

## Lebanon Opportunities

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## EDITORIAL

by the editor-in-chief

# Bikini or veil?

**H**ot is this summer, sizzling with antagonism and polarization. Underlying the ongoing debates, behind the crimes and security breaches, and on many people's minds, lies a developing threat to our way of life. Slowly proliferating from the shadows, an armed political movement, hiding behind a fundamentalist veil, is grabbing parts of our country, yearning to impose a system that is foreign to our traditions. The veil is attacking the bikini, and before we know it, we may find ourselves in a different country altogether.

### THE BIKINI

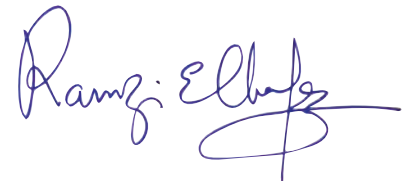
It is outgoing, extroverted, and accepts the company of all other styles of garment, including veils. It thrives in the brightness of the sun, it is compatible with the softness of sand and the harshness of rocks, and it swims in the salty waters of the Mediterranean as well as it does in the sweet flows of the Litani. Highlighting assets, it comes in two pieces, covering the essentials, and leaving freedom to the rest of the body to deal with nature as it pleases, including golden coloring of the skin. No two bikinis are the same. Each one has its own character, size, and patterns. You can find them in a kaleidoscope of colors except for, naturally, yellow. Lately, inexplicably, orange ones have been taken off the shelves. Named after a site in the Marshall Islands, the bikini was invented by the ancient Greeks, but it didn't take hold until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, at about the same time that democracies invaded the rule of law of a good part of the globe, including our country.

### THE VEIL

As Henry Ford said about his Model T: You can have it in any color, as long as it is black! Introverted, it excludes, or hides, all other styles, especially bikinis. Covering liabilities, this artifact of Assyrian and Persian origins blossomed in the Dark Ages, and it slowly made its way to modern times. It is frequently exploited to induce oppressiveness, impoverishment, distance from others, and moral high ground. It was shunned by agrarian societies, whose populations were productive and gained economic self-sustenance by working the land. In some places, especially security quarters, veils are regularly imposed by peer pressure, financial incentives, or religious pretexts.

### ONE CHOICE TO MAKE

So now you have it, and the choice imposes itself: Do we fit in the bikini or do we want a country under the veil? Will our society be open to all forms of thought, leaving our national body free to express itself, gain solar energy, and swim among the rest of the world, or do we want to be confined to an archaic dogma led by mysterious war-mongering druids? Behind what seems to be a national schism or just silly political bickering, lies a pivotal issue: The lifestyle that we want to develop, the neighbors that we would like to have, and the culture of which we would like to be a part. Do we gain richness with diversity or should our existence be restricted to a monolithic environment? These are the choices that are in reality being presented, choices that only a few dare to discuss in the public sphere. Lack of vigilance, or disbelief, is tilting the odds in favor of the Dark Ages. The debate then has to be redirected, and light must be focused on the main issue: What system, or rather what way of life, is good for our country?



**Disclaimer if need be:** No offense is intended to those veiled as a matter of purely religious practice. You are welcome and the above has nothing to do with you.