

ADOPT HERO'S FAMILY

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Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 4 November 2020

The other day, I got engaged in a conversation about the war between the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno- Karabakh) and Azerbaijan with a young man named Henrikh who had immigrated from the Armavir province of Armenia to the United States over ten years ago. Henrikh said the enemy (i.e., Azerbaijan) was at the gates of Shushi, the strategic and second-largest city of Artsakh. He elaborated that President Arayik Harutyunyan had said on Facebook on Oct. 29 that the enemy was 5 km (three miles) from Shushi. Harutyunyan had explained the enemy's main goal was to capture Shushi for "Whoever controls Shushi controls Artsakh."

Henrikh's concern was that gaining control of the strategic Shushi would be a major victory for Azerbaijan and "its gang of criminal warmongers." Henrikh and his wife have two kids. He installs new appliances for a large company. The company will not grant him a lengthy leave of absence to join the Arstakh defense army. He said under the circumstances, he could not leave home to join our men fighting the genocidal Azerbaijan and Turkey. I sympathized with him and told him he could still help in different ways than by fighting. I told him that thousands of Armenians who want to enlist but circumstances do not allow them to fly to Artsakh opt to show their support and solidarity in different ways such as through donations.

From my conversation with Henrikh, an idea occurred to me: to share the feasibility of "operationalizing" it at a crucial time when war is raging and our armed forces are outnumbered, outgunned, and, are facing a league of enemies consisting of Azerbaijan, Turkey, jihadist mercenaries, and Israel's supply of high-tech weapons which are being used against innocent civilians and Artsakh's infrastructure.

To make it possible for young men and women who want to join their compatriots to defend the homeland, let us call the program "A Substitute Family to Support a Parent at War in Artsakh" or "Helping a Family When a Parent Has to Fight for Artsakh."

To put the concept into practice, churches, clubs, schools, and other Armenian social and political organizations should place notices on bulletin boards for those who want to join their sisters and brothers fighting the enemy. Later, we can computerize a database of those who want to join the army and those who would like to help them at home. The contact information of the volunteers could be either directly provided by those wanting to join the army or through the mediating organization posting the notices.

In an ideal situation, volunteer families are relatives or friends who live in the same area of the city in order to allay fears of safety and trustworthiness of the people involved.

A list of families should be announced either on bulletin boards or through the mediating organization listing the notices on bulletin boards. Those who are interested in serving as substitute family to support the family of those who had gone or plan to go to face the enemy could leave their

contact information with a mediating organization such as a school, church, club, etc.

Briefly, the substitute "uncles" and "aunts" will help with the work done by the missing parent such as taking the kids to school, grocery shopping, baby sitting, and any other chores to tidy over the family whose dad or mom is absent for a while.

Unlike the Ministry of Department of War of Azerbaijan, Armenia reports its war casualties. Recent figures of the fallen Armenian soldiers are slightly over a thousand. The enemy is playing the strategy of attrition. They know Armenia is limited in recruiting young men to be sent to the front because of its small population and chronic immigration.

However, the Armenian Diaspora boasts a population of at least 10 million. While Azerbaijan's resources are oil- and gas-based, Armenia has gold in the patriotic Diaspora. The influx of volunteer soldiers from the Diaspora may change the course of history by injecting new blood into ranks of the army.

In modern warfare, bravery is not enough. Our soldiers are exceedingly brave, but are given outmoded arsenal of weapons from the Soviet era, which are limited in precision for distance fighting. Moreover, their numbers are limited compared to the Azerbaijan's population of 10 million plus the financial ability to pay blood money to the mercenaries from Syria and Libya left over from Turkey's imperialistic involvement in those countries.

Whether we get ten, one hundred, or one thousand volunteers, it is still a good idea since the war could be protracted and the rate of attrition of our soldiers has already been made obvious by the number of our casualties. It takes a great amount of courage and sacrifice to do what our Diaspora volunteers would do. Many of these great men and women have families of their own who they have to leave behind as they go to defend our homeland.

Time is of the essence. So, let's hit the ground running, let's evaluate the merits of the idea rather than the details of the mechanism. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Besides, the program does not need financial investment to be realised. Let the Armenian Diaspora do something concurrently as well as raising funds for the war and for championing for the recognition of Artsakh and the installation of sanctions against Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Armenians everywhere are clamoring for the recognition of Artsakh as a free and independent state. Even after Artsakh obtains recognition, Azerbaijan will not give up its claim on the Armenian lands. Therefore, Artsakh needs the help of the Diaspora. It is imperative that the Armenian Diaspora come up with a sound plan based on the idea presented here to prepare Artsakh armed forces for the republic's defense for years to come since President Aliyev is no longer satisfied with the return of the five Azerbaijan regions (out of seven) occupied by Artsakh as he was amenable to do during President Ter-Petrosyan's time. Unabashedly, Baku wants Karabakh and all of the seven regions around it--nothing but the whole nine yards.

Let us work together to win the existential war which is being waged against us. The least we can do

for our military men and women is to honor and be thankful for their bravery and sacrifices by giving them a helping hand while they are serving in the Armenian army. They are facing an enemy whose primitive instincts guide its attitudes and behavior as testified by its habit of beheading Armenian POWs.

Artsakh needs every Armenian to win the war against an enemy who bombs civilian quarters and rains phosphorus bombs. The enemy plans nothing less than genocide. With your help, Artsakh will overcome the challenges the enemy is hurling at our peaceful people. When you volunteer to fight for Artsakh or if you adopt a family, our nation will declare you a hero and thank you to eternity.

There are no comments yet.