

LETTERS

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Anayat Durrani's article "Arab-Americans: Life after Sept. 11 (Nov. 29)"

I think this article is great. I feel those who think that Arab-Americans are tied to some sort of terrorism are wrong. They have committed no crime and should not be treated so.

Brett Ellis
North Carolina, USA

God bless America, the Arab-Americans and all of the decent citizens in the land of the free.

Farouk T. Torki
The Hague, The Netherlands

Francoise Eid's "Fashion victims of society: Is the Lebanese scene due for some originality?" (Nov. 29)

I always enjoy reading Ms. Eid's articles especially since she can so precisely grasp the underlying emotions to a current situation that affects us all. And she does it with such ease and eloquence.

John Khazen
Toronto, Canada

The editorial "Time for Bush to put Sharon in his place" (Nov. 30)

Sharon's visit to the USA is ill-timed!

Is it my imagination or is it a fact that after every bloodbath Israel goes through, Sharon makes a trip to the United States to kiss up to George W. Bush? How come he gets to visit the ruins of the World Trade Center with a conscience that a simple sacrifice from his side could have saved us from the Sept 11 attacks?

Please don't assume I am saying the attacks could have been avoided, but everyone knows that, as the United States continues to stand beside Sharon in its fawning of Palestine, the Arab world will always feel that the United States is only on Israel's side. The bias of the United States will continue to manifest terrorists!

This is the perfect time for George W. Bush and Colin Powell to do their homework and shackle Sharon! This visit is ill-timed and Sharon should be ashamed of himself for even showing up here! Let's see what George W. will tell him! I am not holding my breath for any good news!

Elias Nader
California, USA

Mohammad Zaatari's article "Sidon suffering heavily from power blackouts" (Nov. 30)

For years I've been reading about the electric shortages in Lebanon. And then I read about the dates during which full service will be restored through out Lebanon, and those dates come and go with the wind.

The government should stop talking about it do something to correct the situation. They should simply start firing all those responsible, without compensation. All those responsible should leave with their personal belongings and that's it. The government doesn't owe them one penny. They can live off the graft they have been taking for years. Personally, I believe they belong in jail. The government isn't strong enough on corruption.

Wake up and smell the roses, Lebanon.

Alfred A. Ina
Florida, USA

Hussain Abdul-Hussain's article "Student politics mirror sectarian loyalties" (Nov. 30)

Referring to this article, I must express a disappointment in terms of the biased opinion from the writer's perspective. I was a student at LAU, Lebanese American University, and may I add a member of the Amal movement. It is not Amal who claims to be an all Shiite group.

An informative approach would be to mention the fact that Amal began in the South of Lebanon where, it so hap-

pens, the majority of Shiites lived. It is not a militia. It is a movement, open for all sects who believe in promoting equality among all Lebanese.

I strongly believe the President of the Amal Movement has proven himself to all Lebanese as a non-sectarianist who is doing an outstanding job as our speaker of the house of Parliament. Furthermore, I suggest that, when a reporter decides to write an article, he or she should always keep an open-minded approach to all ideas, despite his or her particular political affiliation.

And finally, may I correct that not all people that were living abroad came from the upper class. That, I believe, was a biased assumption. Do your research.

Heind Berry
Michigan, USA

The article "Targeting Baghdad: What the Iraqi opposition thinks" (Nov. 30)

I think we should have done the job right the first time. In 1991 the United States should have exterminated Saddam Hussein and his Elite Republican Guard.

The CIA has known about Iraq's dealings with terrorists and Iraq's terrorist training facilities, along with Saddam's development of chemical and biological weapons programs, for a very long time.

If the United States doesn't pursue Saddam and the high ranking lieutenants of his regime with the same aggressiveness that it has used towards Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network, then it's just a matter of time when the world will be exposed to a nuclear holocaust.

