
Documentation

Open letter to Gen. Michel Aoun

The open letter translated below, from Laurent Schleret, a Lebanese in exile for 17 years, appeared in the Sept. 27 issue of the French weekly Nouvelle Solidarité.

My general. You who wish to save Lebanon. You have been vanquished, humiliated, sequestered. But behind you, finally joined together, stood the entirety of a people. The people of Lebanon, through your fiery words, cried out all that remained of its faith in God and man. My general, tell me: Who has committed such a crime! Or rather, you should tell your own story through your exiled pen, which nonetheless whispers of the land of the cedars.

The new prime minister, in this case you, my general, decided not without courage to close the illegal ports—the transit points, among other merchandise, for hashish headed for Europe. The Syrian regime, main beneficiary of this traffic, in retaliation inflicted an absolute blockade against the unoccupied enclave. With your ingrained faith as a true resistance fighter, you declared war against the enemy: a war of liberation. From then on, the mighty Syrian armamentarium began to move, sowing death and destruction in your free enclave. But to the dismay of the Syrian Assad, not a square meter was taken!

Assad, a dangerously clever being, stuck to it. He brought together the Lebanese parliamentarians in his base at Qlailaat. Fifty-eight of them had survived the combination of assaults and time—their elections having gone back 20 years—and the death squads of Damascus. Some 65% of our compatriots have never voted, but these 58 old men, they voted for the “Taif Accord.” Their two essential objectives consisted in legitimizing the Syrian Army’s presence, and giving in to the reality of the occupier, while they politically eliminated the resistant prime minister and in the same spirit “named” 40 new deputies!

Given this momentum, these representatives of the people elected a President, René Moawad. He was assassinated 17 days later. The motive for this unspeakable act was, no doubt, this unfortunate man’s refusal to order an assault against you, my general.

Nature abhors a vacuum; Syria, too. Moreover, this assassination had rekindled the enthusiasm of those not yet convinced. Within 25 minutes, Elias Hrawi was unanimously elected! This individual, defined as a “drug trafficker” by a report from Quai d’Orsay [the French Foreign Ministry], was tailor-made for Assad: a puppet!

However, the advanced ages of the delegation could not justify everything. Let’s excuse from the outset the Muslim deputies who had Damascus’s rifle pointed at their heads. And the Christians who lived in the free zone? This extract from the accounts of the Lebanese National Assembly proves quite revealing: “Medical assistance for Deputies Michel Sassine and George Saade: 750 million Lebanese pounds”; that would be 7.5 million francs, to liven up a flagging zealotness.

This done, the western democracies, the United States at their head, found the grand histories of little Lebanon tiresome. Exceptionally, an Arab country was able to put a respectable facade on its man-handling of its neighbor. The opposition only had to keep quiet!

But unhappily for the hegemonist aims of our enemies, the “Taif Accord” caused a number of Lebanese of otherwise timorous sympathies for our cause to take more decisive action. One stopped counting, over the demarcation lines, the shows of fraternization between Muslims, even Druzes, and Christians. Certain of these manifestations ended (shame to the hand raised in murder!) drowned in the blood of their courageous participants. The 600,000 hearts in the free enclave sang out their support for your struggle while the demonstrations brought together up to 300,000 patriots.

To those for whom such a popular mass caused disorientation, you had to remind them that until the autumn of 1988, our divided people’s sole hope had lain in part in the Forces Libanaises, “Christians” who since 1983 had, sad to say, slid into the drug traffic and the surrounding decay, and in part, in the “Muslim” fanatics who, thanks to Saudi money, offered up to \$100 per month to any woman who agreed to wear the *chador*. Suddenly, you appeared before the eyes of this people who asked for nothing more than unity. And Lebanon lived in you, burst forth under your gaze. No, not Christian Lebanon. *Lebanon*. Multiconfessional, free, democratic.

In tandem, and for reasons not really concerning us, Washington was moving toward a rapprochement with Damascus. Through a mysterious Damascus enchantment, the White House suddenly found itself wearied by the “little rebel”—and more, you had had the firmness to condemn the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. It was then that the Forces Libanaises, frustrated by the rejection of a population that had borne its costs, reappeared: “Arm yourselves! And we will rid you of this inconvenient fellow.” The terrible shock ended in a no-win game. My general, with much justice you refute the aberrant conception that there is an inter-Christian war. In effect, Christians and Muslims lined up on both sides of the front, on one side of the friends of Lebanon, and the other, the friends of Taif.

