



The Commander

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

After much travail and several postponements, the Arab summit was finally held in Tunis only to uncover the pitiful state in which the Arab League is and to remove the fig leaf from the fallacy of Arab solidarity from the Atlantic to the Gulf.

Throughout history, Arabs have been known for their endless disputes that are as old as the desert itself. They have never agreed on anything, and if and when they ever did, they promptly went back to infighting and bickering the very next day. It is also well known that previous Arab summits always started with sessions of reconciliation between Arab leaders and ended with an elaborate and grandiloquent statement that pleased everyone. But this latest Tunis summit was the exception to the rule for it started and ended with a dispute between everyone and on everything. Some of the Arab countries did not even bother showing up, some showed up reluctantly or merely to avoid blame, others showed up only to leave within an hour of the start of the summit, and some left just before the concluding session. In the end, not even the otherwise rich Arab vocabulary was sufficient to allow the drafting of the one customary concluding statement. Instead, the Arabs issued four different concluding statements, and here they are:

The first statement was labeled "The Covenant, Entente, and Solidarity Document", but was not graced with the honorific signatures of the Arab leaders pending approval by Arab parliaments, as if the Arabs had democratic parliaments that are able to express their opinions freely and honestly, or that can utter a single word that opposes the will of the ruler, lest they be accused of blasphemy against God and country.

The second statement, named "The Tunis Declaration", is a hodge-podge of wishes and wordy embellishments stacked pell-mell to please this or that ruler and polish the disintegrating image of Arab regimes from the Atlantic to the Gulf, an image they earned because of sharp disagreements, opposing interests, and rapidly changing events, especially after the Iraq War.

The third statement was baptized "Development and Modernization Document", which is a grandiose title for an otherwise substantively empty verbiage and which will neither advance nor delay the march of repression and tyranny. In fact, the objective behind it is to give outside public opinion the illusion that Arab leaders are concerned with political reform, freedoms of opinion and speech, respect for human rights and the rights of women, etc. The objective as well is to reduce American and European pressures aiming at spreading democracy in the greater Middle East, keeping in mind that only those pressures have forced Arab leaders to express any interest in discussing these issues or putting them down on paper in this document. It remains that talking about reform will be just talk, because the Arab regimes will collapse the day reforms are initiated, and naturally these regimes have no interest in committing suicide simply to please the West.

The fourth document is the text of the concluding final statement, which is an endless repetition of all the positions contained in the archives of the Arab League. As such, it did not deviate from its standard format of scattering false promises over explosive problems and issues across the vast desert from the Atlantic to the Gulf, and putting a smokescreen in the eyes of the Arab peoples who no longer care – to begin with – for what their leaders declare at Arab summits or elsewhere.

But the climax of all farces was the positions taken by the Lebanese delegation, which one-upped everyone else with its radical positions vis-à-vis Arab "interests" and insisted on including in the final statement a clause expressing the need to liberate Iraq and return to it complete sovereignty when it itself – the Lebanese delegation – is up to its ears in occupation, collaboration and submissiveness. It also demanded that Arabs stand by Syria, denounce the American sanctions imposed on it, and reject any discussion of a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon!!! This position is akin to the cuckold husband who boasts of his wife's lover in front of people but shamelessly and brazenly asks them not to say anything that hurts his feelings! Truly, there is no shame left in Lebanon in this age of political prostitution!

Honorable Lebanese join their voices to those of some Arab leaders who called for shutting down this kiosk called the Arab League, if only to give people a break from the annual cacophony that the Arabs engage in at the beginning and the end of these summits.

Lebanon , at your service,

Abu Arz,

28 May 2004