Saddam Hussein and his regime harbor the same hatred and jealousy toward the United States as Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network. With all of the threatening statements that Saddam has repeatedly directed toward the United States over the last decade, how could the US government not feel obligated to its citizens to do anything but wage an all out war on Iraq, with a hefty price tag on Saddam's head.

Iraq has a very long history of war and being a troublesome country, way back to the biblical times. In the biblical times, Iraq was then called Babylon. All through the bible there is story of war after war involving Babylon and the Jews.

I think we should let history teach us a valuable lesson, and very aggressively attack Iraq and show no mercy on Saddam or his regime. How many chances do we have to give this guy? He has continued to be a nuisance to society for over a decade. Now it should be time to get the job done right.

Timothy Wilson
Pennsylvania, USA

Ramsay Short's article "Beirut's youth finds a vehicle for its anger" (Nov. 30)

I'm a 23 years old Lebanese woman who lives in the United States. I feel that what those individuals are doing is wonderful.

I have lived through the war for years. If I could have describe my feelings and emotions that I had and continue to experience, through music, I definitely would. The Lebanese should allow these youth to follow their dream. No one knows where it's going to lead them. They seem to be proud of their nationality, let them share it with the rest of the world.

I feel that society in Lebanon is scared to face the truth that the youth is facing, no jobs, no education. There needs to be something done about this matter so that the youth who live outside their own country would return to their homeland.

Marie Zogheib
Pennsylvania, USA

The Daily Star welcomes all correspondence, but due to space restrictions kindly requests that letters be confined to no more than 400 words

Hariri to meet Chirac on UN anti-terrorism resolution

CRUCIAL DEADLINE LOOMS FOR LEBANESE RESPONSE

Politicians visit Maronite patriarch in flurry of activity over the nature of terror, resistance and the role of the state

Khalil Fleihan and Nafez Kawas

Daily Star correspondents

The prime minister leaves for Paris this weekend for talks with French President Jacques Chirac ahead of the crucial Dec. 27 UN-imposed deadline for countries to account for their share of the fight against terrorism.

Rafik Hariri's trip to the French capital is his third since the Sept. 11 suicide attacks in the United States, which sparked the global campaign to stamp out terrorism.

High on the agenda, according to political sources, is UN Security Resolution 1373, which has demanded 13 specific actions by the international community to eliminate terrorists and throttle their source of funding.

Resolution 1373 has the potential to divide the nation by enforcing a crackdown on Hizbullah

But the resolution has also exposed the disagreement between the United States and Arab governments over what constitutes terrorism.

Washington has demanded that Beirut freeze the assets of Hizbullah, which it considers a terrorist movement. But the government has adamantly rejected any crackdown on the resistance movement, which would divide the nation.

The need to gather support for Lebanon and Syria and the Arabs in general gained more urgency after the suicide attacks in Haifa and Jerusalem over the weekend, which appeared to

have diluted erstwhile Western sympathy for the Palestinians. In Beirut, diplomatic activity continued to focus on Lebanon's response to Resolution 1373.

The country's top leaders had affirmed, following a meeting Sunday, that Lebanon remained fully committed to the UN resolution, while simultaneously standing by its calls for an internationally recognized distinction between terrorism and resisting occupation.

Hariri received Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hammoud for a review of the proposed response, their second meeting on the issue in four days. Hammoud is expected to have the final response ready by the weekend and will then send it to the UN special committee entrusted with the issue, according to a Foreign Ministry source.

Meanwhile, Marjayoun-Hasbaya MP Nazih Mansour, speaking to reporters after meeting with Hammoud on Monday, said the questions put out by the UN were in fact addressed to all 189 member states. He added that all international agreements had affirmed the right to resist occupation and Lebanon was united in its stand on the issue.

Replying to a question, Mansour, a member of Hizbullah's Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc, said that force was the only way to liberate occupied land. "This enemy (Israel) understands only the language of force... and we are confident that it will withdraw sooner, rather than later," he added.

