

ON ARMENIA BECOMING "A FRIEND IN NEED..."

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By Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 26 March 2022

The war between Ukraine and Russia rages on. On March 24, 2022, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held its seminal emergency session in Brussels to legitimize military assistance to Ukraine. The cornerstone of the NATO treaty is Article # 5, which states an attack on one NATO ally is an attack on all. This motto was invoked just once only after 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

The NATO members are united in their decision to find ways and means to help Ukraine, which is not yet a member of the NATO. In fact, the entire Eastern and Western European nations are behind Ukraine. Russia, on the other hand, has a few passive supporters, comparatively speaking. China, Iran, Syria, and Armenia and a few others are considered to be Russia's friends. None is actively trying to help President Vladimir Putin in the duality of his objectives: 1. To liberate the Donetsk and Luhansk "People's Republics" from Ukraine rule and 2. To carry out a preemptive strike against the NATO aspirant Ukraine to avoid NATO from coming into Russia's backyard, which is perceived by Moscow as too close for Russia's national security comfort.

NATO is more powerful than the Russian Federation. In terms of armament, troops, and aircrafts. NATO excels the Russian Federation by a mile. Nearly 60,000 US combat troops are ready to launch an attack on Russia if it were to attack a NATO member. Ukraine is not a member, nevertheless NATO is mobilizing to counter Russian forces from taking over Ukraine's main cities in an effort to get Ukraine surrender. What a conundrum to crack.

NATO faces the biggest test in decades. The NATO members, spearheaded by the US, are searching for a *casus belli* (cause for war) or a lame excuse, to attack Russia as the President George Bush Administration did when it attacked Saddam Hussein of Iraq despite the repeated alerts that no weapons of mass destruction were found in latter's arsenal.

The Western media, led by the US broadcasters, have already begun to vilify Russia for allegedly bombing urban areas and killing civilian men, women, and children indiscriminately. As soon as the West finds a half-baked reason, they will counter Russia's aggression against Ukraine with crippling force of 30 nations' muscle. They are desperately searching for a basis to make it look legal to attack Russia.

The rhetorical question is who is trying to help Russia. No body. Here is a golden chance for Armenia to rise and shine by offering Russia some help predicated on the old proverb of "a friend in need is a friend indeed". To avoid some ambiguity as to what it exactly means, let us define it through an example:

If someone is going through a difficult time and is in need of help, a true friend will be there to support them. Because they provide help in a time of need, they show themselves to be a real friend. The first records of "a friend in need is a friend indeed" in English dates from around 1450. However, the idea that this proverb expresses can be traced all the way back to 400 B.C. in the work

of the Greek playwright Euripides. So, the idiom has stood the test of time as being well grounded in practice.

Even though Russia may not need Armenia's help, it would feel so good to know that there is a country out there offering to help. Such a gesture speaks volumes when someone is going through trouble, let alone through a devastating war. Russia may look upon it as a moral support instead of a material aid. Either way, it would send a strong message to Kremlin that Armenia, as a true ally, initiated the offer to help without being asked to do so.

What can Armenia offer to show Russia that it is "...a friend indeed"? Ideas have changed the world; ideas may also endear Armenia to its allies. Here are some suggestions for humanitarian assistance, which may be construed as ingratiating, but after all psychology tells us that we all engage to some extent in ingratiating acts on a daily basis:

1. Offer Russia emergency hospital rooms in Guymri to transport some of the wounded Russian soldiers from Mariupol or Kyiv for treatment.
2. A few medical doctors, nurse, paramedics to volunteer to attend to the needs of the wounded soldiers outside the battlefield areas, such as in Crimea.
3. During war soldiers may depend on canned and dry food. Armenia should offer dried apricots, for example, to be packed and sent to soldiers at the front.
4. Armenian cigarette companies could offer to send to the Russian troops Armenian cigarettes.
5. Armenian candy manufactures of candies, such as Grand Candy, made of real fruit juice and nuts would be not only a treat but also a snack to soldiers on the go.
6. Armenian men and women can volunteer to pack new underwear, blankets, etc. for soldiers since they don't have time to wash the worn ones.
7. The Armenian Diaspora can also ship to Russia humanitarian aid. When it comes to creativity, sky would be the limit.

Funds for the production of goods and products could come from the Armenian government, Diaspora individuals, and many Armenian NGOs. In addition to humanitarian assistance to Russia, this gesture could very well contribute to the economy of Armenia for the production and distribution of the above suggested goods and products. What counts is the spirit, it is the gesture, and not the quantity sent. The thought counts.

While the world is helping Ukraine, Armenia should seize the opportunity to be the first to show to its only ally that it is a real, genuine friend of the Russian people. Such a kind gesture during difficult times would yield many dividends later when the war ends and when the time of reciprocity comes. People will never ever forget "A Friend In Need" for there is something noble about the gesture whether it is needed or not by those going through difficult times--and war is not just a picnic to be enjoyed or be forgotten since the consequences of war are shared by the victor as well as by the vanquished.

When a friend is going through a hard time and you'd offer to help that proves your friendship is the real deal. Therefore, Armenia should seize the opportunity to offer to Russia its humanitarian assistance while the war is raging in Ukraine.

Comments



Telo - 2022-04-12 18:09:00

This is a thoughtful article. But we historically know that no matter how much Armenia contributes to the friendship, Russia dumps on it.