



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Since the passage of UN Resolution 1559, the Lebanese have been watching with great satisfaction the positive position of France towards Lebanon and its insistence at every possible opportunity on the need to implement this resolution and return freedom and sovereignty to the Lebanese people.

We won't be telling a secret by saying that the Lebanese were stunned by this sudden and unexpected French awakening, especially that it comes thirty years too late... For since the time of President Giscard d'Estaing, through the term of the former president Mitterrand, and ending with the current president Jacques Chirac, France had relinquished its political and moral responsibilities vis-a-vis the Lebanese tragedy. So much so, in fact, that the majority of the Lebanese accused France of complicity with the Arabs in their base conspiracy against Lebanon and of sacrificing it on the altar of France's economic interests and its greed for oil.

Yes, unfortunately, we say it in all candour. France watched the Lebanese genocide for three continuous decades without ever uttering a word of condemnation. Never did we see in the French handling of the Lebanese tragedy any moral stirring or even the blinking of an eye, to the point where other Western nations followed France in the disgrace of complicity, indifference and burying their heads in the sand. Lebanon became an isolated prey abandoned to the Arabs who tore it apart in cold blood and without anyone watching and holding them responsible...!!

It is difficult for the Lebanese to forget the courtesy visit made by President Mitterrand to Damascus to hear President Hafez Assad while the Syrian Army was raining fire and massacring the Lebanese people, nor will they forget President Chirac's visit to Lebanon in which he declared from inside the Lebanese Parliament that the Syrian occupation must continue until a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Israel and the Arabs.

We will need some time before we can forget and forgive because the wounds are raw and deep, and our reproach to France is indeed as great as the distinctive and historic friendship that used to bind our two peoples, like the affection that the Lebanese used to have for their "loving mother" before the onset of the tragedy.

But today, with France having decided to correct its past mistakes - which in itself is a virtue - and pursue pressures on Syria to implement resolution 1559 in tandem with the United States of America, we share the Lebanese people's satisfaction with this fortunate reversal. This is evidence that France's heritage in democracy, the defence of oppressed people and the commitment to the principles of freedom, equality and brotherhood on which the French revolution rested, remains strong, even as nations occasionally go through periods of moral decline... Exactly as demonstrated by the generosity of spirit expressed by Western nations towards the peoples who suffered from the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, which is that humans are not merely beasts with the large devouring the small or fighting amongst each other over a financial deal or an oil well, as we thought for many years past.

France's position today has given the Lebanese people a glimmer of hope that they badly need, and has lit a candle in the darkness of the Lebanese tunnel. All that we hope for is for these positive stances to translate from the realm of verbal messages to that of actions in the field. Then, we will be able to say to France and to any other nation that stood by the truth in Lebanon: THANK YOU.

Lebanon, at your service  
Abu Arz  
January 14, 2005