



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

In conventional terms, political opposition is defined as a condition in the political culture in democratic regimes whose mission is to monitor the activities of the government, point to its errors, and hold it accountable in the eyes of the people when it fails to carry out its obligations or deviates from its path. The opposition usually consists of political figures and parties that are not within the government, and that serve as a force of dissuasion against the ruling regime to prevent the latter from falling into despotism, oppression and corruption. In contrast, the opposition in dictatorial regimes is either absent, or eliminated, or repressed, and it is often the case that its members meet with a dark fate of imprisonment, exile, or death.

Therefore, the opposition operates only in a country in which freedom and democracy flourish. But if this country falls to foreign occupation, then the opposition *de facto* transforms itself into a resistance that immediately seeks to organize and mobilize its capabilities to remove the occupation. Resistance is then a state of struggle led by a group of freemen whose sole objective is to resist the occupation and whose only slogan is to persist in the struggle – incessantly and without compromise – until achieving liberation. Its methods are many, from the military to the political, from which the resistance chooses the most appropriate according to the circumstances and capabilities of the country, and the nature of the occupation.

In Lebanon, conditions fall under the definition of resistance, not that of opposition, because the country is entirely under occupation. Consequently, it is not possible to engage those conditions from the standpoint of an opposition, but rather from one of resistance. The resistance that is available to the Lebanese today is political and not military because regional and international conditions have changed. The armed struggle that we waged against the Syrians for fifteen years has failed because of the numerous fatal mistakes that were committed by the leaders of the Lebanese resistance at many levels, chief among which is the mistake of internecine fratricidal warfare.

Since the regime in place in Lebanon is not Lebanese but is rather a product of the occupation and its local agents, it is not permissible – according to convention and logic – to give it the recognition it is given today. Instead, it must be identified for the agent that it is, categorize it as the occupation that it represents, and deal with it from a standpoint of resistance and not one of opposition.

Based on the preceding, and given the lamentable state of disunity within the opposition and its mediocre performance, we do not expect much from it, nor do the Lebanese people pay it much attention. In fact, the Lebanese people deep down give a lot more credence to the international position that is far ahead of the opposition in its determined, stern, and clear handling of the Syrian occupation, which goes to show that the international community cares more for Lebanon than the leaders of the country themselves.

A closer look at the opposition from the inside shows its precarious situation. It has become multiplied into several contradicting oppositions whose leadership is beset with divisions and disagreements over the vision, the objective and the political standing, as follows:

1 – Some demand the cessation of the interference by the Syrian security apparatus in Lebanese life without any mention of a Syrian withdrawal or of resolution 1559.

2 – Some insist on a Syrian withdrawal, but only to the Bekaa Valley in order to protect the "Syrian flank", and demand the establishment of the best "brotherly" relations with "the Sister country...".

3 – Some support resolution 1559 conditionally, while others support only a set of its articles and reject the other articles pertaining to the dismantling of the militias, demanding that the "so-called" resistance be embraced and protected.

4 – Some others are content with demanding the removal of the ruling regime in Beirut with the objective of replacing it with another regime that is, yet again, Syrian-made.

5 – Some have moved from the ranks of the loyalists to those of the opposition in order to strengthen their popularity at the expense of the growing popularity of the opposition. Here it is important to note that the credit for the growing opposition does not go to its leaders, but rather to two factors: First, the serious mistakes committed by the Syrian regime and its byproduct the Lebanese regime; second, the 180 degree reversal in the international positions to the benefit of Lebanon.

6 – Some others have called for a conference to which they invited the Syrian occupation and the clique of parties affiliated with it to look into the subject of the withdrawal in such a way to give the Syrian occupation a face-saving exit.

7 – And everyone is busy with the upcoming elections, the new electoral law and the size of the voting districts, and everyone is ready to wage the election battle under the sponsorship of the occupation or anyone else for that matter, and eager for a seat in Parliament or in the Cabinet.

As a result, the whole opposition thing is a mess, looking more like a tower of Babel or an Arabian bazaar, each one singing their own tune out of synch. The Lebanese people and everyone else are utterly confused at the spectacle of an opposition in which no one knows who is with whom and who is against whom. We fear that Western capitals will also become so confused that they will withdraw their support to Lebanon on the ground that they cannot be more royalist than the king.

Every Lebanese knows in the depth of his or her mind that the destruction that has befallen Lebanon over the past 50 years is mainly due to this ilk of political leadership, and with it most of the religious leadership. The Lebanese also know that salvation will not come from that leadership, but from the following three things: Divine intervention that has protected Lebanon since its inception, the *force vitale* of the Lebanese entity that is refractory to elimination, and the enormous energies of the great people of Lebanon that brim with life and reject death.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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