

# THE LANGUOR, LARCENY, AND BRAVADO OF THE GENERALS

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By Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 14 October 2021

***"Nothing is so good for the morale of the troops  
as occasionally to see a dead general."  
- Field Marshal Lord Slim***

Many Armenians continue to agonize as to why we lost the war to the armies of Azerbaijan and Turkey in last year's Artsakh War.

The lion's share of the blame is hurled at the previous and present heads of state, namely Pres. Levon Ter-Bederossyan, Robert Kocharian, Serzh Sargsyan, and PM Nikol Pashinyan for their negligence in preparing for war. The four politicians are not the wrong targets for the fiasco since they were also the commanders-in-chief of the armed forces.

Since government leaders depend on the military for a nation's security, we should also identify those who share the blame for the defeat. Naturally, the generals are at the top of the totem pole for they are the commissioned officers ranking above a lieutenant general. No name of active general will be mentioned here. We will focus on Armenian military commanders.

In this article, three little, but pregnant, words comprising the title of this essay will be analyzed to show what went wrong with Artsakh's defense.

Most Armenian generals are well educated. They have had extensive education and experience to rise to their position. Despite Armenia's small population, over the years Armenia has produced thousands of famous generals who also served in the Russian armed forces with distinction.

According to investigative journalists, most of the Armenian generals are vying to excel one another in material possessions. For example, most of them want or dream of living in mansions, drive luxury cars, and go on exotic vacations.

They spend their time on "dreamy idleness" to amass worldly possessions rather than make sure Armenian military forces have well-trained and well-equipped personnel who are equipped ready to challenge any adversary. Instead of a well-trained fighting army, they sent armed mobs to fight the enemy's joint forces. Armenian generals also indulge in loose thinking about Azerbaijan's army.

Are the Armenian generals serving the nation do so out of love of country, or for personal gains, power and prestige? Had they had the country's interest at heart, they would have made sure that the Armenian armed forces were ready to face its genocidal neighbors.

If the Armenian military forces were in poor condition, why, for example, the retired Artsakh war hero Major General Arkady Ter-Tadevosyan did not intervene? Why did he not warn the officials that in case of war with Azerbaijan, the Armenian forces would be ill-prepared?

The fish rots from head down. If Armenian presidents are accused of corruption it's because they set

the general culture for the rest and the generals seized the opportunity to enrich themselves.

Reportedly, some generals have become rich by cultivating large swaths of free land for personal gain while the average farmer in Artsakh was stuck with a stamp-sized plot for subsistence living.

The National Security Service (NSS) reported on Sept. 30, 2021 that the Armenian authorities had detained a former defense minister and a major arms dealer of the Republic of Armenia on charges related to embezzlement and for the purchases of faulty weaponry and ammunition. Together, the two men are charged with the fraud of approximately \$4.7 million. If convicted, they would have the blood of 5,000 soldiers on their hands.

It is a mystery how the two high-ranking officers had engineered the purchase of faulty weapons in order to pocket the saved money for personal gain.

Why did the generals accept faulty weapons and ammunition? Could it be because thieves do not tend to blow the whistle on other thieves!? Sending our brave soldiers to the front with faulty weapons is the ultimate treachery.

*Bravado* is derived from the French and Italian words meaning "bragging and boasting." It means bluffing with one's false show of extreme bravery, courage and boldness. If you are full of bravado, you pretend to be braver and more confident than you are so that you may impress or mislead others.

During press interviews, the Armenian generals used to express extreme confidence in countering any Baku aggression. Statements which boasted that if next time Azerbaijan attacks us we shall drive them all the way to Baku. While show of force and confidence are the right things to do to discourage the enemy from contemplating an attack they should not stop you from assessing your strengths and weaknesses.

Our generals should have said: "Armenia is strong and ready to face any external aggression, but we need to be ultra highly prepared by getting more and more of UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems)". You can bluff the enemy, but not mislead your people by pretending to be more powerful than you are. In so doing, you jeopardize your country's safety and security. Under the cloak of secrecy, the generals should have discussed the shortcomings of the Armenian forces and what needed to be done urgently before the eruption of another armed conflict. The "business as usual" attitude was the root cause of the defeat.

Soldiers, not generals, win battles and wars. Yet, it's often the generals who collect the medals. Napoleon Bonaparte remarked: "Soldiers generally win battles; generals get credit for them". If generals get credit for winning the war, then they should also be discredited for losing the war.

