

Jacques Cheminade Meets Lebanese President, Works To Bring Peace Throughout the Middle East

by Christine Bierre

April 9 (EIRNS)—On April 7, just hours after President Trump had been misled into ordering an attack on a Syrian airbase at al-Shairat, French Presidential candidate Jacques Cheminade met Lebanese President Michel Aoun at the Lebanese Baabda presidential palace, to talk about “peace through development” for the entire region. Christine Bierre, in charge of this region for Cheminade’s movement, also attended the meeting.

After that 30-minute meeting, Cheminade made the following remarks to the press gathered at the presidential palace.

“I have come to Lebanon in the spirit of a Free Lebanon, over and above all political factions, as one should always approach such things in France, and to show the role Lebanon can play in the Middle East and in world affairs. For a long time now, in particular since February 1989, General Aoun has been very important in this respect, because he has always shown great political courage and great independent-mindedness, nurtured by his political courage.

“Today, I have come here to say that France must



President of Lebanon Michel Aoun (right) greets Jacques Cheminade in Lebanon, April 7, 2017.

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do everything to support the cause of Lebanon, and in particular to make sure that Europe and France contribute much more aid to the political and economic refugees fleeing to Lebanon, as well as to those in Lebanon who receive the refugees and who sometimes live less well than they [the refugees] do. France must do all in her power to deal with that question. We know that there are between 2 and 2.5 million refugees in

Lebanon, which has a population of 4.5 million inhabitants. We must absolutely do something to help Lebanon.

“The way to help in a decisive manner is to allow the refugees to return to their countries, in particular to Syria, and to help by creating conditions of peace in Syria, through economic development and reconstruction. We did this in France after World War II, with public credit and a commitment to the future. Today we need credit for the development of Syria, so that the Syrians can go back to their country and live there. With time—and that time must be as short as possible—that is the only way to establish peace, through mutual development in the Near and Middle East.

“What happened today at dawn—the missiles fired from an American vessel at an important Syrian base—is something that will no doubt worsen what is happening here. It was carried out before an international investigation into what had really happened in Syria could occur, and it was a decision by President Trump, to go far beyond what Obama did in 2013, when Obama stopped before launching missiles.

“In my opinion, there has been, in a totally premature manner, a violation of the sovereignty of one nation by another one. I think this is very serious. It does not help peace in the Near and Middle East in any way—and we must very quickly, without losing time in useless debates, say that this intervention in the internal affairs of a state must stop, and we must instead create the conditions for peace through mutual development in the future. From that standpoint, Lebanon and the Lebanon of General Aoun must play an absolutely fundamental role that France must recognize.”

In further remarks during that day, Jacques Cheminade referred to the hypocrisy and cynicism of those in France and the Western nations who are calling for a coalition against Assad. “I am not for a coalition against Bashar al-Assad,” he told the correspondent of the French national all-business BFM TV, “but in favor of stabilizing the situation in Lebanon. Some continuously preach morality; the reality is that those doing the moralizing are the ones who organized the military intervention in Libya with the consequences we know, and who allow Yemen to be bombed by Saudi Arabia. They even give the Saudis more intelligence to be able to better bomb Yemen, and after

that, they give lessons on morality to the entire world. I find that to be of the utmost hypocrisy and cynicism.”

Cheminade told Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Politics is not to be nice to someone’s face, and cynical behind his back. Politics is what General de Gaulle did, which is to try by all means to reach détente, entente, and cooperation” among all nations.

Finally, Cheminade expressed his concern with the serious problems Lebanon is facing today due to the war against Syria. To a question by a Lebanese journalist following his meeting at Baabda, Cheminade said that he talked with President Aoun “about pressing France and Europe for more help to urgently improve the sanitation systems currently in a catastrophic state due to the occupation of a country of only 4.5 million inhabitants by too many refugees.” President Aoun had said Europe had begun to help, but Cheminade said that aid must go much further, indicating that France’s world-class water companies should be brought in to contribute to solve those problems.

An article in the April 8 issue of the main French-language Lebanese daily *l’Orient le Jour* also reported that Cheminade was in Lebanon to “to support a Free Lebanon ... beyond its political divisions,” to pay homage to Aoun’s “political courage” and “independent mindedness,” and to call for more aid to Lebanon to solve its domestic difficulties due to the refugee crisis.

“Lebanon could become a powder keg,” he warned, in his interview to BFM TV, and for that reason “the refugees must be able to go back to Syria and the conditions must be created for them to do so, rather than creating dissensions and tensions through interventions like that of Trump.”

Lebanon is exemplary, he said, “because there have been all these family quarrels, with killings and murders; it’s almost Shakespearean, with the Hariris, the Geageas, the Frangieh, and the Gemayels as examples. But Aoun came and succeeded in creating unity among those people who thought about the future of the country. It is that attitude that we must have throughout the whole region.”

Cheminade concluded his trip to Lebanon in discussion with a few Frenchmen—potential voters—who attended a meeting that the candidate organized that evening.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2016

Volume 3, Number 65

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