



The Guardians of the Cedars Party issued the following weekly communiqué:

The series of reconciliations taking place between opposing Lebanese parties has no doubt reassured the Lebanese people and reduced their level of anxiety. But the Lebanese fear that these reconciliations are simply truces that will abruptly end at the first stumble, and many are the expected stumbles on the way to national dialogue slated to begin on the 5th of next month. Indeed, several reconciliations took place in the past between the same parties, all ending in failure and in bloody struggles whose wounds have not yet healed.

Any meeting between opposing parties is good and necessary in order to calm the situation and defuse the tensions between them, but it is not sufficient to build a genuine reconciliation that is lasting and permanent unless the following set of conditions obtain:

First, there has to be a genuine desire among the dueling parties for reconciliation, a desire that stems from a deep conviction of the need to turn the page of conflict and open a new page of friendly relations based on mutual respect and the acceptance of the other, regardless of the disparity in the positions and the divergence in opinions.

Second, the reconciliation should be governed by national considerations and the higher Lebanese interest, instead of self-interest and narrow considerations. Dialogue must remain shielded from outside influence; otherwise there would be no value to any reconciliation if those engaged in it have not freed themselves from their foreign ties.

Third, an environment of openness and absolute candor must prevail in such a dialogue, without all the superficial ceremony, flattery and photo ops.

More important than all the preceding is that the opponents be convinced of the need to support the State and its legitimate institutions, which has to be done by taking the Lebanese people out of their sectarian and religious ghettos and into a single national arena where true building can begin.

Also, the reconciliations must include everyone, including the members of the South Lebanon Army who constitute a principal element of a comprehensive national reconciliation. Without them, the reconciliations would be lacking or truncated, particularly since Lebanese President Michel Suleiman pledged in his swearing-in speech to bring them back into the fold of the nation ...“where there is room for everyone.”

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

October 31, 2008