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## **Never again, Mr. Jibril. Lebanon is not for dividing and ruling**

By Adib F. Farha

Haven't some Palestinian groups done enough damage to their own cause as well as to the Lebanese people? That was my immediate reaction to the news of the irresponsible statement by Ahmad Jibril, the leader of The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in which he announced that the PFLP-GC forces in Lebanon would not disarm as demanded by a UN Security Council resolution.

He accused Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of exerting pressure in that direction and made a clear threat against Siniora. "We hand Fouad Siniora the direct responsibility for the hostile measures against our Palestinian people taken under the cover of a political and media campaign of disinformation," declared Lebanon's unwelcome "guest."

Perhaps to make sure that Siniora does not miss the thinly-veiled threat, Jibril brusquely added, "The attempt to sacrifice the weapons of the Palestinians of Lebanon in line with [UN] Resolution 1559 will not be greeted by silence or compromise."

It doesn't take a mental giant to understand what type of "greeting" the renegade Palestinian leader had in mind. Jibril, a former officer in the Syrian Army and now an agent of Syrian intelligence, certainly has the armed bands it would take to follow up on his threat. The hope is that the Lebanese authorities can muster the necessary resolve and indispensable Arab and international support to "greet" his threat by ordering his immediate expulsion and the disarming of his gang. Having said that, I am well aware that that would not be an easy task - unless, of course, it had the backing of the Palestinian Authority and of the principal Arab leaders. Attempting to disarm them by force without Arab backing and outside the context of a regional deal would be foolhardy and could turn into a bloodbath. Lebanon would have walked into the trap Jibril and his Syrian masters are setting for Lebanon.

Lebanon has borne the brunt of the armed Palestinians' menace for decades. It was the excesses of the Palestine Liberation Organization that fueled the Lebanese Civil War, albeit the seeds of conflict were internal, with external forces egging the various warring parties on. During Lebanon's 16 years of civil strife, statements equally as outrageous as that of Mr. Jibril inflamed the raging conflict each time it would start to wane. Who can forget the declaration by Abu Ayyad,

Arafat's second-in-command then, that, "The road to Jerusalem passes through Jounieh," a small town in the heart of the Christian heartland north of Beirut?

That Jibril and his cronies are working for the cause of propping up the continued but degraded destabilizing role of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon is clear. Equally clear is that their actual cause has long surpassed their alleged goal of "fighting the Zionist enemy," which the overall Palestinian leadership now recognizes and bends over backward to reach a peace agreement with it.

If Mr. Jibril is truly interested in the plight of his countrymen, what is he doing 24 kilometers from Beirut? What's the point of his troops' continued armed presence in the islands of lawlessness he has usurped in Lebanon?

No people have done more to support the Palestinian cause than the Lebanese, from Camille Chamoun to Suleiman Franjeh to the late Rafik Hariri to Fouad Siniora. And how were their contributions met by those of the Palestinians who have driven a wedge between the Palestinian and the Lebanese peoples? With ingratitude, disrespect and defiance of Lebanon's sovereignty. In his latest threat, Jibril had the audacity to target a staunch advocate of Arab causes whose credentials in nationalism and patriotism are beyond reproach. Siniora does not "need a blood test three times per day to prove it," to paraphrase the honorable Lebanese prime minister.

Enough, Mr. Jibril! The days when Arafat ruled Lebanon - as he unabashedly boasted - are over. Syria is no longer there to back you, nor is the Lebanese people as gullible as it once was. After March 14, you can no longer bet on dividing the Lebanese along sectarian lines to advance your dream of a surrogate state in their country while you claim to fight for your "right of return." Perhaps it is a return to Arafat's days that you dream of. To you and your ilk we say, enough. Never again.

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