CELEBRATING OUR VICTORIES

Posted on March 16, 2014 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 16 March 2014

It has been a difficult year and decade for the Armenian nation. The challenges Armenia and the Diaspora have been slapped with are too well known to itemize. To make matters worse, like many other people some Armenians have an unhealthy propensity to be drawn to negative rather than positive news and interpretation when it comes to national developments. As a result, their perception has become darker than the reality. An obvious antidote to the negative and false perception is the celebration of our victories. Fortunately, there have been a respectable number of them.

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A new phase in our struggle against the Turkic duo is junior partner Baku's aggressive campaign against the Armenians. Fueled by petro dollars and probably coached by senior and savvy brother Ankara, Baku has been running around the globe like a headless chicken to transform the Armenian attack on Khojalu to genocide. To change the Khojalu fact into fancy, Azerbaijan authorities have, in recent months, targeted the legislatures of Hawaii, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming, to name a few.

Trying to introduce such an unlikely resolution in relatively low-profile U.S. states is no accident. Baby Aliyev's diplomats believe they have a better chance for success in states where there are few Armenians or Armenia and Azerbaijan are just spots on the map.

The campaign to win Hawaii's recognition of the Khojalu fight as genocide was launched in the standard manner of Baku: two Hawaii legislators were invited last summer to Azerbaijan for a familiarization (read indoctrination) trip. The caviar diplomacy paid off as the two junketeering

politicians—upon their return from being wined and dined in Baku's glitzy hotels and fleshpots—backed a resolution in the Hawaii legislature to declare Khojalu genocide. The Azeri plot was soundly defeated, thanks to the efforts of an 82-year-old Arpine Phillian Mar, Arthur Martirossian, and other Hawaii Armenians.

A month later, Baku tried the same ploy in Wyoming. "Khojalu was genocide" proposition was defeated there by a vote of 35 to 25, despite Baku's claim that acceding to Khojalu as genocide resolution would be beneficial to U.S. strategic interests. Earlier on, similar resolutions were defeated in next door South and North Dakota.

In February a group of Armenians in Massachusetts narrowly defeated the bid of an anti-Armenian lawyer to become a Superior Court judge. The Armenians were successful despite the fact that the lawyer (Joseph Berman) had the governor's support and is a national commissioner of the influential Anti-Defamation League (ADL)—an anti-Armenian organization headed by Abraham Foxman--which parades as an anti-racism organization. Foxman's ADL is selective in its racism and refuses to recognize the Genocide of Armenians fearing such a move could hurt Turkey's relations with Israel.

Last year a group of Ontario Armenians, supported by Alevis, defeated the Turkish consul's attempt to erect a phony monument to honor the non-existent First World War Turkish internees in Canada. Months of clandestine Turkish diplomatic efforts to raise the farcical monument in Brantford, Ontario, bit the dust, thanks to the alert action of Armenians and Alevis.

There have been recent Armenian successes also in Argentina and Australia. In all instances, Armenians took on the Turkbeijan foe armed only by the truth and a dedication to justice. They spent no money to wine-and-dine politicians or send them on $8,000 junkets (the bill for the Hawaii representatives' trip) to Yerevan to stuff them with "khorovadz" and Areni wine, a la Aliyev's gang.

While celebrating these victories, we should remember that they didn't happen just because our cause is just. Armenians were victorious because a handful of our compatriots made the effort on OUR behalf. The dedication of these mostly unsung Armenians should be a lesson to armchair Armenians everywhere. Rather than just luxuriate in our victories, Armenians should act—no matter where they live—to defeat the ongoing Turkbeijan conspiracies.

Ankara and Baku want to believe that third- and fourth-generation Diaspora Armenians would not have the patriotic drive of the earlier generations. Ankara and Baku like to believe as earlier generations inevitably leave the scene it would be a cake walk to have anti-Armenian lies accepted as the truth. To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, vigilance is the price of truth. We can't be armchair Armenians who just sit and applaud, without participating. The adage says victory has many godfathers, defeat is an orphan. If we don't participate, we have no right to appropriate the victories of those who put the time. Not only should we become activists, we should encourage our children and grandchildren to carry the torch. We can't afford to drop the torch between generations.