



The Guardians of the Cedars -The Movement of Lebanese Nationalism issued the following communiqué:

We said it and reiterate it: the politicians of Lebanon disagree on everything except on the destruction of the country!! Now we have the oil crisis emerging onto the political scene and mutating from its economic objectives into a rich material for becoming mired in endless wrangling and arguments, and disputes about the revenues of this much promised wealth and how to invest it and spend it, while that oil remains trapped at the bottom of the ocean, if in fact its existence has been verified yet and if its quantities are sufficient to cover the exorbitant cost of extracting it.

If indeed Lebanon's political class is so concerned for Lebanon's resources as they claim to be, why are they then negligent of the enormous resources already present in the country such as the water resources, most of which is wasted into the ocean or to neighboring countries, and whose prices by far exceed the price of oil? Or the tourism resource and the historic and archeological treasures that are one of a kind in the world like Baalbeck which by far outshines the Parthenon in Athens and the Pantheon in Rome in its beauty and majesty. Not to mention the Lebanese forts and castles that dot the Lebanese landscape in Byblos, Sidon, Tyre and others, the Holy Valley of Qannoubine whose historic features are in jeopardy, the Jeita Grotto which deserves to be one of the seven wonders of the world!! And then, there is the wealth of the Lebanese brains scattered around the world and over which the civilized nations compete to attract them and benefit from their great and diverse potentials in all fields of culture, industry, commerce, finance and particularly in scientific research and modern inventions, while the Lebanese state is trying to outsmart itself in how best to drive them away and push them into emigrating!! And what about Lebanon's distinct climate and nature whose stunning beauty has been described by historians and the holy texts as God's paradise on earth.

In principle, those natural resources and wealth ought to make Lebanon among the richest countries of the world which is capable of attracting millions of foreign tourists, exactly like Italy and Greece and others. But these resources need to be exploited in a scientific and correct manner, and require the will and the good intentions to do so. Should this happen, Lebanon will be able to cover its financial deficit with its own means and capabilities and without begging and borrowing. It should be able to raise the standard of living for its people to levels that match those of advanced countries, without the need for oil exploration and its complicated problems.

Lebanon can walk into the tourism sector through a wide front door, and I don't mean here just the Arab summer visitors or the Lebanese expatriates. But what is the incentive that would encourage foreign tourists to come pouring into Lebanon? Is it the hallmark of security zones and their independent enclaves? Is it the hallmark of the armed outlaw mini-states that are disseminated across the country? Or is it the spectacle of the Lebanese politicians' appearances and their excessive ugliness???

And so we return to our starting point and say that Lebanon's biggest problem remains the shallowness and abject quality of the country's political class. This is the first and last obstacle that stands in the way of the country's revival and prosperity.

Lebanon, at your service
Abu Arz
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