



New England Americans for Lebanon

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NEAL supports US State Department's Travel Advisory to Lebanon

It comes as no surprise to those who understand the facts of the situation in Lebanon that the US State Department just issued (12/09/02) a travel advisory to that country.

Lebanese officials of successive puppet regimes, all appointed by the Syrian occupation and accountable only to it, have tried hopelessly for over a decade now to convince the world of the illusion that Lebanon is independent, safe, and prosperous. The reality is, however, otherwise.

- Lebanon is the last satellite state on the planet, reeling under the rule of the Stalinist Assad regime in Damascus.
- Lebanon remains a very dangerous country since the Syrian occupation gives free rein to several terrorist organizations, including its own Mukhabarat intelligence services. These organizations operate in total impunity. They run training camps, wage war and acts of terror, terrorize the population with kidnapping, theft, and murder, and defy the legitimate authority of the state.
- Lebanon is mired in economic collapse due to the puppet government's destructive economic policies and rampant cronyism and corruption that have buried the country under a \$30 billion debt.

No fake elections, no sensational summits, and no amount of debt forgiveness obtained by begging around the globe will bring back Lebanese or foreign investments to Beirut or make the country safe. As long as the Syrian army remains in charge of the country, and as long as the Syrian regime continues to quietly sponsor a growing partnership between Al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas, there will be a direct threat to the security of American and Lebanese citizens alike.

The bombings last month of American-owned businesses near Beirut and the murder of an American nurse in Sidon make the US government's travel advisory a necessity. NEAL fully supports that warning, but believes it is not enough. NEAL strongly urges the US Administration to recognize the failure the policy of "stabilizing" Lebanon under the Syrian occupation for the past 3 decades. That policy, under arguments of pragmatism and Realpolitik, has literally transformed Lebanon into a haven for terrorism and a cesspool of instability in the region. This in turn has wrecked havoc in the Middle East peace process since it provided a Syrian umbrella of ideology and logistics to all the enemies of peace in the region.

Lebanon's ongoing war is indeed one long September 11 for the Lebanese people, and the time has come to reverse course and liberate Lebanon from the Syrian Gulag. Decency and justice require no less. US policy toward Lebanon must be founded on addressing the underlying cause for the security threats leading to the State Department's travel advisory: the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

Long Live Free Lebanon