



Commenting on the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut and on the pro-Palestinian demonstrations, the Party of the Guardians of the Cedars - Australia Branch -, issued the following communiqué:

The Lebanese received with great satisfaction and relief the news of the Syrian authorities' latest resolve to withdraw its troops from Beirut and some regions of the Mountain and the Beqaa. This is a step they have awaited so long that they began to despair they will ever be spared the terrible sequences of this occupation, an occupation that robbed their tranquility, dispersed their children, impoverished them, emaciated their country and brought it to the verge of disaster.

However, the satisfaction of the Lebanese is vitiated with doubt concerning the probity of this withdrawal which is only partial, and occurred under the pressure of regional political circumstances... Moreover, the reasons for this disbelief are numerous, including:

- 1- The fear that Syrian domination on our country will continue through the current regime that was established by Damascus to be its extensivity and a tool to fulfill its policy, in conjunction with the constitutional institutions, the centers of power and decision, and the brass hats that hold the government's reins... Thereupon, the Syrian forces would have evacuated only in form, but remained as active in fact.
- 2- The fear that Syrian troops will remain in the Beqaa, the North and parts of the South ad infinitum, thereby leaving Lebanon decrepit and shattered. The fact is that the withdrawal from Beirut in fulfillment of the Taef Accord was retarded more than ten years, hence who will guarantee that their withdrawal from the rest of the country will not be delayed several decades!
- 3- Their fear that Syrian troops will not return to Beirut under any pretext, allegation or an internal dissension - the like of which Syria is an expert in creating -, especially if it feels that the regional situation that forced it to withdraw has changed and may give license to its return!

As for the popular demonstrations witnessed in the streets of Beirut in disapproval of what is going on in the West bank and the Gaza strip, they do not represent the upright Lebanese nor the true Lebanese conviction and the authenticity of the people, since the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is as old as history, and does not concern us. Indeed, Lebanon is not implicated in conditions there except in as far as they reflect positively or negatively on the Lebanese national interest. Moreover, we must not forget that the Palestinians set about to destroy Lebanon, the country that sheltered and protected them for over half a century: they proceeded to kill the Lebanese and commit the worst crimes against them. Therefore, only one task is incumbent upon us: to expel them until not a single Palestinian will remain on Lebanese soil!

At the service of Lebanon,

Sydney - Australia.
4/4/2002.