



The Guardians of the Cedars Party - The Movement for Lebanese Nationalism issued the following message:

As we watch the events unfold today in Syria, we recall the era of the Syrian occupation of our own country between 1976 and 2005, which is by far the darkest and bloodiest of our contemporary history. The Syrian repression machine that has been decimating its own people for nearly three months now, had persisted in decimating the Lebanese people for 30 years, in a systematic destruction of the country in all its institutions, private and public, its infrastructure as well as its superstructure, in broad daylight, within sight and hearing of the international community. Yet, not one eye blinked for 30 years.

Let history be a witness, and lest we forget, we ought to remember that this diabolical military machine, well-heeled in the culture of blood, killing, shelling, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, and mass graves, was gifted to us by our Arab "brothers" under the label of the Arab Deterrence Force in order to consolidate "security and stability" in Lebanon, with the approval of the decision-making capitals of the world that feared for their oil interests and petro-dollars.

But history is history. Today, based on our long experience with this regime, we believe that the Syrian people have just embarked on a long painful journey, given the criminal nature and diabolical methods that the regime uses, not only in the security and military realms, but also at the political and media levels. The regime turns truths on their heads, exploiting a naïve West at times and its close friendships with the residual countries of the former Soviet Union at other times.

Western countries rushed to support the Egyptian people against their regime, and dispatched their fleets to Libya to protect the civilians there. Yet, they hesitate today vis-à-vis the Syrian regime, merely sending timid criticisms, silly appeals, and cosmetic sanctions that are more tantamount to paying lip service than taking a serious and stern position that alleviates the suffering of the Syrian people and gives them hope to free themselves from the nightmare that has weighed them down for more than four decades.

Case in point: when Western countries demand that the Syrian regime undertake democratic reforms as a way out of the crisis, they ignore – by deliberate or unintended stupidity – that dictatorial regimes cannot coexist with, nor can they survive, the fresh air of democracy. The most they can offer

is a few cosmetic and superficial actions that do not address the substance of the issue. The West seems to forget that Arab dictatorships would not have survived for decades without the repression machines that always were their backbone and their *raison d'être*.

And when they appeal – I repeat: appeal – to the regime not to use excessive force against its people, these Western countries are in fact authorizing the regime to use moderate force. And when this appeal is made by the UN Secretary General, it acquires an international legitimacy. The pinnacle of gullibility by some decision-makers is to consider this regime as essential for the stability of the region, when all the facts show that, throughout the past decades, the Syrian regime was the greatest contributor to undermining, destabilizing, and threatening the security of the entire region, beginning with Lebanon, to Iraq and Jordan, and all the way to Gaza and the West Bank.

We ought, perhaps, to emphasize to the West that the popular revolutions around us are inexorably headed to democracy, no matter how long this might take. The ideal approach to take for the future of this most troubled region of the world is to assist the repressed peoples in their drive for emancipation and to replace their dictatorial regimes with more democratic ones, regardless of their brand or color or political affiliation.

We certainly hope that the suffering of the Syrian people not be as long as ours was, and the first condition for this is for the Syrian people to count on themselves first and foremost, like we did before and during our Cedars Revolution, in accordance with the proverb, "The best helping hand is at the end of your own arm". And, from our own bitter experience with the West, we advise the Syrian people not to count too much on the friendship of the West because, as this other proverb says, "An ignorant friend is more harmful than a reasonable enemy."

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

May 19, 2011