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AWORD

33 Riddles of Numbers and Symbols from Lebanon Lexicon



A colleague, addicted to LBC, Future and Al-Manar since 3 months, came out with a lexicon which he intends to expand on. Here are some excerpts:

- 1- A Government of National Unity: Council of Lebanon Tribes Chiefs.
- 2- Fight Corruption: A term used to enhance one's image and tie the hands of his opponents.
- 3- Transparency: See through me if you can.
- 4- "This is not Lebanese": A term used to confirm that "Lebanese" is a positive idea of one's self, with all "others," who disagree with him being "non Lebanese".
- 5- "Shia'a and Sunni have always loved each other": Especially when the Sunni feudal lords were co-hooting with Shia'a feudal lords to manipulate their "followers".
- 6- Christians, Muslims and Druze lived peacefully together: Except in 1840, 1860, 1920, 1943, 1952, 1958, 1969, 1975 till 2007.....
- 7- "What is your name?": Are you one of "us"?
- 8- "What village do you come from?": Your name is misleading and I could not figure out your confession.
- 9- "Are you related to Mr. Georges?": Forget your name and village; they are both confusing.
- 10- "What is your confession?": Hell with it all, Tell me your confession and get over with it.
- 11- My Za'im is (sheikh so and so or bey so and so): Without him I cannot find a job and if it was not for him I would have to work in the job.
- 12- "Illegitimate government" vs. "Legitimate government": Al-Manar's lexicon vs. Future's lexicon.
- 13- International Legitimacy (Ashara'iyah Al Douwalia): I am going to use my connections to beat you.
- 14- Let justice take its course: Catch me if you can.

- 15- “Is he the only one?": We all break the law and get away with it, why him?
- 16- “Lahoud is bad”: Sanioura is great = anti Shia'a and Aoun = Sunni.
- 17- “Sanioura is bad”: Lahoud is great = pro Aoun and the Shia'a = Shia'a.
- 18- “Development and Reconstruction is the path”: I support Hariri and I don't care whether we develop the country or not.
- 19- “State of Laws and Institutions”: I support Lahoud and I don't care whether we break the law or not.
- 20- “Hizbullah and its appendages” vs. “the de-facto government and its militias”: Future Movement vs. Free Patriotic Movement in an eloquent expression of the principle of tolerance.
- 21- “The Ugly Enemy”: A term used to depict Israel and all our cousins and neighbors and potential ugly ones.
- 22- “The Beast of Poverty”: An animal found in Mesopotamia, highly reproductive, hunted by the UN, US and the EU and thousands of NGOs for almost a century now. It is assumed that once killed, poverty will be saved.
- 23- Martyrs: A term used to elevate those killed to a divine state so we do not mourn their absence as human beings.
- 24- Terrorists: A term used to downgrade those committing acts of violence to justify worse acts of violence.
- 25- “Tire Burners”: A newly coined term used by the March 14 supporters against Aoun and Hizbullah and other (March 8) supporters.
- 26- Signés Tires: A term coined by Omar Karami for tires burnt in 1992 by Hariri supporters and which brought his downfall.
- 27- “201 times I shall not resign”: A term coined by Sanioura improvising on the commonly used 100 time term and proposing one thousand-time as a prospect.
- 28- “Burning tires on January 23, 2006 has caused stoppage of rain and many suffocation cases”: An “unbiased and scientific” statement made by an “expert” at the Lebanese Official Weather Authority to LBC, and who failed to mention the chimneys of Chekka, Sibline and Zouk, where tires and petrocokes are sometimes incinerated illegally.
- 29- “Talk Numbers”: A term currently in use in two rival advertising campaigns by opposition and pro-government forces to explain their positions on the Paris 3 Conference and what is called a “reform plan”. Here are some numbers:
- 30- 1.5 Million: A number identified by the Lebanese opposition for those who demonstrated in Beirut on Sunday, December 10, 2006.
- 31- 1.06 Million: A number identified by the Lebanese Minister Ahmad Fattat for those who demonstrated on the 14th of March, 2005.
- 32- 2.56 Million: Being the addition of the above two numbers or 100% of all Lebanese between the age of 18 and 70.
- 33- 160% is the new statistical method created in Lebanon and used internationally by BBC and CNN which quoted the hundreds of thousands or the million-figure several times particularly on March 14, 2005. It also explains why 80% of the Lebanese said in an Ii poll “I abide by the laws” and the same 80% said that “the Lebanese in general” do not abide by the laws. This method is now adopted by the Neo-Conservatives to explain the decrease in the rate of their supporters and how they are winning against the “axis of evil”.

Another colleague, having read the above, said that there was nothing unique about those 33 riddles, quoting US President George Bush's “we are not winning, we are not losing in Iraq” speech, as a riddle that defies all.

33 happens to be the number of days required for “the birth of a new Middle-East” as described by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice after “diagnosing” the July-August 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon.

Toufik W. Akra

