



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Ever since it made the fatal mistake of deciding to challenge the United States of America and confronting it in Iraq, the Syrian regime has been on the receiving end of one blow after another. And it is reeling now from the pressure, beginning with the Syria Accountability and Lebanon Sovereignty Restoration Act and the sanctions that followed, through resolution 1559 and its corollaries, and ending with last week's vocal grass-roots demonstrations that filled the streets of Beirut and gathered under their umbrella a number of diverse political and religious groups. The one loud message to come out of those demonstrations was to denounce the Syrian occupation and demand its withdrawal from Lebanese soil, which led observers to conclude that this is the beginning of the end for Syria's prestige in Lebanon.

A close reading of international perspectives and events leads one to conclude that the series of measures against the Syrian regime will continue to escalate until the Syrian regime meets the American demands, especially since it was revealed in investigations from Falluja and other Iraqi insurgent cities that most of the foreign fighters had come to Iraq by way of Syria, with the knowledge of Syrian authorities and their personal sponsorship. Indeed, the Syrian regime provided these fighters with the funds, the salaries, and the counterfeit passports and visas, in addition to the popular mobilization, the ideological indoctrination, the areas of gathering and training, transportation, etc...

The Syrian regime made a bet on thwarting the American plan for Iraq with pretty much the same terrorist methodology that it used to make the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 fail, and with the coordination and cooperation of the same Iranian regime. But what it missed is that what goes in Lebanon does not go in Iraq, that the circumstances that surrounded the Israeli invasion then are very different from those that created the American invasion of Iraq today, and that the world before the events of September 11 is different from the one we have today in their aftermath.

It then bet on the failure of President Bush in the last elections and the victory of his opponent, hoping to exploit the period between the elections and the handing over of power or any change in US foreign policy that would obtain from the accession of Senator Kerry to the White House. That bet too failed because, first, the US, as a matter of prestige, cannot allow itself to fail in its open war on terrorism, neither in Iraq nor anywhere else, and irrespective of who is the president in charge. Second, the victorious return of President Bush to the White House means that this war is to the end and it must be concluded to his advantage no matter the obstacles or the price. Third, the liberation of Lebanon and breathing democratic life anew in its veins have become a central piece in US policy, not only from the standpoint of punishing Syria but also from the making Lebanon an example to follow in achieving the objectives of spreading democracy in the greater Middle East.

This whole idea of Syria's determination to challenge the United States reminds us of La Fontaine's fable of the vain frog who envied the bull for its size, and so decided to match it by drinking so much water that it inflated and exploded. May God bless the soul of Imam Ali who said, "Many are the lessons, but little is the learning".

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

November 26, 2004