



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

In spite of the wide differences between us and Hezbollah in the positions and the ideology, we find that the joint memorandum of understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic movement contains a number of positive points that constitute an important turning point in Lebanese political life and which lay the foundation for the emergence of a new State on modern and solid bases, assuming they are correctly implemented and the circle of signatories is broadened to include the remainder of the political forces and parties that are active in Lebanon.

The most prominent of these positive points are the following: First, it is a written document that has been announced before public opinion, which makes the signatories to it committed to it. This represents a far-reaching precedent in the history of political practices in Lebanon, something we are not accustomed to. Second, because it is written with a great deal of sobriety, sincerity and seriousness. Third, because it left the door open for everyone to subscribe to it. Fourth, it addressed the bulk of the problems surrounding the Lebanese crisis and put the finger on the Lebanese people's wounds in those delicate issues such as dealing with corruption at its roots, prosecuting the corrupt, recovering pilfered public funds, reforming the administration on the basis of competence, merit and the right man at the right place, adopting a new electoral law that guarantees true popular representation and that allows emigrants to exercise their right to vote, limiting the influence of political money and sectarian fanaticisms, uncovering the fate of the missing in Syrian jails and mass graves, reforming the security services, respecting public freedoms of opinion and expression, addressing the problem of Palestinian weapons, spreading the authority of the State over all Lebanese territory, in addition to delineating the borders between Lebanon and Syria and establishing diplomatic relations between them...

Perhaps what distinguishes this memorandum is the return of Hezbollah to the fold of "Lebaneseness" after its drifting towards the Syrian-Iranian axis and its complete subscription to its policies. This paves the way for breaking Hezbollah's isolation and fusing it into Lebanese society after it has been a stranger to it for most of the time.

As to the provision pertaining to the weapons of Hezbollah, it is still ambiguous and subject to interpretation, which suggests an intention to delay the dismantling and handing of those weapons over to the Lebanese army in compliance with resolution 1559 and in meeting the wishes of the vast majority of the Lebanese people, and this is why we have reservations vis-à-vis this provision.

We also have reservations on the call issued to the Lebanese residing forcibly in Israel to return to the homeland on condition of a compulsory appearance before the justice system, even if nominally. We insist on their dignified return and their compensation for the damages they suffered materially and morally, since they fought in defense of Lebanon and not against it as is falsely rumoured. Which is why they deserve reward, not prosecution.

Finally, it is our opinion that the government should respond positively to this memorandum-document if it wants to extricate itself out of the stagnation surrounding it. It must widen the circle of dialogue to include all other political creeds and begin implementing the positive elements in the memorandum because the ultimate test is in the implementation.

Lebanon , at your service

Abu Arz  
February 10, 2006