



# LFSANA Newsletter

## Volume 1, Issue 1...

Fellow students and LFers,

In this first issue of our newsletter, we, the LF Students of North America join together in one more way to make our voices heard to the rest of the world. In our history and times we have always stood strong fighting in every possible way we can. In times of war our students were the first on the front lines and in times of peace we were the frontiers of knowledge and determination. Today, as we watch our country from afar we find ourselves looking towards this little place we call home and thinking how we can help this country, the place where our grandparents and great grand parents called home, the place our ancestors spilled their blood for us to have a home of our own and we look to this small country and hope that one day we will be able to do the same; have our safe place and go back Home. I would like to welcome you and all my fellow friends and readers in our first edition of our monthly newsletter. We hope to be the voice and opinion of all the students in North America and bring you if just in writing, a small piece of who we are and what we represent .

Thank You,

**Samir Khoury**

## Choose War or Peace – Issam Zainoun

Many times in life we wish we could choose to “eat the cake and have it”, however, as we grow older and wiser, we find that compromise in necessary: we are faced with choosing between two mutually exclusive goals or desires. In Lebanon, we have become used to thinking we want one thing, while we act and work toward another. In modern societies, while it may be true that politicians obscure the true purposes of an ideology they adopt, they still manage to work toward those ideologies and eventually achieve them. In Lebanon, we aim for one thing but walk toward another thus never achieving what we set out to accomplish. This paper addresses some issues that are inconsistent by avoiding assumptions and opinions and building a logical argument based on observations.

Definition: The Logical Chain

The following essay will use logical reasoning to arrive to a solid conclusion. The conclusion will be reached by following a step-by-step process in which each step is derived from the previous step by a logical reasoning. This is a logical chain: if any of the reasons are disputed, then the whole chain is broken and the conclusion is invalidated. However, if each step is undisputed, then the conclusion is valid and cannot be dismissed. Therefore, the conclusion is not based on intuition or feeling or biased opinion, rather on a chain of indisputable logical reasons. No opinions will be used as part of the reasoning, only simple indisputable facts.

Hezbollah's Weapons

Popular claims by Hezbollah and its supporters are always on the move; however, some of them remain constant. Although numerous claims are attributed to this party and to its various supporters throughout the country, let us select the ones that are constant and comprise the core of their stance.

Hezbollah Has a Right to Bear Arms

Hezbollah has a right to bear arms in order to defend their land from an enemy that is at their doorsteps.

Israel is a continuous threat and must be treated as an active enemy that can strike us at any time, and we must be ready to respond.

Hezbollah has never used its weapons against Lebanese so why is it being targeted to give up its arms.

They have historical reasons to not trust the army or anyone else with their security.

Hezbollah is Lebanese and is exercising its rights as a Lebanese political party.

Israel is the one behind all the murders that are occurring today against 14-march MPs and persons.

Therefore Any Lebanese Party can Bear Arms

Let us agree with the above claims. Also let's agree that all Lebanese have equal rights. If so, then a Lebanese party has the right to bear arms in Lebanon, and can operate in parallel to the army, if it meets the conditions that Hezbollah has stated are enough reasons to allow armament, namely:

The party has an enemy at its borders that is a permanent threat.

The party can show that this enemy is as dangerous and hurtful as Hezbollah sees Israel to be.

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## A City From Lebanon - Tyre



Tyre is the fourth largest city in Lebanon, an ancient Phoenician city in the south, jutting out into the Mediterranean Sea. It is located about 23 miles north of Acre (Akko), and 20 miles south of Sidon. The modern city's name is **Sur**. Today, Tyre (Sur) is a popular stop for tourists due to its ancient ruins. It was added to UNESCO's World Heritage list in 1984.

This Phoenician city was queen of the seas. Tyre grew wealthy from her far-reaching colonies and its industries of purple-dyed textiles. It also attracted the attention of many conquerors throughout history.

