

Speech of His Excellency, the Minister of National Defense Mr. Yaacoub Riad Sarraf

Representing His Excellency the President of the Republic General Michel Aoun

Esteemed political, security, diplomatic, intellectual, media and economic figures

Esteemed officials in the conference – esteemed audience

The 7th Regional Conference for the Center of Research and Strategic Studies is held amidst numerous challenges and expectations. The challenges emanate from the continuous military and political escalation in the Middle East and the contradictions and balance shifts that accompany it as well as the impact of all the previously mentioned factors on Lebanon, one way or another. As for the expectations, they are those emanating from a firm will expressed by the new tenure under the leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic General Michel Aoun which consists in sparing Lebanon as much as possible the shadow of crises that are covering the whole region as well as launching the state development process and reforming its institutions, regardless of the difficulties and obstacles that might face it, for it is inevitable to join efforts in order to progress, hand in hand and lead the nation to the shore of safety and stability.

Esteemed audience

It is not a secret that the institution of the Lebanese Army is at the top of the list of national institutions that constitute a pillar, nay, a cornerstone for national stability. The Lebanese Army has gained its rank after proving, in reality and with its limited capabilities, its competence in facing terrorism and its unlimited preparedness to sacrifice in defending the nation's unity,

sovereignty, independence and safety of its regional and economic land and waters, which has captured the admiration of the international community and increased the amount of international aid offered to it. Therefore, the President of the Republic General Michel Aoun puts on top of his priorities the effort to boost the army's capabilities, whether through the available local capabilities or through the cooperation with friend states, basing on the commitment of these states to protect Lebanon's stability, or through the joint international effort in fighting terrorism, to which Lebanon contributes with all its available resources and capabilities.

Esteemed audience

The success of the center of research and strategic studies in organizing these conferences which hold a strategic dimension dealing with the most important dilemmas and problems facing the regions and citing their causes, not only their symptoms and results, is a pertinent proof of the high intellectual and cultural level characterizing Army officers as well as the noble feeling of responsibility in the Army command towards the causes facing the region, as an integral part of Lebanon's responsibility in spreading diversity, openness and dialogue and in paving the way towards peace which is the ambition of all the peoples of the region.

It is probably very helpful to be enlightened through the recommendations and suggestions proposed in the conferences in which participate the elite of intellectuals, researchers and academics, whether local or international, thus adding a vast space of objectivity and credibility, particularly that the subjects discussed in these conferences tackle the military, security and political sides in parallel with the economic and administrative sides which include the bases of economic and social development as well as the placement of active principles and mechanisms to fight corruption in all its aspects. The army is the only guarantee to preserve the citizens' freedoms and protect the nation's policy. It is also the institution that guarantees the preservation of social and economic security.

Esteemed audience

On behalf of the President of the Republic whom I am honored to represent before you today, I extend my appreciation to the army command and to the center of research and strategic studies and I would like to encourage you to continue organizing similar conferences and interacting with similar centers in Europe, the United States of America and Asia. Moreover, I would like to extend my appreciation to all the people who have contributed and participated in this conference, particularly the friend participants for their attendance and efforts and their affection toward Lebanon.

Welcome, dear guests, to your second country, Lebanon.

Long Live the Army – Long Live Lebanon