



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

To the extent that the Lebanese people pin their hopes on the dialogue conference and wish it success, they are equally concerned about it. They approach it with great caution and apprehension because of the failures they were dealt for more than 60 years as a result of the politics of mutual lying, outsmarting and deception among those in the political establishment who ruled the country or controlled it since Independence.

For this reason, the consensus of the Lebanese on supporting the conference is contingent on its delivering clear, decisive and courageous decisions that pinpoint the root of the crisis and prescribe effective and permanent solutions for it. Which means that those decisions should stay absolutely clear of half-measure compromises, half-baked solutions and ambiguous language that were used in the past to distract and sedate people.

Therefore, what is required of the participants at the roundtable is to adopt a dialogue process that is different from the obsolete traditional dialogue process, one that is based on total candor , absolute honesty and straight talk, even if this leads to the failure of the conference, God forbids, because admitting failure remains far better than covering it up, and agreeing to a fake common denominator is more dangerous than not agreeing at all.

Even though this dialogue comes at least thirty years too late, it represents the last chance for the Lebanese to bring their chronic crisis to an end, after they have exhausted all other avenues. It also represents a glimmer of hope because it is the first time that the rival parties gather around a table to resolve their differences without outside sponsorship, particularly since all previous Arab mediations utterly failed and led to destructive wars: The 1969 Cairo Accord that ignited the Palestinian war on Lebanon; the 1976 Riyadh Accord that ignited the Syrian war on Lebanon; and the Taef Agreement that ignited sectarian and religious hostilities rather than putting them down. Therefore, this Made-in-Lebanon conference is a rare opportunity before the Lebanese and a final test for them to prove to the world that they can manage their affairs by themselves, decide their future on their own, and lead their country to safe harbor .

The dialogue participants should therefore be aware that they are before historic responsibilities and that the people are watching them to judge for or against them, which will depend on the outcome, and not the formalities, of the conference. The people have had it with formalities and want out of the hell they are trapped in. They no longer care for appearances and superficialities. They do not care if the shape of the table is round or rectangular, or if the participants did or did not embrace each other, or if this leader shook the hand of that leader, or if they determined the identity of the Shebaa Farms... What matters to people is to reach definitive and radical solutions that eliminate the anxiety that grips them around the clock and the permanent state of fear about the future, about the nation's fate, about the terrifying and humiliating living conditions... In short, what the Lebanese fear is for the conference to yield a settlement that satisfies the participants at the expense of the people and the nation.

The participants should also be aware that establishing a purely Lebanese dialogue must be a prologue to purely Lebanese solutions, meaning that they should extricate this country from the vicious circle of foreign polarizations and regional conflicts so that it does not remain endlessly at the mercy of foreign interests.

Lebanon , at your service

Abu Arz

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