

How can we establish a better Lebanon?

Perspective of a Lebanese immigrant

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Who should be the next Lebanese President continues to be a matter of wide disagreement among the Lebanese. Even among Lebanese immigrants, there is no general consensus on who can best serve and lead their country. Young Lebanese are especially frustrated by the stalemate in Lebanon and cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel, despite some recent good events that raised their hope that a better Lebanon is emerging, especially after withdrawal of foreign troops from their homeland and the return of their leaders from exile or prison back to the political scene. However, there does not seem to be any Lebanese personality at this time that can capture the Lebanese imagination or rally all Lebanese public support. If we analyze the political events within the last 30 years since the start of the Lebanese war, we note that the Lebanese people often rallied around strong leaders or parties that were against foreign occupation. Aoun gained a lot of support when he opposed Syrian occupation and Hizbollah gained the support of all Lebanese including Christians when it resisted and fought fiercely to force the Israeli to leave South Lebanon.

Sadly, we all realize that the war in Lebanon has not ended yet and will continue to be an unending saga as long as the relatively two giant (military and geographically) countries that surround Lebanon are still heavily involved in the Lebanese political scene and they will never stop meddling in the Lebanese internal affairs. The only option remaining for a young Lebanese who is fed up with this continuous political and military invasion by the 2 surrounding countries is to look at the horizon over the Mediterranean Sea and plan to immigrate toward a land that promises more peace, more freedom and equal opportunities.

Lebanon will always remain weak until a strong leader comes to power, a leader who is capable of purging the government from corruption and from agents that still protect foreign interests. Unfortunately, our Lebanese leaders are still suffering "Post-Occupation Stress Disorder". They fear assassination, jail, or exile and rightly so if they dare to speak the truth or if they dare to criticize the corrupted Syrian regime in Lebanon.

Like Israel in Palestine, the Syrian intelligence in Lebanon is monitoring every corner and working continuously to identify new targets and to assassinate any person, whether religious or politician, who opposes Syria's interests. The Syrian regime has panicked after its military forces were forced to leave Lebanon; the outspoken free Lebanese Media, now uncensored, can become out of control and expose the realities of the Syrian Regime.

Lebanon now needs a complete rehabilitation after we got rid of two occupation powers that invaded and violated every aspect of Lebanese economic, political and social life. Unfortunately, most Lebanese were, and may still be, taking advantage of the chaos that dominated Lebanon. Blackmail, bribes, theft and administrative corruption are still widespread in Lebanon. The law needs to be enforced and discipline needs to be

reestablished and moral and patriotic values need to be re-learned. The right person should be appointed in the right post. The tax code and collection must be reformed to rebuild the Lebanese infrastructure, pay the debt and reduce dependence on foreign aid.

We do not need more politicians; we just need better ones. We need to rehabilitate them and their political parties to break out their confessional and egocentric molds and get them to represent and work for the interest of the Lebanese People. Only in these conditions, can we appeal to the Lebanese abroad, exiled from their homeland by a dire economic and widespread corruption, to come back, invest and contribute to the prosperity of Lebanon.

A lot of changes and reforms need to take place in Lebanon to satisfy the aspiration of Lebanese young men and women who dream about a better Lebanon. The Lebanese scene, under the influence of occupation until recently, is undergoing rapid changes. The Lebanese people have now more freedom to express their thoughts despite the many assassinations of key political figures.

It is time we elect new representatives and a new president that are proudly made in Lebanon. We need representatives that put Lebanon first above individual, party or sectarian interests, leaders who represent the average Lebanese citizen still struggling to improve his/her socio-economic conditions devastated by wars and occupations. We need more democratic political parties.

The classic political leaders, especially those who were part of the Lebanese civil war, need to step down and allow free elections to take place within their own parties. We need a new president who works on unifying the Lebanese from all religions and all political affiliations.

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