



**The Commander**

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué :

For the Lebanese people, the passing year has achieved one momentous achievement in their struggle, and that is the vanishing of the nightmare of the Syrian occupation that weighed down on them and their country for thirty years. More than having regained their sovereignty and the freedom of their decision-making, they have confirmed the true independence of their nation. Yet, there remain deep wounds left behind in the wake of the criminal assassinations and bombings, and also a concern for the future in light of the ongoing political crisis.

In an attempt to express these worries, the following questions are addressed to those in charge of the political situation, from whichever camp they hail, and the Lebanese people expect answers to these questions that would give them back confidence in their future:

- Has Lebanon been thrust again in the role of an arena for regional and international conflicts, after ridding itself of the tutelages and resting now in the hands of the international community that is closely watching and shepherding the country's march, always ready to help and having issued resolutions to that effect?

- Is the regime and the government cognizant of that fact that a genuine state cannot be built on appeasing one party over the other parties, or on surrendering any sliver of sovereignty over its land and its freewill to any party, be it domestic or foreign? So what is the problem with this government that cannot take matters into its own hands, instead of allowing itself to be distracted with deadend dialogues. Either it continues ruling and assumes its responsibilities, armed with the confidence of the parliamentary majority, or it should resign and allow the formation of another government with a new vision for salvation!

- Does the current escalation on the Israeli-Lebanese border serve the highest interests of Lebanon, particularly since the identity of those who provoked it remains unknown, as is the identity of those who committed all the crimes of 2005? Or does it serve the interests of those who want to abort the great victory achieved by the Lebanese people and turn back the clock? And how much longer will the decision of war and peace remain in the hands of a few, and not in the hands of the Lebanese state? How much longer will the soil of the nation be desecrated and its stability shaken, at a time when simple logic and absolute legitimacy require that there be no other weapons on Lebanese soil except those of the legitimate armed forces alone, with no other associates or partners?

- Who is responsible for the open and blatant return of sectarian discourse, which gives Lebanon the image of a bunch of dueling fiefdoms, each "fiefdom" made up of one color, each having its own independent decision-making... While the Lebanese people are quite the opposite and have shown the whole world that they were united on that March 14 th and have earned the respect of the international community, and merit life, liberty and independence?

What is more troubling to the Lebanese is that, should those questions remain unanswered, the current regime and government crisis will continue to the point where the international momentum in support of the Lebanese cause will be lost, and with it the opportunity given them to recover the attributes of their state. This opportunity was borne out of the meeting of two wills, an international one and an internal one, which is something that history rarely offers nations. And since nature abhors vacuum, the vacuum on the Lebanese scene may become filled by a *fait accompli* that will bring back the Syrian occupier from the rear door – even in terms of political influence – after it had left through the front door to be never missed.

So beware this fatal mistake that would make us, like the last rulers of Andalusia, cry like women over a reign we could not hold on to like men. Let the Lebanese people reject any return to the past, with one voice and no matter what the politicians say, and let them close their ranks and make the future of their country worthy of their sacrifices and the blood of their martyrs.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz  
December 30, 2005