

Ghassan Tueni Rejects a Syrian President for Lebanon

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MP Ghassan Tueni rejected Monday the election of a "Syrian President for the Republic of Lebanon" warning Damascus against launching a campaign of terror to impose its return to Beirut.

Tueni, who also is chairman of the board of an-Nahar publishing house, made his stand in an editorial in the independent daily under the headline "For dialogue with Syria, not for its return and terror!"

"Does the dear sisterly Syria believe that she can impose its return on us, though not victorious, preceded by a campaign of terror, though upgraded this time by threatening to assassinate the Saudi ambassador?"

He accused Syria of being politically and diplomatically "confused" at a time a conference on Middle East peace appears imminent.

Tueni expected a pre-planned Syrian-Israeli war in the Golan Heights, which could spill over to Lebanon and end in a Syrian-Israeli peace preceded by a symbolic Israeli victory.

That, he wrote, would allow the Israeli Army to regain some of its dignity lost in the July-2006 war with Hizbullah which could lead to peace based on a limited pullout from the Golan and the Shebaa Farms.

Damascus, Tueni wrote, is expected to be "deterred by international determination" from banning peace in Lebanon and Palestine.

"Lebanon, deep inside, is still interested in dialogue with Syria and is ready for this dialogue," He wrote.

Lebanon also can "help in protecting" Syria's regime if Damascus stopped believing that its "rotten diplomacy can impose on the United States ... Saudi Arabia and the Arab and foreign worlds a Syrian President for the Republic of Lebanon in return just for its good behavior".

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