



The Guardians of the Cedars Party issued the following communiqué:

Many lessons need to be learned from the futile July War if we are serious about saving and rebuilding Lebanon on sound foundations that include life, stability and permanence.

The first lesson is that everyone has to subscribe to the one-state, one-army project, and to abandon the duality of primacy and decision by eliminating all the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving and completing that project, such obstacles being the mini-states and the parallel armies. The most basic condition for the rise of a strong and capable state is the elimination of these mini-states, while the converse can never be true.

The decision of war and peace is the exclusive prerogative of the state and no other, since that decision has to do with the fate of the country and its supreme interest. As such, no individual or group has the right to monopolize that critical decision-making, no matter what the pretexts or motives may be.

The second lesson we ought to learn, since most of Lebanon's problems arise out of its entanglement – voluntary or forced – into the Arab-Israeli, Arab-Arab, or Arab-Iranian conflicts, is that Lebanon has to be shielded away from those destructive conflicts by recovering the Lebanese identity and declaring Lebanon's absolute neutrality according to the Swiss model.

The third lesson, now that all Arab initiatives have failed to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis, is has become incumbent upon the state to urgently internationalize this crisis by expanding the UNIFIL forces operating in the south, increasing their numbers, and deploying them in all Lebanese regions, especially on the Syrian-Lebanese borders, in order to back the Lebanese army in spreading its authority over every corner of Lebanon.

The fourth lesson is in speeding the secularization plan of the state's political and administrative institutions, in order to combat the sectarian and religious tensions that were never part of Lebanon's authentic traditions. Religious fanaticism undermines the foundations of the state, while national fanaticism strengthens them.

The fifth lesson, now that the Palestinian refugees have become a security and demographic burden that is threatening Lebanon's very existence and future, is that it has become the state's duty to leverage all its authority and capabilities

to prevent their permanent settlement in Lebanon and accelerate their return to their country or other countries that have the means to re-settle and integrate them.

But the most important lesson is for the Lebanese to rise up to their responsibilities in choosing their leaders on the basis of specific national criteria, particularly at this dangerous juncture that requires extraordinary statesmen endowed with a heightened sense of responsibility for these extraordinary times. Otherwise, to maintain the same political establishment with its failures and lack of imagination and vision and courage may lead to Lebanon's perdition, and then regrets won't do any good.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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