t was not until the third stop on my 14-day Arab book tour promoting Warriors of God, my newly translated his-
tory of the Third Crusade, that I got my stereotypes in order. I had gone from Riyadh to Abu Dhabi to Beirut, talking about Richard the Lionheart and the great defender of the Muslim world—Saladin Yassir ibn Ayub in Arabic, or Saladin in Beirut. I was standing in the hallway of an institute of Islamic Studies with my esti-
mated 150 listeners, when an old, elderly col-
lleague of his happened by. The tweedy professor was cheerful in his praise of my book. He had just read it in all of Saladin's transla-
tions.

"Is the Arabic version satisfactory?" I asked, shooting a playful glance at Saladin. "Did you choose the right words?"

"More than satisfactory," replied the colleague, "in fact, I went to study the English now, and see if its words are satis-
factory."

On my second night in Beirut, I was scheduled to lecture in the Phoenicia Hotel, a vast expanse of red velvet seats, located
not far from the Phoenix Hotel, where Arab leaders would soon congregate and confer on the Crown Prince
Abdallah's peace proposal. The event was jointly sponsored by Lebanon's minister of culture, Ghasan Salama, and my pub-
hisher, Oneway. My schedule earlier in the day seemed
designed to put me in a certain mood. First, I was to meet the prime minister of Leb-
nanon, Rafik Hariri, the man given credit for the
rebuilding of Beirut after the 18-year civil
war.

And then we drove through Sabra. For years I had read about Palestinian refu-
gee camps, but until I saw Sabra—where at least 700,000 had been murdered
in 1982, reportedly at the behest of the Is-
raeli general Ariel Sharon—I did not appre-
ciate the extent of the slaughter. We bumped
along a muddy, potholed byway, treading
with our feet covered by shoes of cheap
clothing, shoes, utensils. And then we
touched past a huge garbage dump, upon
which vendors sat and sold whatever
they could find beneath their feet. I was
being shown the "breeding ground" (or the radical
forces within) of the Israelis. For Sabra.

After Sabra, I was taken to meet my spon-
 sor in the ministry of culture, the elegant Ghasan Salama. He began our meeting
by announcing that, personally, he favored en-
couraging every Arab country to develop nu-
clear weapons to counterbalance Israel's nu-
clear arsenal. Since Vice President Dick
Cheney was touring Arab countries at the
time, contemplating opening up a third
front with an attack on Iraq, Salama was
primed with a counter blast. I was merely the closest Amer-
ican he could call to express this tre.

In due course, the line thinned until only a few readers re-
amained. And then I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

"I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

feigned charm with a lady in a red scarf. sipping my juice and

waved and chatted, signing my name happily in Arabic before slid-
ing the books on to me.

I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

Of those heads of those in line for the
book signing, I scanned the room for the
eight auditors. Someone brought me to-
mato juice in a wine glass. I gave it

to the audience. And then we were

in the company of a minder, attending

us a leer and then turned on his heels and left. I watched the

with a minder, attending

as a group,

On my second night in Beirut, I was scheduled to lecture in the

"You had to know that they were driven through Sabra.

At night I lay down on my bed in his element, signing his name happily in Arabic before sliding the books on to me.

It seemed like a moment. And then one of the three came around, asking for my
divine guidance, and saying, "Is this your books on to me.

I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

In due course, the line thinned until only a few readers re-
amained. And then I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

three glowering men. I asked the guard, "Are they

"I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

I glanced over at the three glowering men.

It seemed like a moment. And then one of the three came around, asking for my

divine guidance, and saying, "Is this your

books on to me.

I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

In due course, the line thinned until only a few readers re-
amained. And then I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

three glowering men. I asked the guard, "Are they

"I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

I glanced over at the three glowering men.

It seemed like a moment. And then one of the three came around, asking for my

divine guidance, and saying, "Is this your

books on to me.

I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

In due course, the line thinned until only a few readers re-
amained. And then I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

three glowering men. I asked the guard, "Are they

"I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

I glanced over at the three glowering men.

It seemed like a moment. And then one of the three came around, asking for my

divine guidance, and saying, "Is this your

books on to me.

I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

In due course, the line thinned until only a few readers re-
amained. And then I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

three glowering men. I asked the guard, "Are they

"I saw three of the eight coming toward me. I

I glanced over at the three glowering men.

It seemed like a moment. And then one of the three came around, asking for my

divine guidance, and saying, "Is this your

books on to me.