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SHAYKH FADLALLAH DISCUSSES RELIGIOUS STRIFE, FOREIGN INTERVENTION

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/Interview with Shaykh (Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah), Shi'ite leader, by Amal Yusuf: "Shaykh Fadlallah to AL-TADAMUN: Al-Asad Supports al-Naqurah Negotiations To Give Lebanon Chance To Try Its Luck With Israel"; date and place not specified/

/Text/ Beirut--Since Hizballah /God's Party/ announced it was responsible for blowing up the barracks of the U.S. Marines and the French paratroopers in Beirut's suburbs last year, the world press has focused its lights on Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah on the grounds that he is this party's chairman and spiritual leader even though Shaykh Fadlallah has denied this in more than one interview, though he admits that he knows the party chairman and has a connection with its leadership.

One of the qualities of the scholarly shaykh is that he is one of the most enthusiastic Shi'ite advocates of renouncing sectarian jingoism and of strengthening the bond of Islamic unity. He has biting criticism against the excesses that occur in Beirut and that affect some of its Sunni inhabitants.

AL-TADAMUN has had the following interview with Shaykh Fadlallah:

/Question/ You have visited Damascus and met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. What has he told you regarding Lebanon's future?

/Answer/ The fact is that I did not discuss this issue with him directly or in detail. But I talked with him about the Israeli position in Lebanon, including the Israeli occupation and domination, and the political and economic situation in Lebanon which is embodied in the political alliances that are entrenching their relations with the sects and with some of the country's political establishments. In my discussion with the president, I focused on our past rejection of the 17 May 1983 accord and our rejection of the current negotiations on the grounds that they represent a form of recognition of the Israeli presence in Lebanon through the security arrangements. President al-Asad was in total harmony with what I said on this issue. We also discussed the need to establish balance between the Muslims and Christians to avert any political flaw in Lebanon because we believe that the sectarian domination existing in Lebanon can create for us /problems similar to/ the problem that

situation in al-Kharrub as a time bomb with which it will try to rekindle the sectarian war once again in this region which lies on the borders of the southern region.

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has existed in the past 10 years and which has claimed many victims. Therefore, we believe that the presence of a balanced regime in this country will make all the citizens feel that the regime belongs to them and not to any single faction and that there is no discrimination at the level of services. This will realize for Lebanon stability and the continuation of this coexistence between the Muslims and the Christians.

President Hafiz al-Asad emphasized this point in a fundamental manner. I also felt his strong interest in preventing a security eruption, especially in Beirut. I asked him to intervene with all his strength to stop some factions that try to detonate the Lebanese arena, especially Beirut, in order to underline political or propaganda positions. We noticed in the discussion with the president that he is interested in the future of Lebanon on the basis that Lebanon constitutes an important position for Syria, especially in terms of Syria's security and policy.

/Question/ Did President al-Asad express understanding toward your rejection of the negotiations despite Syria's position of obvious support for them?

/Answer/ It seems from the president's statements that his support for the negotiations is in harmony with the position of Lebanon, which has wished to try its luck with Israel. This support is not based on the belief that these negotiations are the only means through which positive results can be achieved on the issue of liberating the south.

The Syrian president believes that Israel is trying to manipulate numerous political circumstances to achieve political and security gains. We believe that Israel is trying to play the game of acceptance of peace and of calling for peace and negotiations in order to underline its image as a peaceful state in world public opinion. It puts obstacles in the path of peace while trying to insinuate that the others block peace so that it may emerge before the world as the victimized country fearing for its security. It thus makes an advance political step toward its future schemes.

/Question/ You met with Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, the head of the Unification Movement, during the visit he made to Beirut. At the time, reports were leaked to the effect that disagreement in viewpoints surfaced when the issue of establishing a grouping encompassing all the Islamic movements in the Lebanese arena was discussed. Is what was leaked at the time true?

/Answer/ The truth is that there is no disagreement in viewpoints on the idea of projecting Islam to the people the way they feel it should be projected. Islam is not just a sectarian box like the other sectarian boxes. Rather, Islam represents an intellectual method of life which the others can discuss the way they discuss the other intellectual methods that comprise lines of action, lines of legislation and lines of movement in life. In this respect, there is no disagreement whatsoever between us. There is disagreement on some of the means or some of the instruments to crystallize the idea. I believe that there are objective conditions that prevent transforming Lebanon into an Islamic country. One of these conditions is the conviction of the people who live in this country regarding this method because no people can be ruled by

force and no idea can be imposed on them coercively. We believe that the way to achieve results is persuasion with all means, as the Marxist thought and others do. The advocate of an idea must not project directly his idea in arenas that need preparation. It is essential that the minds of the Muslims and the Christians be open to this thought. Let us begin with dialogue on it because Islam is living in a climate of fanaticism and of sectarianism and oneupmanship, exactly as Christianity used to do. I feel that there will be no problem when the dialogue begins and when the Muslims and the Christians realize that there is more than one issue on which they meet at the moral level. At the level of the Islamic movements, there is a degree of unity on the ground in more than one aspect. As for unity in the acknowledged technical sense, i.e. political unity, its prerequisites and conditions do not exist yet.

