



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

One more voice joined the band of denunciators of the Syria Accountability Act and the Israeli raid against Damascus. The Maronite Patriarch again repeated his previous stance "rejecting the reliance on anyone to defeat Syria...but we insist by the same token on being in an independent country that enjoys a free decision-making..."

This was followed by the Orthodox Antiochian Synod which asserted in its concluding statement that "Syria remains subjected to a terrible repression campaign that threatens it, while it shoulders its responsibilities in the Arab world and defends its freedom of action. It does not bomb, hold accountable, or punishes anyone, but it won't let its defenses down. It will stay the course on its march to freedom...and Lebanon is called upon to a genuine renaissance in which it stays immune to all the pressures..."

Then the Synod of the Heads of Eastern Orthodox Churches also followed suit at its meeting at the Armenian Orthodox Catholicosate in Antelias and denounced "all threats against the Arab countries, especially against Lebanon and Syria...and it expressed its concerns for the rights of the Palestinian people to an independent state, and the return of the refugees to their homeland, calling on Israel to withdraw from Arab and Palestinian lands, and from the Shebaa Farms and the Golan Heights..."

As a party that is entrusted with the Lebanese Cause and the sanctity of its objectives, and which represents the conscience of Lebanon, it pains us to read these words and we cannot but feel deep anger. It is becoming increasingly clear to us that Lebanon is a forsaken country, abandoned to the whims of fate, and orphaned of any parents or kin. We have no choice but to protect it and stand by it against anyone in confronting this endless flow of political delusions and assassinations of the truth.

We will stay within the norms of polite discourse and we won't allow our anger to drive us and attack those dignitaries whose spiritual standing we respect, but we will limit ourselves to asking them a few questions, hoping to receive soothing answers:

- 1- Are these positions by the dignitaries taken out of fear or out of conviction? Whatever the case may be, we can't excuse them because fear was never in the nature of the Church, and fear should not prevent it from saying the truth no matter how difficult. Thus was the Lord, and they must follow his example. Otherwise it is preferable that they remain silent instead of uttering falsehoods. Conviction cannot be in support of Syria at Lebanon's expense, and in support of Arab causes to the detriment of the Lebanese cause. To do otherwise is like supporting the executioner and not the victim.
- 2- Would those dignitaries please explain to us how they were able to reconcile their call for supporting Syria on one hand, and the liberation of Lebanon on the other, calling for both at the same time? As if it were China, not Syria, that occupies Lebanon!!! In which case we should ask the US Administration to impose sanctions on China instead of Syria.
- 3- Would the dignitaries please explain to us why they oppose the Syria Accountability Act? Doesn't this bill, in its main headline, require the recovery of the sovereignty of Lebanon exactly as they themselves demand? Then on what basis do they oppose it? Why the duplicity and the deception on the truth?
- 4- Can those venerable dignitaries explain to us their excessive concern for Syria? Is Syria so innocent of shedding the blood of this righteous country called Lebanon? And is Syria, like the Cesar's wife, beyond any suspicion?
- 5- And would the dignitaries tell us why all this meddling in politics? And why have they converted their Holy Synods to political forums for lies, half truths, and silence over the other half of the truth? Why do they say one thing and its opposite at the same time? And why do they insist on tailoring their religious cloaks to fit ambiguous and false political positions?

As we read their statements, we were reminded of Ghandi when he said: "I love Christ but I do not love Christians." While we would not go as far as Ghandi, we say SHAME on the fathers of the Eastern Churches because Lebanon does not deserve this suffering and all these spears stabbing it from both inside and outside!

Lebanon, at your service,
Abu Arz,
October 25, 2003