The Armenian generals should have made certain that the soldiers sent to the front were well-trained and equipped with the most effective weapons to face the encircling fire of the enemy consisting of a league of half-a-dozen of countries. Field Marshal Lord Slim captured that spirit when

said: "Nothing is so good for the morale of the troops as occasionally to see a dead general". Slim was a great Australian "fighting soldier" of a high ranking officer in WWI and WWII. Regardless of his position, he participated in battles. He understood that troops want to know that their commanders get out of their comfort zone to share the risks with their troops. A "dead general" makes that point.

What should we do with our generals who have failed to carry out their duties, obligations, moral as well as professional? Court martial them? Fire them? Ship them out to Pres. Ilham Aliyev for honoring them for the easy victory? Make them give back what they had stolen from the people? Or ask them to commit suicide?

What happened to the WWII Japanese generals who were "charged" by the court of public opinion as citizens who had disappointed their country? The moral charge was not for languor or larceny, but for not being able to assess the strength of the enemy. Many, such as General Sugiyama Hajime, killed themselves to escape being tried as war criminals. Sugiyama had to be talked into it by his wife, because he did not feel it was necessary to die for losing the war against a superior foe.

We do not want the Armenian generals to commit suicide, but to return to the people all they had stolen from them. Naturally, they cannot return to their mothers 5,000 of our sons who perished in the war, but they can certainly resign to make room to generals for whom love of country comes first.

Being resilient, we will ride on to overcome our sorrows. But when do we begin to learn from our mistakes so as not to depend on our resilience to rise from the ashes? When do we learn to avoid being burned in the first place? Somehow, smarts, collaboration, and unity should replace resilience as being the most important trait of the Armenian people.

The stakes are high. We cannot risk national security. We should all (Armenia, Artsakh, and the Diaspora) shoot for excellence. Perfection is the fuel of the engine for achieving higher levels of excellence. Our brave soldiers deserve the best, nothing but excellence in generals, equipment, and weapons, for they risk their lives for the protection of our Homeland, Hayastan.

*The above picture shows a mourning Armenian mother placing flowers at the grave of her fallen son. Her streaming tears have turned her nostrils red. Here is a grieving mother of a valiant son who gave his life for the protection of Artsakh. Who is responsible for the lives of our brave soldiers? Turkey and Azerbaijan? Yes! The Armenian generals? For their "dreamy idleness," for their pursuit of personal gains, and for their false bravado courage, we lost nearly 5,000 soldiers, 48 percent of our Artsakh lands, 190 Armenian settlements, historic Shushi, the crown jewel city of Artsakh, and the aftermath of the war disunity in the political landscape of Armenia and Artsakh. Of all the losses, no one will ever feel a bigger grief than the lonely mothers who lost their sons.*

## Comments



**Noubar Serabian** – 2021-11-16 20:45:48

American author Eric Hoffer pointed out in his writings that "The only index by which to judge a government or a way of life is by the quality of the people it acts upon. No matter how noble the objectives of a government, if it blurs decency and kindness, cheapens human life, and breeds ill will and suspicion- it is an evil government." Any government that "Cheapens human life" by casually sacrificing 5000 soldiers, to satisfy the greed of a money hungry, former defence minister David Tonoyan (crony of PM Pashinyan) and a bunch of army Generals is an EVIL Government.



**Minas Kojayan** – 2021-11-11 01:18:43

Կը ծափահարեմ հեղինակին համարձակ մեղադրանքները, բայց չեմ կրնար համաձայնիլ այն աւանդաբար կրկնուող ոչ ճիշդ մեղադրանքներուն, որոնք ուղղուած են Ա. Նախագահի շրջանի զինուորականութեան եւ յատկապէս հրամանատարութեան հասցէին: Շատ պարզ պատճառաբանութեամբ՝ այդ ինչպէ՞ս եղաւ, որ 90-ականներուն ալ մենք աւելի վատ զինուած էինք, բայց մեր անձնագոհ բանակայինները «արիւրեան բազում գործեր կատարեցին մեր աշխարհին մէջ» (Խորենացի, Ե. դար): Պիտի փափաքէի փաստերը լրջօրէն նկատի ունենալ եւ «կողմի» մը հանդէպ օրինաւոր միջոցներու դիմած Ա. Նախագահը չնոյնացնել յաջորդներուն հետ: (Մ.Գ.)