Question Was Shaykh Sha'ban's visit for the purpose of forming an Islamic front?

Answer No, it was a visit to Beirut to explore the atmosphere because he had heard that there was disagreement between the Sunna and the Shi'a which could develop into a difficult case. However, he found out that these are mere rumors. It is true that there are sensitivities and problems but they have not reached the point of danger yet. Sectarianism is a reality but for this reality to turn into a complex, then this is serious. Islam is like the other concepts. We notice, for example, that Marxism in China is understood differently and that some of its characteristics are different from Marxism in the Soviet Union. Some of the characteristics of Marxism in Europe differ from those of Marxism in the Soviet Union.

The difference of sects is not a problem. The problem lies in exploiting sectarianism to erect barriers between the Muslims so that we may separate them from each other psychologically, politically and socially. In a lecture I delivered at the al-Maqasid Association, I called for mixed societies, i.e. for marriages between the Sunni and the Shi'i so that they may discover the spheres of agreement between them. The current situation has not emanated from the presence of sectarian differences but from the exploitation of sectarianism by some political leaders to achieve their aspiration to divide the people. Sectarian rancors did not exist in the past. Sunni Muslims are present in al-Silm Quarter and in Burj al-Barajinah and the Shi'ites are present in Beirut and the two sides coexist without any problem. But the political game has sought to create in society a problem of Sunni and Shi'i. So how does it go about creating it?

After 6 February and as a result of the armed Shi'ite presence, through the Amal Movement and through Hizballah, and of the armed Druze presence, the Sunna began to feel weak, considering that they have no armed organization, because of the flaw in the balance. Since then, this imbalance has been manipulated.

Question There is a general impression that you are the spiritual leader of Hizballah, despite your denial and your statement that there is no organizational relationship that binds you to this party?

/Answer/ From the outset, I have not worked and I will not work with anybody in an organizational form. However, this impression emanates from the fact that most of the youth, not only the youth in Hizballah and in the Amal Movement but also the unaffiliated youth, have grown up with my lectures and have been influenced by the atmosphere I create. If I were operating organizationally, why would I deny it?

I operate in the general Islamic arena, trying to criticize, warn and intervene in some cases, whether in Amal, in Hizballah or in the other parties. I operate not only at the level of Lebanon and the Islamic arena. I also have relations with Muslim students in Europe, India and the United States.

/Question/ What about your recent meeting with representatives of the Lebanese Communist Party?

/Answer/ The meeting was held at their request to talk to me about some negative acts committed by a number of faithful who work in the arena against the Lebanese Communist Party. The dialogue was frank. I expressed some observations on their method of work and we talked about some common problems in the arena and about some issues that may be viewed as common, even if temporarily.

/Question/ Some accuse you of violence and radicalism and others describe you as a flexible man who is in favor of dialogue. What is your comment?

/Answer/ I am not a radical. I am a committed man and a man of thought. Radicalism is for a man to exceed natural and civilized means in an attempt to crystallize a thought. I believe in the prophet's words "God is gentle and loves gentleness and He gives in gentleness what He does not give in violence."

I believe that man must win friends over to his thought and his causes. This can only be done with persuasion, not with pressure. We do not believe in violence as a principle and we liken violence to a surgery. But it is not natural for one to wish somebody peace when this somebody is directing a bullet at his heart or trying to crush him.

/Question/ You have strongly criticized the loss of security in Beirut. Are there practical steps to solve this problem?

/Answer/ We have tried to pressure the parties we can pressure. I believe that the loss of security is subject to the premeditated political scheme and the scheme for sedition in Lebanon. Nobody can solve it. It is difficult to talk about solving the problem of West Beirut in isolation from the problem of Lebanon as a whole. The loss of security is not a normal condition generated by the Lebanese sedition but a condition emanating from a political decision made by those who created the Lebanese sedition.

/Question/ You call for boycotting the United States when Lebanon is a consuming country. Can Lebanon respond to this call under this circumstance?

/Answer/ The fact is that I have not called for a total boycott of the United States because Lebanon cannot boycott the major powers that have the industry.

I call for boycotting the United States economically. Instead of shouting a thousand times "death to America," let us stop smoking American cigarettes. Instead of importing American goods, let us import European goods. It is true that Europe agrees with the United States but the United States is now the biggest and strongest ally of Israel. My purpose behind the boycott is to develop a popular condition, i.e. to have the people express their rejection of all the forces that put pressure on them by boycotting these forces where it hurts them because our /present/ method of confrontation is villification, vituperation or the blowing up of embassies. I believe that this may create a negative morale condition in the United States or elsewhere. But boycotting the United States economically causes it greater harm. 11L

/Question/ You have mentioned recently that the international red lines obstruct any movement to solve the Lebanese crisis. What do you mean by the red lines?

