

At war's end, Bolton said Rice surrendered to Arab demands

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U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice accepted French and Lebanese demands for the cease-fire that ended the Second Lebanon War, a document obtained by Haaretz quotes former John Bolton, the former U.S. ambassador to the UN, as saying.

The document, a letter sent by deputy UN ambassador Daniel Carmon to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem on Friday August 11, 2006, strengthens Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's claims justifying the last major ground operation of the war, which began that day and claimed the lives of 33 Israel Defense Forces soldiers.

Olmert maintains that on Thursday, August 11, negotiations in New York over UN Resolution 1701, which ended the war, took a turn that adversely affected Israel's interests for the resolution. Olmert has used that negative turn of events to insist the operation during the final 60 hours of the war was necessary. The Winograd Commission report on the management of war, set to be released Wednesday, is expected to focus on the legitimacy of that operation.

The letter is entitled "Security Council discussions - the conversation between Gillerman and Bolton," detailing a conversation between Danny Gillerman, Israel's ambassador to the UN, and John Bolton, the former U.S. envoy to the UN.

In the letter, Carmon emphasized that Rice had agreed the draft ceasefire resolution would stipulate that the international peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon would operate under Chapter VI of the UN charter, which would give it observer status only. She also agreed that the disputed Shaba Farms would be mentioned in the resolution. Israel opposed both clauses.

Carmon also wrote in the letter that Bolton said that "only a conversation between Olmert and Bush can save this situation."

Carmon also write, "Bolton said tonight in a conversation with Gillerman that the secretary of state took the task of negotiations [over the resolution] upon herself, and she is personally involved in all of its details."

"Rice is the one who agreed to the last two changes that were discussed in talks tonight between [former undersecretary of state Nick] Burns and Jerusalem - Chapter VI and Shaba Farms."

"The actions of the secretary of state stem from her determination to bring the decision up for a vote tomorrow, Friday. For that purpose she will arrive here tomorrow at 10 A.M., and will intensify the process... Bolton described with sorrow a situation in which the French surrendered to all of the Arab demands and the United States isn't prepared to give up on the 'holy alliance' with the Europeans."

"[Bolton] promised to try in a meeting tomorrow with the French ambassador to take Shaba Farms out [of the draft]... but he doubts it will help. In his opinion, the French man won't make an effort in that direction. In response to Gillerman's question about what can be done, Bolton responded that only a conversation between Olmert and President Bush can, if at all, change the face of things and rescue the situation."

By Barak Ravid, Haaretz Correspondent