



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

We strongly endorse the position of Bkirki demanding an amendment of the Taef Agreement. We believe this is a step forward in the 1,000-mile journey of reforming the decaying political system in Lebanon. We also remind everyone that our party was the first to denounce that Agreement and its dangers, and repeatedly warned that its implementation will have disastrous consequences on the country.

The reasons that led us to challenge the legitimacy of the Taef Agreement from the first day it was ratified are numerous, but we summarize them in six points that we put at the disposal of Patriarch Rai in the hope that they might buttress his arguments as he seeks to amend the Agreement.

1- The Taef Agreement was drawn up and ratified outside of Lebanon. No country around the world that respects itself should accept to adopt a constitution that was made abroad and partly by non-Lebanese parties, regardless of the political and security circumstances in which the country might be.

2- The Parliament that approved the Taef Agreement at the time had long ago lost its legitimacy and its authority, as it had been extant for more than 20 years and having renewed its own term several times. It no longer represented the Lebanese people, particularly the younger generation.

3- The Taef Agreement was delivered by a Saudi-Syrian midwife, back when the Saudi and Syrian regimes were conspiring together against the Lebanese people. In fact, the Syrian regime had personally overseen the drafting of the new Lebanese constitution in the person of Abdel-Halim Khaddam who sat at all the meetings and discussions by Lebanese parliamentarians. He had a say in every word and every article, thus earning the title of the "Godfather of the Taef Agreement. " It is ludicrous to believe that any occupation would agree to advance the interest of the occupied country over its own interest, particularly this kind of expansionist and predatory occupation that the Syrian occupation of Lebanon was.

4- The Taef Agreement was grounded in false premises that proclaimed the fallacy that the war against Lebanon was a "civil war" and that the causes of the war are to be found in the constitution, thus reaching erroneous

conclusions. The facts are otherwise: The war was never a civil war at its core, for otherwise how would one explain the thousands of Syrians and Palestinians that died on our soil? Similarly, the problem was never in the constitution, as ours was one of the best constitutions in the world before it was maimed and distorted. The problem was always in the custodians of the constitution who failed to properly implement it .

5- The Taef Agreement contributed to the fragmentation of the State's authority at its highest offices. It caused the paralysis of the constitutional institutions which we are witnessing today. It created a conflict over prerogatives and responsibilities between the three heads of State known as the Troika Conflict, which quickly degenerated into acute divisions within the Lebanese people along sectarian and religious lines that Lebanon last experienced back in the bloody events of 1840-1860 under the Ottoman occupation.

6- The Taef Agreement linked the fate of Lebanon with the fate of Syria when it stated that they are "brotherly" countries bound by a "unity of history and geography:", when the reality is radically otherwise. Neither the geography of the two countries is one, nor is their history. The history of the two countries is nothing less than a sequence of bloody wars and conflicts that continue to this day. The danger of this text is that it has linked Lebanon's foreign policy to Syria's policies and their regional ramifications, thus violating the international standards where a country's foreign policy is decided exclusively on the basis of the country's highest interest, and exhibits the flexibility needed to adapt to changing circumstances.

We take issue every time the following cliché, which is void of any credibility, is repeated by the political establishment and the press: "The Lebanese unanimously supported the Taef Agreement which ended 15 years of civil war." Parliament members did not even meet to decide on the Taef Agreement; only a defunct unrepresentative expired Parliament was resurrected to support and ratify the Agreement. Nor did the Agreement end 15 years of "civil" war, because it was not a civil war in the first place, and second, the war ended with the fall of the Eastern Sectors which had resisted the Syrian occupation, thus allowing the latter to tighten its grip on all of Lebanon, appoint two presidents of the Republic and extend their terms, appoint parliament members, governments, and prime ministers, and steer Lebanon's foreign and domestic policies.

As the country continues to struggle through the endless impasse, the honorable Lebanese look up to Bkirki's standing as the last national authority that inspires trust and hope, after they have lost their trust in the entire political leadership..

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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