The “Gulf war” was decisively the beginning of a rapid countdown, which would mark the end of a free Lebanon. The holy union around oil grew too dangerously close to Washington, and Jerusalem, and Damascus: On Oct. 12, 1990, Israel gave its “assurances” to the resisters. The crowd that offered its body as a rampart at the Presidential Palace,

U.N. outlaws Iraqi nuclear power, science

The United Nations Security Council has given Iraq a series of ultimatums, ordering it to dismantle or destroy so-called dual use technology—industrial technologies that could conceivably have military applications. The rulings constitute a virtual ban on scientific research, in implementation of the policy known as “technological apartheid.” They also rip up whatever vestige of national sovereignty might have remained to Iraq.

According to U.N. Resolution 707, enacted in August, Iraq will be barred from having any nuclear facilities, except those relating to the use of isotopes for medical treatment, or for agriculture.

The director general of the U.N.’s International Atomic Energy Agency on Sept. 20 submitted a “revised plan” to the Security Council on how to ensure that Iraq never develops a nuclear bomb. The IAEA has demanded the right “to carry out inspections, at any time and without hinderance of any site” in Iraq; to “stop and inspect vehicles” within Iraq upon demand; to have “unrestricted freedom of entry into and exit from Iraq” without need of visas or the like; to have the right to “remove from Iraq”

any material it desires; to “inspect imports or exports” of any material; and to “communicate from any place within Iraq without hinderance,” among other broad powers. It is expected that the IAEA demands will be incorporated in a new Security Council resolution before the end of October.

Noting that the resolutions also require that all states be barred from aiding Iraq’s nuclear program, the IAEA has put together a list of what must be barred outright from Iraq, or only sold to Iraq with prior IAEA approval. This list includes: fissionable materials, centrifugal balancing machines, high-strength steel, titanium, mass spectrometers, lasers with 40W average output power, superconducting magnets, nuclear reactor vessels, berillium, high-purity calcium, lithium, tungsten, robots applicable to explosive environments, high-temperature furnaces, computers with a composite theoretical performance of 12.5 million operations per second.

The IAEA also demands that Iraq be banned from: “import, construction or use of research and power reactors of any type”; “nuclear fusion experimental devices based on magnetic or inertial confinement”; “import, construction, and use of neutron sources, electron accelerators, particle accelerators, heavy ion accelerators”; “research on radiation physics and chemistry, and on the physical and chemical properties of isotopes.”

trustingly left its environs. On Oct. 13, the assault began. The “red lines” which the Israeli Shamir had always set for Assad—various interdictions which he used as an excuse to send planes over Lebanese territory—evaporated.

The Syrian steamroller, with support from the fighter-bombers, swept our front lines. They then indicated to René Ala, the French ambassador to Lebanon, that you could obtain a cease-fire under his auspices. Once at his side, a flanking maneuver by the Syrian troops definitively cut you off from your army, as Ala himself explained in a communique to Agence France Presse. That was too much! And in this rout, all the most beautiful dreams we had, vanished. The suffering of the Lebanese, murdered in the deepest part of their being, is humanly inconceivable.

At Dahr-el-Wahch, where our valiant fighters had chosen to resist despite the defeat that was announced, 80 were executed; the Syrian machine gun carved a crucifix on their chest. Dany Chamoun, the last political figure to cry out the truth, was assassinated, as were his wife and their two young children. The torpor of this defeat and this limitless cruelty took an infinitely long time to abate. Some finally had the strength to move their lips: “The general is lost, but he has reconciled us,” said a Sister of the Order of St. Claire from Yarze. And to quote you a last time, my general: “We have

waged and won the first battle against our own demons.”

But rage fills me, and I cry out: Why, did the bishops, the grand muftis, the democracies, support Hafez el-Assad, when the mere priests or sheikhs, and the people as a whole supported the resistance? How could the democracies agree to the plans of a man who ordered the massacre of 25,000 of his rebellious compatriots at Hama in 1982, and whose services rival those in Teheran when it comes to international terrorism? Terrorism—perhaps that’s the answer; and perhaps several power games which escape us, and which give the Kuwaitis the right to be free and the Lebanese the right to be silent.

What escapes George Bush is that, within a century and a half, there will not be found a drop of oil on this planet; but the Muslims, on the other hand, will be twice as numerous.

Can it be, can free men eternally do battle with these oceans of men, the more so when they are our brothers before God? My general, this Lebanon of which we all dream, is this not the paradise promised to all believers? No! Let us not relegate brotherhood to that. We must, today, hand in hand, organize a government in exile which one day will rebuild our Lebanon, a mirror of humanity which, in turn, will be able to find, against the destructiveness of hate, the sweetness of a multiconfessional civilization of Love.