

CASSANDRAS, JEREMIAHS CAN SABOTAGE THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

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✘ Team Keghart **Editorial**, 26 January 2010

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Whether it's due to a character trait, an ingrained attitude, experience or conviction, these naysayers are quick with their corrosive sarcasm or in dishing out reasons why a proposal or plan will not work. A favorite argument of theirs is the never-failing "it was tried before but it didn't work out."

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Predictably, the naysayers see themselves as realists; their opponents see them as jaded and tired cynics.

The ancient Hebrews called them Jeremiahs because of their predilection for negativity and to a "woe to us" mindset.

The ancient Greeks called them Cassandra, after the lachrymose seer who specialized in predicting doom and gloom.

We would like to call them wet blankets because they fear vigor, enthusiasm, and new ideas. They have the ability to ruin a party by their mere presence.

In 1978 Jan Morris, a British historian and doyenne of travel writers, essayed a perceptive article about Istanbul which she titled "City of Yok". Morris memorably wrote: "The favorite epithet of Istanbul seems to be yok. I don't speak Turkish, but yok appears to be sort of general-purpose discouragement, to imply that (for instance) it can't be done, she isn't home, the shop's shut, the train's left, take it or leave it, you can't come this way or there's no good making fuss about it, that's the way it is..." Armenians also have their "yok" aficionados.

Another characteristic these doomsters share is their reluctance or inability to offer constructive alternatives.

Since the Western Armenian National Congress stepped to the plate to participate in the Armenian

national dialogue, the Cassandras / Jeremiahs have—as is their habit--mocked the group and said the group is destined to failure-- without bothering to offer an alternative vision. No offers of lifesavers from the negativists on how to pull out of the Diaspora quagmire.

For decades the Diaspora has been on a downward spiral. Our political organizations have been unable to put forth long-term and credible blueprints for the survival, let alone the strengthening of the Armenian Diaspora.

It's the ultimate irresponsibility to throw rotten tomatoes at well-intentioned people who have volunteered their time, talent, knowledge and efforts to advocate—on international forums-- the long-ignored rights of Diaspora Armenians, the children of the few who survived the Genocide.

We suggest that as long as the so-called realists confine their contribution to "it will not work", they should keep their own counsel and let people of conviction and vision try to pull us out of the fog.

