



The Commander

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Every time a Syrian official makes a statement, we learn a new lesson in duplicity and evasiveness, such that over the years we have become experts in scrutinizing the mindset of the Syrian regime and uncovering its concealed motives couched in fickleness and deception. It is indeed those attributes that allowed the regime to control Lebanon all those years without exposing itself to blame or criticism from friendly – or so they pretended to be – countries.

The easiest way to read the thinking of the Syrian regime is to assume the exact opposite of what one reads or hears coming out of Damascus, since the regime's people will say the opposite of what they do, and will do the opposite of what they say. In this fashion, the Syrian regime tricked the world for three and a half decades and kept its hold on power unconcerned by anyone, always hiding its real terrifying identity behind as many different masks as it needed.

One such recent lie by the Syrian regime was last week's statement that "Damascus will support any Lebanese president, and it won't appoint him either. Whether or not the term of the sitting president is extended is a decision for the Lebanese themselves and not ours...". This lie was met with positive reactions in certain Lebanese circles known for their naiveté, and some even considered it a matter of fact and acted accordingly, adding to the crowd of candidates and presidential wannabes. We even hear the term "lebanonization of the upcoming presidential election" used in the media.

We certainly hope that only the naïve believed this lie while the rest of the Lebanese and the Lebanon-minded decision-makers in the capitals of the West ought to know better. As to those who remain fooled by the cunning Syrian regime's sweetened language, we call on them to consider the following:

1 – The acceptance by the Syrian regime of the "Lebanonization" of the presidential election is only in form and is destined for local and foreign consumption. The words are decent but the intent is evil. The whole thing smacks of a new deception aimed specifically at Washington and Paris to sedate them after the two Western capitals concurred on demanding the full respect of Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, and free decision-making.

2 – As long as Syrian troops and their Intelligence Services remain in Lebanon, the Syrian regime's interference in the presidential elections is inevitable and definite. The Syrian regime will do everything it can to prevent the election of a president who is inimical to Damascus, for fear of the negative implications such a president is likely to precipitate against the Syrian occupation. Ultimately, the fall from grace of Syria in Lebanon means the de facto collapse of the Syrian regime in Damascus.

3 – Ultimately, the actual voter in the election of a new president is Parliament, and everyone knows that the Syrians appointed the vast majority of its present members for that specific purpose. It therefore makes no sense for this dummy Parliament to dare disobey its masters' orders in Damascus, no matter how heavy the pressures are from the inside or the outside, from Washington or Paris.

4 – But let's assume for the sake of argument that Parliament, by some act of magic, disobeyed its Syrian masters and chose a president who opposes the Syrians or their occupation. The question then becomes: Will this president remain alive, or will he meet the same fate as his predecessors Bashir Gemayel and Rene Mouawad, and the many others who were eliminated for the simple reason that they dared oppose the Syrian will?

5 – Only last month the Syrians left their obvious mark on the municipal and mayoral elections, openly interfering in their every minute detail such that their outcome was custom-made to their interests as occupiers. Is it therefore reasonable to expect them to refrain from interfering in the presidential election, which is a matter of life and death for them???

We apologize to those who are naïve enough to continue taking seriously the words of the Syrians, and we reiterate one more time our assertion that the upcoming presidential election in Lebanon, like other upcoming critical milestones, will never be "lebanonized" before the last Syrian soldier and intelligence agent leave Lebanese soil. To say otherwise is utter nonsense.

Lebanon , at your service,

Abu Arz,

18 June 2004