Founded at the start of the third millennium B.C., Tyre originally consisted of a mainland settlement and a modest island city that lay a short distance off shore. But it was not until the first millennium B.C. that the city experienced its golden age. Tyre

has a long and illustrious history. In ancient times it was the most important city of the Phoenicians, amassing great wealth and power from the export of purple dye.

In the 10th century B.C. Hiram, King of Tyre, joined two islets by landfill. Later he extended the city further by reclaiming a considerable area from the sea. Phoenician expansion began about 815 B.C. when traders from Tyre founded Carthage in North Africa. Eventually its colonies spread around the Mediterranean and Atlantic, bringing to the city a flourishing maritime trade. Early in the sixth century B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, laid siege to the walled city for thirteen years. Tyre stood firm, but it was probable that at this time the residents of the mainland city abandoned it for the safety of the island. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great set out to conquer this strategic coastal base in the war between the Greeks and the Persians.

Somewhere near Tyre, **Jesus** healed a Syrian woman's daughter after she gave him a clever reply about breadcrumbs. (Mk 7:24). A **Christian church** was founded in Tyre shortly after the martyrdom of Stephen (in Jerusalem) and St. Paul, on his return from his third missionary journey, spent a week in conversation with the disciples there. According to Irenaeus of Lyons, the female companion of the Gnostic magician Simon Magus came from Tyre. During the Byzantine era, the Archbishop of Tyre was the primate of all the bishops of Phoenicia. At this time the town witnessed a second golden age as can be seen from the remains of its buildings and the inscriptions in the necropolis.

Tyre was captured in 1124 during the First Crusade and became one of the most important cities of the **Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem**. It was part of the royal domain, although there were also autonomous trading colonies there for the Italian merchant cities. The city was the seat of the archbishop of Tyre, who reported to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The most important recent archaeological find in a Phoenician cemetery from the first millennium B.C. Discovered in 1991 during clandestine excavations, this is the first cemetery of its kind found in Lebanon. Funerary jars, inscribed steles and jewelry were among the objects retrieved from the site. The importance of this historical city and its monuments was highlighted in 1979 when UNESCO declared Tyre a world Heritage Site. In the meantime, government efforts have stopped much of the wartime pillaging that Tyre's archaeological treasures have suffered because of economic stress in the area and international demand for antiquities. Grassroots campaigns have also drawn attention to the importance of the city's antiquities.



## Between Destruction and Resurgence - Fadi Baaklini

Much has happened over these past few weeks. So many victories followed by so many tears, so many threats followed by so many lies. As Lebanese living abroad we have the luxury to be unattached to what is really going on in Lebanon. We live it by the moment, and stay up-to-date with the current events, but we are rarely in touch with the pain and suffering of the people. Many of us wished to be present in Martyr's square on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February as we watched the scores of Lebanese and party flags being waved in memory of the death of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, but also in remembrance and recognition of the birth of the 14<sup>th</sup> of March movement.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the spectrum Hizballah mourned the death of Imad Moughniya. According to them he died a glorious death. He was a martyr, and a lost asset to the organization. But as things usually progress in Lebanese politics, the mourning of a fellow party member turns into the preferred platform for politicians and demagogues. They scream and deploy threats left and right not caring whom they threaten and offend. They are like teenagers who know the risk of confrontation, but do it anyway because they feel falsely invincible. This was most evident by Sayed Hassan Nasrallah's speech on that day.

What is a country to do when most of its political leaders would like to build while the rest have a pleasure in destroying? What is a country to do when part of their political leaders do not care of what happens to their people as long as their cause is fulfilled? What is a country where foreign ideologies and agendas are a priority over its people? What is a country when those who object remain silent? That is a country where the few dictate the fate of the many, and where the old who are safe and sound in their underground bunkers, send the youth, no force, the youth, to fight their wars ideological wars.

