



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

The US administration has recently stated that it wishes to see the Syrian forces leave Lebanon so that the country recovers its sovereignty, and that the upcoming presidential elections be held in a climate of democracy and freedom and without any foreign interference.

The Lebanese naturally were exhilarated by this completely new American position after they bitterly suffered for thirty years from neglect and complicity, if not outright collusion.

What the Lebanese really hope for is that words are translated into concrete deeds and a tangible reality on the ground and do not remain mere promises and wishes. The US administration should begin dealing with the Syrian occupation of Lebanon as it did with the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait or the Nazi occupation of France, because occupations never end with goodwill and wishful thinking, nor do they end with political and economic sanctions that have so far failed and proved to be of limited effectiveness in reality.

One must also consider that the Syrian occupation of Lebanon differs from other occupations because it has managed over the past thirty years, and through a handful of local traitors, to establish on our land a vast political and intelligence network that has enabled it to control every facet of political life in the country. Which means that extracting such an occupation that is entrenched in Lebanese society and in all the country's military, administrative, and political institutions, beginning with the President of the Republic and all the way to the government and Parliament and every last bureaucracy in it, will be incomplete if it does not remove with it all the roots and residues that it has spawned. Failure to do a thorough house-cleaning will keep Lebanese decision-making attached to Damascus until further notice, with all the negative consequences that this will have on the rehabilitation of Lebanon and the contributions that it could make to rehabilitate the entire Middle East.

Assuming that the presidential elections do indeed take place away from any Syrian pressures, the standing Parliament that is slated to conduct the elections will inevitably give birth to a pro-Syrian president since all its members are in Parliament by virtue of the Syrian machinery that draws up the electoral lists and forces the victory of its candidates by terror and bribery.

Therefore, and if the US administration truly wishes for the Lebanese people to elect a president from the core of their convictions and freewill, it must first and foremost completely eradicate the Syrian occupation, with its security apparatus and networks, then call on the Lebanese people to new parliamentary elections under the supervision of the UN or other neutral international observers, which will then yield an authentic Lebanese Parliament able to elect an authentic Lebanese president. As to the residual scum that are the Syrian agents in Lebanon, the people will take care of removing them and ending their treason. Sort of all that, the American promises will remain mere promises and cheap talk.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,

March 27, 2004