



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

In the inauguration speech for his second term, President George Bush enunciated a number of principles and values that are rarely heard from other leaders and presidents of the free world. The quintessence of the speech was that it revolved around the one great value of freedom, whose greatness lies in its being the third of the fundamental attributes of God, after love and knowledge, according to the ideological trinity central to the beliefs of the Guardians of the Cedars. Freedom precedes democracy since the latter emanates from freedom and is one of its byproducts, and not the other way around. There can be no democracy without freedom.

The American President repeated the word freedom dozens of times and promised to spread it everywhere, so that "...this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world...", linking the war on terrorism with the spread of freedom in the world, on the ground that repressed people, and not free people, produce terrorism.

He made a commitment to support persecuted people by saying, "All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know the United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors..." and he warned tyrannical regimes by saying, "...it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world..."

In other passages of his speech, President Bush demonstrated more compassion towards persecuted people than their own leaders when he said, "...success in bilateral relations between America and the other regimes will depend on how these regimes treat their people...", adding in a direct address to those rulers, "...to know to serve your people, you must learn to trust them, and the success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people." He then went on speaking about human dignity saying, "America's belief in human dignity will guide our policies. Yet rights must be more than the grudging concessions of dictators..."

President Bush linked, like no other American president ever has, the future of freedom in America with the spread and development of freedom in the world, saying, "We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world." And the best yet of what he said in his speech was the implicit warning to the rogue regimes of their impending fall and the strong rebuke directed at them with the words of Abraham Lincoln: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it..."

We carefully read each paragraph of this historic speech and were mesmerized by each word in it. It ignited in us the hope for the day when we see the "fire of freedom warming those who feel it, and burn those who fight its progress", and the day we see the sunshine of freedom rising all over the globe, particularly in this most oppressed and dark region of the world.

Clearly, this speech which defines a great and unprecedented ambition in the history of the United States will not be achieved tomorrow or in a couple of days. But one thing is certain; it has achieved two things: First, it outlines a future US policy that is founded on high principles and ethical bases, and it commits present and future administrations to them. Second, it gives repressed peoples, and the Lebanese people are first on the list, a dose of hope for liberating themselves from their executioners and their rusty chains.

Many, from both East and West, have criticized this speech, and some saw it as empty rhetoric or for local political consumption. Some others dismissed it mockingly. But we have a different opinion:

1- We believe that this is extremely serious talk which will be implemented sooner or later because, first, it is coming from the president of the most powerful country in the world, and talk is only measured by the power that stands behind it. The powerful, unlike the weak, do not need to lie and cajole, particularly when President Bush has overcome the hurdle of the presidential elections; second, these are words that were spoken in front of millions of people who are now witnesses to them; third, because President Bush has so far proven that he means what he says and he keeps his word, as his positions from September 11 to date have not changed their course and his war on terrorism and terrorists continues by various means including the military, security-wise, politically, diplomatically, and economic sanctions.

2. We understand the criticisms coming from tyrannical regimes and their fear of freedom and those who advocate for it. But what we do not understand is the continued and excessive criticisms leveled by Western nations against the US in general and President Bush in particular, and which seem to be grounded in egotism and jealousy and nothing else. It is truly disconcerting that these countries are so oblivious of the fact that the war on terrorism is everyone's war and

for the benefit of all. Each one of those countries is a target that will be hit by terrorism sooner or later if it is not eradicated immediately.

This speech, a historic document in its own right, has placed President Bush in the rank of the great presidents in history. The values that are enunciated in it have also elevated the United States to the level of its great responsibilities towards the world and consecrated it, rightfully and by merit, as the the leader of the free world...

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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