



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

The US ambassador to Beirut, Mr. Vincent Battle, toured the Lebanese American community in the United States of America to encourage it to invest in Lebanon and salvage the collapsing Lebanese economy. One gets a mixed feeling on reading this news: elation, but also surprise and astonishment.

The elation comes from the sudden American interest after many long years of abandonment in which Lebanon was thrown under the claws of the most rogue and evil regimes in modern times, namely the Alawi regime in Damascus, the Wahhabi regime in Riyadh, not to mention the Lebanese puppet regime itself that was the bottom-feeder in this entire cynical enterprise.

The surprise, on the other hand, comes from the anomaly of this initiative in the history of international diplomacy and its norms because it took place to the exclusion of Lebanese diplomacy to whom this sort of activity normally belongs. Unless, of course, our embassies abroad are so busy defending the interests of Syria in Lebanon that they do not have time to defend the interests of Lebanon!

The astonishment is due to Mr. Battle's ignoring, by design or by accident, the most evident of economic scientific facts that there is an organic connection between economy and security, between investments and stability. Capitals are by their very nature cowardly, and yet at the same time they are very smart. Cowardly because they do not like the risk of investing in hot and troubled spots. Smart because they continuously search for stable and secure places to operate, and they do not need evidence or mediators. Add to this that confidence in the government is the number one factor behind the return of capitals and their owners to the homeland as happened in 1982 after the Israeli invasion and the election of Bashir Gemayel to the presidency of the republic.

Also strange is that Mr. Battle ignored the fact that the status quo in Lebanon is a perfect condition for capitals and investors to flee Lebanon because of the flourishing corruption in the body politic, the rotten ethics of state institutions, the widespread presence of terrorist organizations, and the ascendancy of fundamentalist movements in the country to the point where the Taef regime has become a miniature clone of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan!

Even more bewildering is the call by the US ambassador to the Diaspora to place its investments in a country reeling under foreign occupation, whose treasury is empty except for burgeoning debts, and whose young vital workforce has emigrated in search for liberty and democracy, and to escape despair and poverty!!

Finally, his Excellency the ambassador began his tour where it should have ended. For if he really wanted to help Lebanon he should have begun his visit at his own State Department in Washington DC who we hope has freed itself of Saudi influence. He could have asked the State Department to work for ending the Syrian occupation of Lebanon through the implementation of UN resolution 520; supporting the Syria Accountability Act; helping Lebanon free itself from the terrorist cells that have infiltrated every fiber of its society; ceasing its support of the Taef regime and its political progeny; and paving the way for the country's professional elites to manage the country on the basis of honesty, accountability, science, and courage. Then, and only then, will the Lebanese capitals and investments promptly return to Lebanon without anyone's invitation.

As we thank the ambassador for his initiative, we remind him that capitals need conviction, not convincing!

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,
July 18, 2003