backdoor for foreign interventions.

This belligerent behavior is akin to a trespasser using a neighbor’s yard to attack another – an act that undermines Lebanon’s sovereignty entirely. In August 2019, a significant escalation occurred when Israel launched a drone strike in Beirut, which then-president Michel Aoun condemned as a “declaration of war.”

Moreover, Israel’s occupation of the northern part of Ghajar village further violates both the Blue Line and Resolution 1701. Despite UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces deploying south of the Litani River, Israel’s persistent refusal to withdraw ensures that peace remains elusive, leaving Lebanon under the constant threat of Israeli aggression.

## Rewriting 1701

The amendments proposed by Hochstein to Resolution 1701 reveal Israel's broader strategy of using international mechanisms to further its objectives. These changes would extend UNIFIL's jurisdiction two kilometers north of the Litani River, allowing international forces to conduct searches, patrols, and inspections without requiring approval from Lebanese authorities. These inspections can include searching vehicles, private properties, and suspected weapons sites.

Effectively, this is a demand for Lebanon to cede control over its own territory – a clear infringement on its sovereignty. Under the guise of peacekeeping, this would grant Israel indirect control over Lebanon's internal security dynamics, especially since intelligence for these operations may be influenced by, or even originate from, Israeli sources.

## Eyes on the south

Hochstein's proposal raises critical concerns about intelligence oversight: Who will guide these operations, and how might covert Israeli interests be served? The potential involvement of Israeli tech companies like Toka, co-founded by former prime minister Ehud Barak, is telling.

Toka specializes in advanced surveillance technologies that can hack into and manipulate live or recorded video feeds from public and private security cameras, including those in ports, airports, and border crossings.

If Toka's technology is deployed in southern Lebanon, it could potentially compromise the very systems used by UNIFIL. This technology, which leaves no trace, could be exploited to monitor Hezbollah and Lebanese military movements, all under the guise of international peacekeeping operations. The consequences would be profound: a complete erosion of Lebanon's security, replaced by a surveillance network manipulated by Israel to serve its own strategic interests.

Israel's covert surveillance approach can be seen in how it handles Beirut's southern suburbs. The infamous Dahiya Doctrine advocates for overwhelming destruction of civilian areas to target Hezbollah strongholds, yet Israel seems to avoid fully enacting this policy – possibly due to its desire to preserve infrastructure that supports covert operations.

Technologies like Toka's suggest a more calculated plan, enabling 24/7 monitoring of Hezbollah-controlled areas under the Litani River. Armed with precise intelligence, Israel could execute targeted strikes or assassinations akin to those witnessed during the 2006 war,

turning southern Lebanon into a zone of perpetual surveillance and intermittent violence – all under the pretense of adhering to Resolution 1701.

### Berri's rejection

Nabih Berri, long-time leader of the Amal Movement and a staunch ally of Hezbollah, immediately opposed Hochstein's proposed amendments. As Speaker of Parliament since 1992, Berri has been a key figure in resisting Israeli encroachments and defending Lebanese sovereignty.

His longstanding relationship with Hezbollah and the broader Shia political movement positions him as a critical figure in Lebanon's struggle against foreign intervention. Upon receiving Hochstein's proposals, Berri recognized them for what they were: an attempt to undermine Lebanese sovereignty under the guise of enhanced peacekeeping.

While Hochstein framed these amendments as necessary for stability, Berri's response was clear: the real issue is not a lack of oversight but Israel's continued violations of Lebanese airspace and territory. As Berri emphasized, any genuine pursuit of peace must begin with holding Israel accountable for its aggression and ensuring it abides by existing UN resolutions.

He also announced that "the consensus among the Lebanese on Resolution 1701 is a rare consensus, and we are committed to it," adding, "We reject any amendments to Resolution 1701, whether by increase or decrease."

In an interview with Al Arabiya TV, Berri also stated, "I have been mandated by Hezbollah since 2006, and it agrees to 1701."

Resolution 1701, meant to establish peace, is being reshaped into a surveillance tool – a mechanism for Israel to achieve what it could not through military means. The use of sophisticated surveillance technology, the selective enforcement of ceasefire terms, and the involvement of international forces all serve to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty, rendering "peace" a hollow word.

OCT 25, 2024