



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

The two summits of Sharm El-Sheikh and Aqaba last week were the focus of political attention worldwide because of their importance and implications for the entire Middle East, especially with the US President's personal involvement in leading the meetings and his use of the political and military capital he earned in his victory in Iraq.

Presumably, the US President succeeded in achieving significant victories in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet, the path along the roadmap remains long, difficult, and with many bumps and obstacles to overcome.

More from a standpoint of realism than one of pessimism, and in our strong desire to see the American efforts come to fruition, we would like to point out to those concerned that a peaceful settlement between the parties to the conflict remains elusive and the political environment surrounding it is not sufficiently mature to yield long-lasting and viable peace.

In our view, preparing an environment that is compatible with the much promised peace requires the following three political steps:

1. An unrelenting pursuit of the war against terrorism until the latter is permanently eradicated, particularly when this scourge remains operational and successful in every corner of the globe, and fully capable of scuttling peaceful endeavors at any time of its choice. Obviously, those regimes that support it and provide it with the strategic depth it needs to succeed must not be ignored.
2. A reassessment of the geopolitical map of the Middle East as previously decided, with the replacement of dictatorial regimes by democratic ones because dictatorial systems and peace cannot co-exist. The freedom zones in the region must be expanded for the benefit of the oppressed people of the region, since permanent peace can only rest on people and not on regimes.
3. Giving priority to the liberation of Lebanon and the return of sovereignty and freedom to it. This will enable the country to re-assume its natural pioneering role in leading the march to peace and spreading it to all countries in the region based on its deep-rooted historic mission and long experience in this context. This little nation was, and will continue to be, the gravity center and the key to war and peace in this part of the world.

We remain cognizant of the fact that when these favorable conditions are made available, they will open the way for a natural birth and the evolution toward natural peace. The alternative is a Cesarean section and the return of the newborn to intensive care as is the case today.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,

June 7, 2003.