



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Any observer of the American administration's recent handling of the Syrian file would come to the conclusion that an open political war was initiated by the administration against the Syrian regime last September 3, when it sponsored UN resolution 1559 and worked to pass it in its present confrontational version. Moreover, this war is likely to witness a sharp escalation through additional resolutions and other tough measures that Washington might successively adopt against Damascus in the near future, either alone or in solidarity with Europe and the international community.

And before Mr. Kofi Annan submits his report to the Security Council this October 3 on the Syrian response to the requirements of Resolution 1559 – with what other tougher resolutions may follow it – the US Congress unanimously adopted its own resolution on September 13 that strongly condemned "the flagrant violations of the human rights and the civil liberties of the Syrian and Lebanese people by the Syrian Arab Republic", and demanded the end of the illegal Syrian occupation of the Lebanese Republic and an end to Syria's development of weapons of mass destruction..."

Although this resolution is not binding on the US administration, its passage in Congress, according to informed sources, is a preamble to another binding resolution currently under preparation entitled "The Syria and Lebanon Liberation Act", which is expected to pass soon along the same lines as the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 that laid the ground for the invasion of Iraq. Not to mention the political, economic, and diplomatic sanctions called for in the Syria Accountability Act, but which have not yet been enacted by the US president, although he is expected to do so soon should Damascus fail to abide by the US demands.

Yet, in spite of this international climate of pressure on the Syrian regime, it continues apace with its same-old policies of evasiveness, deception and obstinacy. Ignoring the fact that its tricks have become exposed to everyone under the lens of international scrutiny, the Syrian regime is trying to sneak around the international demands. Its irrational determination at deception makes it claim that resolution 1559 was a victory for Syria and Lebanon, when in fact it is a giant slap to both it and its surrogate Lebanese regime and a sword hanging over their necks. The Syrian regime is lying when it says that US envoy William Burns came to Damascus to renew the dialogue between the regime and Washington, when the truth is that Mr. Burns came to inform the Syrians in a loud and clear voice that they have to execute the American demands before it is too late, and that they have to undertake substantive reforms and not cosmetic changes, with concrete acts and not slogans. The Syrian regime also lies when it tries to suggest to its followers in Lebanon that there is a new deal in the making between Damascus and Washington over Lebanon, and that the Lebanese file is linked to the Iraqi file or the Middle East file, when the fact is that resolution 1559 has uncoupled the Lebanese question from all other issues, eliminated the Syrian mandate over Lebanon, and placed the Lebanese cause in the custody of the international community.

What is striking in all of this is the string of mistakes committed by the Syrian regime – otherwise known for its cunning – since the beginning of the Iraq war, especially since the rulers in Damascus continue to refuse to acknowledge that international policy led by the US has effected a 180-degree turn after the events of September 11, 2001, and that the entire region of the Middle East after the Iraqi invasion has become the direct target of American interventionism. To persist in its policies of supporting terrorism, colonizing Lebanon, and fomenting the fires of strife in Iraq will lead the Syrian regime to its inevitable demise, for whoever sows the wind shall harvest the storm.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu-Arz

September 17, 2004