

The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Hezbollah is giving away \$HK78,000 to every Lebanese family/individual who suffered losses, during the fighting between the Israel Defence Force of the Iran-backed guerrilla organisation. By my reckoning, roughly, it means that Hezbollah will be paying about \$HK70 billion to the victims of the fighting, which waged for about 34 days of bloody fighting. My calculations are based on official figures of the homeless of Lebanon, numbering 900,000 people, according to international relief agencies. Even if these figures are off by 50 percent, with the correct figure, being 450,000 people, the amount of money, being paid out by Hezbollah, would still be huge, at about \$HK35 billion. Now, \$HK70 billion or \$HK35 billion, whatever figure one chooses to accept, is a great deal of money in anybody's books. It is, just about, enough money to purchase New Zealand, along with all of the country's sheep where, when one lands at Auckland Airport, the captain of the aeroplane announces: 'Ladies and gentlemen, we shall be landing Auckland Airport in 10 minutes. The time, now, is 6:30 pm. Please put your watches back by 50 years.' I wonder from where all of that Hezbollah money came: Iran? Syria? Al Qaeda? From the point of view of many, if not most, of the displaced persons of Southern Lebanon, the fighting between the Israel Defence Force and Hezbollah paid dividends. It was quite worth while to lose one's ramshackle home in the certain knowledge that Hezbollah would pay up, allowing the owner to replace his old home with a new one. Now that it has been established that Hezbollah has almost unlimited funds at its disposal, I assume that the American Government will be investigating as to where this guerrilla force obtained such a great deal of money. This reminds me of what happened at the turn of the twentieth Century when American missionaries determined to teach the Chinese about the values and joys of monotheism. Entering southern China, these missionaries were met, first, with a great deal of curiosity because the Chinese people have, always, been religious, worshipping, not just one god, but a whole family of them: Mother; father; brother; sister; and, etc. Initially, the American missionaries had little luck in converting the 'heathen' Chinese to the way of Christianity. But, then, they stumbled upon a wonderful idea: Feed the heathens, first, and then, having obtained their undivided attention, teach them about Christianity. In fact, having fed the heathens, it was noted that they, automatically, would agree to be converted from pantheism to monotheism – because they could get free food and lodging. It was as though Chinese New Year holidays was to last for every day of the year. For some of the new Christian converts, the very lucky devoted ones, they were even allowed to go to America, the land of gold, in order to tell their inspirational stories: They had seen the Christian light. The ploy of the American missionaries worked, wonderfully. A bowl of rice and or a bowl of noodles and the heathens became believers. Funding for the American missionaries came from well-meaning, religious Americans from New York to Louisiana. The reward for the missionaries was not for this world, but for the next, they were told.

In the case of Hezbollah, I note that this guerrilla movement is employing a similar ploy as the American missionaries employed at the turn of the twentieth Century in order to obtain Christian converts. A major difference, today, is, of course, that the cost of obtaining converts is a great deal higher than the cost of a bowl of rice or a bowl of noodles. No doubt, the countries, bankrolling Hezbollah, have done their homework. It seems to me that, for every Lebanese, converted to the way of Hezbollah, especially in respect of child-bearing females, whether or not they are married, it could well mean the replenishment of the 'heroes' of Hezbollah, who gave up their lives for the cause as propounded by Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's acknowledged leader. So, \$HK78,000 today could well result in huge profits in years to come.

Further, Hezbollah, for the first time since Israel became a State in 1948, has been able, successfully, to stand up to the Israeli Defence Force and it could be said that Hezbollah won the day. This is because the Muslim world, both in the Middle East and in Asia, has taken careful note that about 10,000 Hezbollah guerrilla fighters had been able to do battle with one of the best-trained and best-armed militia forces in the Middle East. The world took note of the fact that, during the 34-day conflict, in Tehran, Iran, more than 5,000 devout Muslims signed up to fight the Israeli Defence Force in Lebanon in a single hour. The people, who put pen to paper in Tehran, had not received any money from Hezbollah for agreeing to fight under the unified command of Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, unlike the homeless people of Lebanon, who are receiving \$HK78,000 per head. From the standpoint of a public relations's exercise, Hezbollah is doing a bang-up job, in my opinion. Israel, on the other hand, is unable to counter the proactive exercise of Hezbollah and, if the Israeli Defence Force should kill Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, such an act would, with certainty, backfire on the government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Meanwhile, the Israeli Government has its own problems, with some 500,000 Israeli Jews, having been made homeless by Hezbollah rockets à la Iran. I have not heard of the Israel Government, giving out money to the misplaced Jews of the country. Another matter that I find most interesting is the speed by which Hezbollah set up the channels of communication in Lebanon in order to pay the homeless people of the country, allowing them to get their lives back in order post-haste. No sooner had the guns gone silent in Beirut, than out came the heavy earth-moving equipment to clear away the rubble in order to make way for new homes to be built with Hezbollah money. Talk about organisation! Allah is truly Great!

Talk to you next week.

Chief Lady

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