



The Commander

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

The “Greater Middle East” project that was recently announced by the United States with the basic acquiescence of the European countries, and which calls for political reform and the spread of democracy in the region, has caused both negative and positive reactions.

Most Arab regimes rejected the project, especially Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, on the pretext that it is a foreign import and that they (the regimes) refuse reform imposed by force. The reality is that this rejection is based on a fear of the principle of reform, given that any political, social, or cultural reforms within those regimes will be at their own expense. Any acceptance of reform means the disappearance of the regimes.

It is for this specific reason that Arab states hurried to rally against the reform project and abort it, externally with the visit by the Egyptian president to France (the gate to Europe) and internally by holding a conference called “Issues in Arab Reform” and organized by the semi-official Library of Alexandria. This is in addition to the visit to Washington (the gate to international decision-making) by the Tunisian president. And last but not least, through a charter of deception agreed to last week in Cairo by the Arab Foreign Ministers, which they insidiously called the “Arab Charter of Human Rights”.

This so-called Charter is in 25 pages and 50 articles, and its texts are written in a lyrical style and in a language that is elaborate, ornate, and embellished as in its Article One that says “...Human Rights in the Arab countries must be part of the national concerns that make these rights fundamental and lofty paradigms to guide human will and allow it to elevate its reality to the better according to the highest of human values...”

However, and based on our experience with Arab mentality and using a famous Arab saying: “Read and you shall rejoice, try and you shall be sorrowful”, these words are certifiably romantic and seductive blather that will never make it to an implementation phase in reality. They will instead be forgotten with the passage of time or as soon as American pressures fade away. The reasons are many, first of which is the fact that Arab Human Rights have been for long decades in the tight grip of the regimes and rulers, and cannot be released except with the disappearance of those regimes and rulers. At least, by changing the manner in which they repress their peoples and smash their ambitions, dreams, and rights. Second, and according to the prevailing custom, the will of the Arab ruler derives from the will of God and not from the will of the people. That alone explains the permanence of the rulers and the 99.99% popular votes in sham elections and referendums that the rulers insist on holding from time to time to distract and mock people and trash their rights.

On reading the introduction of that Charter, that says that the Arab ministers and after lengthy discussions agreed to introduce amendments to their newly-hatched project “consistent with modern times and with the human values that assert the rights of citizens to freedom, justice and equality...”, you would think that the calcified Arab regimes had suddenly awakened out of their totalitarianism, sprouted angels’ wings on their backs, and decided on a whim to protect the freedom and provide justice and equality to their crushed people from the Ocean to the Gulf.

We do not believe that the West will take any of this too seriously, and we do not believe for one moment that the life of the ordinary Arab will translate from the hell of oppression to the paradise of freedom through this empty verbiage that is, in the final analysis, not even worth the ink it is written with.

(Part II of this statement will be published next week).

Lebanon , at your service,

Abu Arz,

March 13, 2004