Silence is part of the recipe for suicide, and the Lebanese decided to break the long silence. While those who fought the Syrians for 15 years now naively exonerate them of their crimes because of a silly piece of paper, there are those who are able to stand up and refuse Syrian and Iranian tutelage over Lebanese territory. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 2008 we reminded those same people that their military and political "adventures" will not silence the Lebanese people. A piece of paper will not make them forget the agony they suffered for 30 years at the hands of a so-called sister, and it will certainly not make them forget their comrades, alive or dead, in the sister's jails. Those are the same comrades that the co-signers of that piece of paper consider non-existent by explicit talk or by silent assertion.

Our cause is simple and just. It dedicated to the resurgence of the Lebanon that was once known as the Paris of the East. We want Beirut to be remembered for its beauty, and not its destruction. We are tired of destruction, but the question is when will they.

## General Aoun, Before and After the MOU - Rani Geha

Today, Michel Aoun says Hezbollah must stay armed until the liberation the Shebaa Farms, the release of the prisoners in Israel, and until a general defense structure is in place. Today, Michel Aoun says that Hezbollah has always been a resistance movement and never a terrorist organization. Today, Michel Aoun says Hezbollah liberated Lebanon from Israel.

Aoun's supporters tell us that the General never changed his positions. But is that true? Well here are few quotes from Aoun's past:

"Hezbollah is collaborating with Israel to legitimize Israel's use of destructive force [against Lebanon]"  
-An-Nahar 4 February 2002

"The resistance [Hezbollah] is prolonging the [Israeli] occupation"  
Al-Liwa', July 2002

"I question the purpose for Hezbollah having so much freedom in the financial, organizational, military, and foreign policy areas"  
As-Safir, 11 November 2004

"How does Hasan nasrallah say that those who are with 1559 are worse enemies than the Israelis? This is sectarian incitement. They [Hezbollah] are using the people as cattle controlled by financial dependence and fear, then they talk to us about democracy."  
An-Nahar, 29 November 2004

"If Hezbollah wants to liberate Jerusalem then I, Michel Aoun, tell them go ahead. But for them to remain armed in Beirut's Southern Suburbs, then no, because we refuse that their weapons be used as a means of pressure [against the Lebanese]"  
Al-Liwa', 17 September 2004

"Hezbollah is an independent state within a state. They [Hezbollah] decide on the foreign policy and the government merely follows. They are helping Syria in Lebanon no more, no less"  
An-Nahar, 27 February 2002

"I know many things that Hezbollah has done in violation of international laws and agreements, and these actions are considered terrorist"  
An-Nahar, 27 February 2002

"We demand from Hezbollah to give up its weapons because its mission is over. The Lebanese know this truth and so does Hezbollah. And the Shebaa Farms issue is simply an excuse that is illegitimate legally, practically, and principally."  
An-Nahar, 31 January 2005

"Hezbollah, internationally, falls under resolution 1566 which calls for fighting terrorism"  
An-Nahar, 31 January 2005

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The party does not fully trust the Lebanese army or anyone else to protect it.

Can any other party claim these conditions? If so, the party would have to find an enemy. There are two candidates: Israel and Syria – since these are the bordering countries to Lebanon.

Let's consider Israel, if Hezbollah is correct, and we have already agreed that they are, then any party can use Israel as a reason to bear arms – for the same reasons that Hezbollah does. This would hold especially true to 14-march who's MPs have been targeted and, according to Hezbollah, Israel is behind these killings. So, using the reasons above, 14-march has a right to bear arms.

Let's consider Syria, it was not long ago that Syria bombed Baabda and ousted the Lebanese army commanders from the Presidential Palace and commenced to control government monies, establishments and officials. Lebanese activists were targeted, churches were bombed, assassinations, and renewal of the presidency was done despite the constitution. The people faced killings, confiscation of homes, and deportation of leaders, money laundering, stealing from the government and corruption – enough to say that the Syrians are proven dangerous enemies. 14-March allies agree that Syria is a dangerous enemy at the border; therefore, they again have a right to be armed.

