



The Commander

Commenting on the decision to redeploy Syrian troops in North Lebanon, the Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Some are under the impression that this new initiative and the similar ones that preceded it denote the Syrian desire to withdraw completely from Lebanon, as a prelude to the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. However, any observer of the situation more closely who can read between the lines and considers the nature of the Syrian regime's expansion and its superiority complex towards the Lebanese authorities throughout the past quarter of a century, will reach the following conclusions:

— To begin with, the word redeploying of troops does not mean their withdrawal but only changing their position from one place to another. The Lebanese politicians persist in using this expression to placate the Syrians in order to avoid their wrath, whereas the Syrians use it to tergiversate and beat about the bush; if they really meant to leave Lebanon, they would have used the word withdraw instead of redeployment!

— This step is not designed to gratify the Lebanese entity or satisfy some of the opposition, as it is believed in certain circles, but it is exclusively caused by considerations emanating from pressure on the Syrian government to reconsider its activity in Lebanon!

— It is not true that this step is the result of the mutual decision of Lebanese and Syrian army commands as was intimated by the media, but by the exclusive decision of the Syrian command, and later communicated to Lebanese command, its figurine, save its face and to mislead the public opinion!

— It is not true that this step is in the direction of implementing the Taef Accord as it is constantly claimed, since it comes a decade after the time stipulated in that accord and when in case of honest intentions it should have been taken!

— It is also not true that this step is serious and decisive, since the Syrian troops are able to return at any time to the positions they evacuated without previous permission; Syria being such an expert in creating excuses and pretexts! If it needed ten years for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut, how long will their withdrawal from the Beqaa take?

— Nor is it true that the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut has restored the sovereignty, independence, freedom and decision making of Lebanon. The truth is that the exact opposite occurred: Syria has consolidated its grip through its security elements implanted in every political, military and administrative circle, and its Lebanese stooges occupying the decision making posts, thereby turning the Administration into a marionette whose strings are in Syrian hands positioned in Damascus and Anjar... Everybody knows how freedom in Lebanon was restricted and how severely the opposition was repressed and punished during the past few years at the hands of Lebanese authorities, surpassing in methods even the Syrian methods!

— And most significant is that this initiative was taken, according to information we possess, on the eve of the American offensive against Iraq, which might cause the intense activity of islamist militias firmly established in the North, forcing Syria to occasion sectarian tribulations under cover of attacking American interests and those of its allies! Nevertheless, it is no secret that the Syrian forces fostered these islamist militias and allowed them to expand with the intention of using them when needed to create disturbances requiring their continued presence in our country.

The question arises: When will Lebanon be rid of Syrian intrigues? And how?

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,

23/2/2003.