

Feltman: No Return to the Pre-1990s

Contributed by Naharnet
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Reliable U.S. sources said Acting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman's recent presentation before Congress carried, not only an assertion of the U.S. policy toward Lebanon, but also cut the road to a return to the pre-1990s phase and concessions made to regional powers in a bid to consolidate any external influence over Lebanon.

Feltman's Oct. 28 presentation on a "Regional Overview of the Middle East" also confirmed that Washington will not be bargain at Lebanon's expense to win something from Syria, according to the sources.

In his presentation, Feltman said he had visited Syria on several occasions "as part of our policy of engagement."

He said his initial meetings were essential to "underscore the U.S. commitment toward advancing regional peace and establishing a constructive atmosphere for dialogue."

"Having laid this groundwork, we now want to move beyond dialogue and toward action in the areas of cooperation and concern that we have identified," feltman told Congress.

He said that while the U.S. has made some "modest" headway with the Syrians in this regard and believes that there is further potential for a positive, constructive U.S.-Syrian relationship.

"For that potential to be fully realized, however, we will need to see Syria address our concerns about some of its regional policies, such as support for terrorist organizations like Hizbullah and Hamas," Feltmas went on to say.

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