So, if Hezbollah faces one enemy, the 14-March constituents and backers faces two enemies. If they choose to not trust the Lebanese army, they will have met the 3 conditions stated above and have a right to arms. Again, this is assuming equality among Lebanese, i.e., equal to Hezbollah's rights.

According to the above, both countries are enemies. The conflict is that Hezbollah and its allies do not consider Syria to be an enemy nor that is actively working against Lebanese government and Lebanese benefits. However, just like Hezbollah does not need the rest of the country to agree on the degree of danger posed by Israel, other parties do not need Hezbollah or the rest of the country to agree on the degree of danger posed by Syria.

Either way, if Hezbollah has one enemy (Israel), other parties have not just one (Israel as claimed by Hezbollah since it is behind the current killings) but two (Syria by the reasons made above).

Which Leads to the Lebanese Federation

Based on the conclusion above, Hezbollah agrees strongly that Lebanese parties be armed. This can lead to many forms of government, but definitely not to a unified government with a wide spread rule and means of enforcing security and law. This model is closer to a federations at best and, and at worst, is simply havoc. Whatever it is, it remains the furthest from being a unified nation with equal rights to its citizens.

Despite this, Hezbollah claims their goal is a unified Lebanon for all Lebanese. Furthermore, their followers insist that Hezbollah will lead Lebanon to peace and unification. We have clearly shown that Hezbollah does not desire a united Lebanon and, furthermore, aims more to a federated Lebanon or similar.

The Battle for Peace or War

The Lebanese people are currently split in two groups: ones supporting Hezbollah and ones supporting the government.

The conflict, however, is not one between Hezbollah and the Government, but rather goes beyond these two parties. The following presents an argument showing that the struggle is between choosing between War and Peace.

We Want War – Even though we won't admit it

Of course, you won't see Hezbollah saying they want war, but you do see them building their army and packing arms at the border with Israel. You see them burning tires in the streets, declaring that they are ready for Israel and will show her hell if she dares strike, talking against the International peace keeping forces in the south, working with Iran who has clearly declared that "Israel will be erased off the face of the earth".

Historically, these are actions of an army seeking war, not ones peace.

Furthermore, since Hezbollah has already declared that they won the war of 2006 against Israel, they are in a good position to broker a peace agreement. After all, a peace agreement is best done after a win.

Finally, Hezbollah places blame on Israel for the bombings in Lebanon – the bombings against the members of parliament, with no proof. In fact, it contradicts itself since it calls the government to be an American accomplice. How Israel attack an American accomplice. Therefore, Hezbollah, is merely making blunt inaccurate allegations – or rather instigating trouble with Israel.

All the points above show that Hezbollah is asking for and driving toward a war with Israel – this is especially true of its alliance with Iran since Iran has openly declared war against Israel.

Hezbollah wants war.

We Want Peace – Even though we won't admit it

What does the Government want? Let's see if we can arrive to a conclusion by using the same type of reasoning:

During the war of 2006, the Prime Minister openly admitted to not wanting a war with Israel. The army did not get involved and stood aside.

During the current bombings, the government and 14-March openly blame Syria and its accomplices and have in some cases found evidence pointing to Syrian backed parties being involved in these bombings.

The Government is urging for the election of the president and returning to a normal democracy.

These actions are actions of peace. The government and 14-March agree that Syria is the threat at this time and Israel is a by stander. The point being, they would rather keep Israel as a by stander, that is they want peace with Israel.

The government wants peace and normality.

Neither Side has Honestly Stated Its Goals

The problem therefore is that neither side has clearly declared its intentions. Hezbollah denies the drive toward war, which is clear from their actions. The Government denies its wanting a peace agreement with Israel. This is the problem. The followers of these two leaderships don't see clearly these goals – although they are clear as day and night.