Referring to Lebanon's reply to UN Security Council Resolution 1373, Mansour said it was "clear, frank and not subject to interpretation. It



Sfeir and Chamoun: the latter accused the state of being a form of terror

affirms the right to resistance."

National Liberal Party President Dory Chamoun, speaking to reporters Monday after a protocol visit to Cardinal Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, charged the country's "rulers and those supporting them" of exercising "political terrorism."

He said if Resolution 1373 had decided that terrorism was bombs and explosives, "we have terrorism being exercised on Lebanon and pressure preventing the Lebanese people from choosing their real representatives in the government."

"This is the... terrorism that must be fought if Lebanon is to return to normal," he said after meeting the Maronite patriarch.

Beirut MP Nasser Qandil, addressing reporters after a similar visit to the patriarch, said the people had unanimously agreed to adhere to the resistance and to a joint Lebanese-Syrian stand in confronting regional developments. They also agreed on Christian-Muslim coexistence, which he said should be considered a "national achievement and wealth to be safeguarded."

Hizbullah, MPs praise the suicide attacks in Israel

Elie Hourani

Daily Star staff

The suicide attacks that rocked both Jerusalem and Haifa at the weekend were on Monday the object of praise by several Lebanese groups.

Hizbullah's commander of the South, Sheikh Nabil Qaouq, said that suicide attacks have defeated Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon for the first time in his entire military career.

"Sharon's downfall is imminent as a result of the Lebanese resistance's attacks and those of Palestinian fighters," Qaouq said in a speech at Yaroun. He added that it was a matter of time before the Kfar Shuba hilltops and the Shebaa Farms were liberated from Israeli occupation.

"Israel is now thinking about withdrawing from the occupied areas. But it is looking for a face-saving way to do so. But the Lebanese resistance is determined to make such a withdrawal look like an unconditional Israeli defeat," he said.

In a related development, pro-Hizbullah Baalbek MP Hussein Hajj Hassan praised the suicide operations. "They have shaken the belief in Zionist security and undermined all the precautionary measures taken by the Israeli military in-

stitution," Hajj Hassan said in an *iftar* Monday at Younin.

He found it strange that Western states are prompt in supporting the Israeli stance, "yet the West does nothing when the Israelis commit crimes against women and children and assassinate *intifada* activists."

Also on Monday, Hizbullah's deputy secretary-general Sheikh Naim Qassem described the current situation as "not mere fighting" between the Israelis and Palestinians. "What is happening today is a historic moment for shaping the future of the entire area."

"Either the whole Middle East is reshaped to please Israel or the Occupied Territories are freed and the whole area can live in peace and quiet once again," the cleric said.

Speaking at an *iftar* in Ghasanieh, he said the suicide bombings were legitimate operations. He said that the US had stood by Israel since its foundation in 1948, "and now, following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, the United States is even more biased in favor of Israel."

He added that "we are facing an unfair international resolution. Either we give in and accept it or keep fighting to regain our occupied land by force."

Day of solidarity for ex-detainees

The Follow Up Committee for the Support of Lebanese Detainees in Israeli Prisons, as well as 13 non-governmental organizations, announced a day of solidarity with Arabs held in Israeli prisons to be held next Monday.

The Follow-Up Committee for the Support of Ex-detainees of Israeli prisons organized a news conference on Monday at the Press Federation urging social, political, humanitarian, and civil committees to participate in the nine-hour solidarity demonstration to take place on Dec. 10 in front of UN House in Beirut.

That date marks the anniversary of the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Hu-

man Rights. The committee's secretary-general, Mohammed Safa, said the purpose of commemorating this day was to remind the United Nations and the international community at large that Israeli forces are still detaining Lebanese citizens.

"This is not only a violation of the declaration," he said, "but also a scandal to the international community and all world governments," Safa said.

Israel is still holding 13 Lebanese detainees, all of whom were abducted by Israeli troops or captured while on resistance operations. Eight of the detainees have been held for over 10 years.

