



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

It is painful to hear the speeches given last week at the General Assembly of the UN, all of them centered on Iraq and demanding the scheduled withdrawal of the Coalition Forces from its territory and a return of its full sovereignty, etc... with no mention of Lebanon, even in passing. It is more painful when we hear Arab delegates, including the Syrian, denouncing the American occupation and hegemony over Iraq, while the Syrian army is happily entrenched in Lebanon for the past quarter of a century, and no one could care less or raise an eyebrow over it... Even more painful is the sight of the Lebanese delegate brazenly and shamelessly joining the chorus of delegates.

We stand against occupation in the absolute, and for Iraq's sovereignty and the recovery of its freedom. But we are also for the sovereignty and freedom for all the peoples living under occupation, foremost of whom the Lebanese people, without any discrimination between one occupation and another.

The greatest insult comes from the American administration through some of its officials who grace us once in a while with their unique theories – replete with naiveté, arrogance, and conceited hypocrisy – about the Lebanese situation. In a recent interview with the Al-Hayat daily, the Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Richard Armitage, declared:

- 1- Michel Aoun is "old history". We ask: How can that be when he is the leader of the largest popular movement in Lebanon that includes a majority of people from the younger generation? And who appointed Mr. Armitage a judge to categorize people as he pleases?
- 2- The number of Lebanese politicians who agree to maintain the Syrian dominion over Lebanon is equal to the number of politicians who oppose it. We reply: How can that be when the vast majority of the Lebanese people oppose the Syrian occupation and yearns for freedom much more than the Iraqi people? Syria's agents in Lebanon are a tiny corrupt minority that the Lebanese people reject because it does not represent their aspirations and future hopes.
- 3- Syria has an interest in good relations with Lebanon because Lebanon is its port of access to the sea. We answer: This is hypocrisy at its best because it offers a justification for the Syrian influence in Lebanon and suggests that Lebanon may be a part of Syria because of its geographical location, thereby giving any country the right to seize and rob another country to protect its interests!!!
- 4- If the Lebanese government requested the withdrawal of the Syrian forces, the latter would have to comply. We say that this is both hypocrisy and stupidity combined. Mr. Armitage should know, at least from his embassy in Beirut, that this request by the Lebanese government is highly unlikely because that government is a bunch of slaves installed by the occupation and they won't stand against their masters in Damascus. Those who are born to crawl can't fly! If the Syrians persist in appointing and installing governments in Beirut, Lebanon will remain indefinitely in this vicious cycle.
- 5- The Lebanese system was shaped by the pact of 1932, after which a large demographic change turned things upside down. We say this is hypocrisy combined with ignorance, because he meant the pact of 1943 and not 1932, and because there has been no census to look into demographic change since that time, and because millions of Lebanese in the Diaspora stand ready to return as soon as conditions improve. If his Excellency Mr. Armitage is hinting to the need of diminishing the presidency through the Taef Accord on the basis of this presumed demographic change, we say this is nonsense because Taef created a state with many chiefs, further inciting disagreement among the Lebanese, and because the Lebanese people do not mind having a secular state with one chief, irrespective of his or her religion.

The saying goes: better a wise enemy than a dumb friend. We add to it: the greatest tyranny is by an ignorant friend. Woe to these times that made a country that is mere decades old rule over the destiny of a country that is thousands of years old. These are truly tyrannical times.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,
October 4, 2003