/Answer/ From my watching the developments of international politics, I have noticed that the Lebanese sedition was born on the peripheries of the Palestinian problem. Consequently, this crisis is intended to be a pressuring card within the framework of the Palestinian problem. We have also noticed that the Lebanese sedition did not end with the departure of the Palestinians, as a military and a political force, from Beirut. This is why several cards continue to be held by the international camps which can play their cards in Lebanon. For example, one of the issues existing at the Israeli and international levels is the issue of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. We do not expect this occupation to end quickly. The reason is that Israel does not want to stay in Lebanon. It recognizes Lebanon's international borders but it is occupying the south so that it may be a pressuring card for absorbing and then annexing the West Bank and Gaza to Israel. As for the United States, the initiative it has presented needs the Lebanese card in order to exert pressure on Syria so as to involve it in the U.S. solution. Thus, we find that Lebanon is an arena that is still likely to touch off more than one issue in the interest of the U.S. and Israeli solutions. I believe that the Israelis and Americans will not let go of any card that achieves for them strategic or tactical political gains. The security plan and the negotiations are not the other face of the solution because the solution is being concocted behind the scenes. The plan and the negotiations are only intended to preoccupy the people and to make them imagine that something will be achieved so that the people may not reach the phase of fatal despair that motivates them to destroy the equations. ✓

The cabinet is for managing, but no solving, the crisis and the negotiations are not the means for the withdrawal. These negotiations are a superficial production covering the secret negotiations going on at more than one level.

/Question/ How do you assess the Soviet role in terms of support for the Lebanese issue and the Middle East issues?

/Answer/ Insofar as the Soviets are concerned, we appreciate the general slogans they raise for the liberation of peoples. But we believe that the role of the Soviet Union as a superpower does not proceed in its support for the people's causes from an intellectual basis. This means that the Soviet Union ✓ N.S.

is prepared to lose on this account. Intellectual and principled positions motivate one to sacrifice for his thought. The Soviet Union is not prepared to sacrifice any of its positions or to make any political or military sacrifices for any people. The Soviets believe that their strength as a superpower comes first and then follow the people's causes, depending on how strongly these causes are tied to the Soviet plan in this regard. ✓

Naturally, the Soviet method of movement differs from that of the United States because the Soviet system is different from the U.S. system. But the Soviet system meets with the U.S. system in that it moves within the framework of the game of interests which governs the position of the Soviets as a superpower.

The Soviet Union does not do the Arab countries or any other people a favor when it supports them but rather achieves some gains for itself. We do not agree with those who try to depict the Soviet Union as the savior of peoples because the Soviet Union, like the United States, is a superpower. But the Soviet tendencies are closer to those of the peoples and its policy is closer to the policy of the peoples than is the U.S. policy. ✓

But the Soviet movements have the background of the superpower moving for its own interest. This is what we notice in the Soviet movement concerning the Palestinian cause. The Soviet Union moves to a certain limit and in the manner its interests permit so that it may not lose the Arab card or any of the cards it holds in this regard.

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EFFORTS TO RESCUE AIRLINE INDUSTRY EXAMINED

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic No 87, 8 Dec 84 p.35

/Article by Ibrahim 'Awadah: "After Repeated Abortive Attempts, Cooperation Agreement Between Two Airlines Subsidized by Government With 125 Million Pounds"

/Text Beirut--After prolonged negotiations throughout 2 full years, it was recently announced that the first cooperation agreement of its kind has been concluded between Middle East Airlines and T.M.I. /Trans-Mediterranean Airlines. The agreement provides for setting up a holding company in which Middle East Airlines owns 90 percent and T.M.I. 10 percent. This company will oversee the air transport policy of the two companies and will draft the recommendations needed to boost their activity, provided that each of the two said companies maintain its complete independence insofar as personnel, pilots and acquired operating lines are concerned.

Though this agreement, born after hard labor, has come to declare or, at least, to postpone the idea of full merger between the two companies and even though it is considered an ordinary cooperation agreement between two companies, it has exceeded this concept to turn into an econopolitical problem which is capable, if not contained, of leading to the obstruction of this agreement before it is actually born, i.e. before it is put into implementation at the outset of 1985.

It is well known that the two Lebanese airlines have been facing for a long time financial and economic problems emanating primarily from the troubled political and security conditions since 1975. These conditions have had their impact on the activity and operations of the Lebanese airlines industry, causing both companies to incur vast direct and indirect losses and damage. Since the start of the war and up to date, Middle East has lost nearly 800 million pounds (some losses resulting from the destruction of a part of the company's fleet and other losses emanating from the decline of activity due to the closure of Beirut Airport for long periods of time). T.M.I. total losses have amounted to nearly 200 million pounds as a result of this company's loss of a number of its main lines and of the difficulty of operating from Beirut International Airport due to security reasons.