Battle visits land mine victims

US Ambassador pledges government help for the South

Mohammed Zaatari and Samer Wehbi

Daily Star correspondents

US Ambassador Vincent Battle announced that his government had provided \$6.6 million (LL9.9 billion) to assist in de-mining efforts as part of the American De-mining Assistance Program to Lebanon.

During a tour of the South on Monday, Battle said his country had carried out 73 development projects worth \$1.2 million (LL1.8 billion) in 28 villages and towns in Jezzine.

Battle, who spoke at Ain Majdaline, said the US government would "maintain its support to reduce the risk of injury and develop economic opportunities for victims and their families."

"We should work together to execute these schemes for the purpose of developing Ain Majdaline and other villages in Jezzine and the South," he said.

Battle started his tour in Jezzine, and he was accompanied by embassy officials and Jon Breslar, the director of the US Agency for International Development. The group began in the town of Sabbah where Battle inspected the Development Cooperative Center for the Victims of Land Mines, which is funded by the US non-governmental organization World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF).

The center's officials informed Battle that the number of land mine victims in the areas of Jezzine and East Sidon was among the highest rates in the country. The center provides services for 374 land mine victims. Services comprise of agricultural production programs such as poultry breeding, egg production, bee keeping and honey production.

They also include food-processing training programs such as honey wax production, dehydration of herbs, fruits and vegetables, and extraction of essential oils. The center organizes awareness campaigns and training sessions to warn about the dangers of mines.

Battle then visited the village of Ain Majdaline, three kilometers outside the town of Jezzine, where land mine victims represent 30 percent of the total of victims in the *qada*. A meeting was held in the village's church between Battle and residents, mainly land



"We should work together." Battle hands out certificates

mine victims, the majority of whom were former SLA members or families of members. Victims informed the ambassador about their situations, after which WRF's representative in Lebanon Nadim Karam told residents about the project's goals.

Battle praised residents' cooperation with the WRF, adding that such cooperation would have a positive impact on the economic and social development of the area. He said other organizations and countries were working seriously with the United States to put an end to the problem of mines.

George Khawand, a priest in Ain Majdaline, spoke on behalf of residents to express appreciation for the US initiative.

According to statistics distributed by the US Embassy and prepared by the Land Mine Resource Center at Balamand University, 240 people were killed and 116 injured in the Jezzine and East Sidon areas over the past four years.

Job opportunities in Jezzine are almost nonexistent.

Agricultural production, once the main source of income for most residents, has been especially undermined by the presence of land mines in agricultural fields. International programs that started implementing projects in the region since 1999 have largely contributed to the villages' revival.

Battle concluded his tour at the army barracks of Nabatieh Fawqa where he and Brigadier General George Sawaya presented certificates to Lebanese soldiers schooled in de-mining. The eight soldiers received diplomas for completing a training program held by the US

Mine Detecting Dog Program.

"Today we stand on the verge of an important phase of the American assistance program, consisting of adopting mine-detection dogs as an advanced means for de-mining," Sawaya, the director of the National De-mining Program, announced at the ceremony on behalf of Army Commander General Michel Sleiman.

"These diversified varieties of land mines and unexploded ordnance are still threatening the safety and daily life of our parents and children, especially in the South and western Bekaa," Sawaya added.

Monday's six canine and eight human graduates were the second class in a series of three de-mining programs. They began on Sept. 17, almost four months after the first dogs and handlers completed training. The third group of dog-cadets will arrive in March.

By the end of next year, 18 dogs are expected to be on active de-mining duty, with the most recent graduates likely taking up their new posts in Nabatieh as soon as facilities there are completed.

A live demonstration with dogs and handlers was held following the graduation.

The US Mine Detection Dog Program also provides the donation and training of a bomb-detector dog, five ambulances, a training package on treating wounds from land mine explosions, protective and reconnaissance suits, mine detectors as well as four transportation vehicles.

The US embassy announced that it expected to provide \$4.5 million (LL6.75 billion) for the program by the end of 2003.

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