

LETTER CAMPAIGN FOR ARTSAKH'S INDEPENDENCE RECOGNITION

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By Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles 30 March 2021

*"All I need is a sheet of paper and
something to write with, and then
I can turn the world upside down."
Friedrich Nietzsche*

Armenia is reeling from last fall's defeat at the hands of Turkbaijan. The unprovoked and surprise attack has left Artsakh in disarray economically, socially, politically, and territorially.

For the rebirth of Artsakh, three pressing national projects should be pursued concurrently:

- I. Recovery – The return of Artsakh citizens to their homes; building their infrastructure and healing the wounds of the environment among other important considerations.
- II. Mobilization of the nation -- Arming for the inevitable future war against expansionist/racist Turkbaijan, acquiring arms through local production and through imports from China, training of our young men and women including Diaspora volunteers for a standing army. To engage the enemy next time, drones, jet fighters and other "tools" of war are essential additions to the Armenian army.
- III. Recognition -- Campaigning for the recognition of Artsakh's independence. Let us not fall victim to the delusion that we would prevail next time without serious preparation and claim we are not defeated when we have been humiliated because of Armenia's corruption, egocentric leaders, complacency, and Diaspora's passivity.

In a recent article, "[Persuasive Appeals for Artsakh's Recognition of Independence](#)", I stressed the importance of campaigning on behalf of Artsakh's recognition of independence. I shall cite a letter on how to capitalize on appeal strategies to persuade people to acknowledge or ask their representatives to recognize the independence of Artsakh.

The need to get sovereign countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Artsakh cannot be overemphasized since the Turkbaijan genocidal duo are intent on swallowing the rest of Artsakh.

One of our most important defense strategies will be to work on getting countries in the West to accept Artsakh as a free, independent, and sovereign state for its ultimate survival in its present hostile environment.

Let's consider Aristotle's art of persuasion. What would be the most effective way to appeal for assistance, for help in recognizing Artsakh's independence?

Let us base our strategy on Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, the three appeals Aristotle coined in his seminal "*Rhetoric*".

Ethos (appeal to ethics/credibility) refers to the effort to convince your audience or reader of your credibility or character. In other words, before you can convince an audience to do something for

you or to accept anything you say, it has to accept you as a credible, trustworthy source.

Pathos (appeal to emotions) refers to your effort to persuade your audience by appealing to their feelings. Your audience will be more receptive to being persuaded by someone with whom they can identify. In using pathos, you need to make the audience feel an emotion in order to act. Research shows pathos is most effective when used in the introduction and conclusion of your letter or speech.

For example, in a letter which promotes recognition of Artsakh's independence, you may cite how Azerbaijan launched an unprovoked sneak attack on Artsakh and shelled/bombed civilian quarters and infrastructure with drones, phosphorus gas, loitering munitions, etc. all in contravention of international law. Thousands have become displaced (appeal to pathos).

Logos (appeal to logic) refers to the effort to convince your audience by using logic and reason. To promote logos, effective arguments should make use of testimonials, surveys and other supporting details to back up your claims.

Avoid information overload. Do not overdo facts and figures.

Research shows that of the three appeals, logos is the most effective strategy to use for everything being equal. Ethos and pathos, both are equally effective.

In addition to the three pillars of persuasion, there is the most powerful notion of "appealing to one's self-interest". This falls into the logos category. If you need to turn to an ally or someone else for help, do not remind him of your past assistance and good deeds. Instead, find something in your request or in your alliance with him that will benefit him, and emphasize it out of all proportion.

When we approach President Joseph Biden, for example, and ask for recognition of Artsakh, we must not forget to explain how Artsakh's independence will be good for "America" (e.g., a new market, an ally in the south Caucasus, U.S. will be hailed as a true democracy that upholds self-determination, etc.) and President Biden will be remembered as a true friend of those fighting for their freedom. We have to offer a benefit for the exchange.

Based on scientific findings, when asking for help, appeal to people's self-interest and never to their mercy or gratitude alone. In asking for help, do not dwell on the past.

Self-interest is a compelling reason for people to respond positively to propositions of mutual interest. So, always think of reciprocity when you want someone to do something for you unless you are dealing with a close family member or a bosom friend.

If I were asked to write a letter on behalf of the recognition of Artsakh's independence, this is what I would say: (Note: For explanatory reasons, this will be a long letter to elaborate on the appeals and their sequence used for persuasion).

March 29, 2021

Dear Senator Roseburg:

I am writing to you on a matter of mutual importance. The Republic of Artsakh's (Nagorno-Karabakh) democracy is in the balance and requires to be saved with your assistance. During your nine-year tenure in Congress as senator, I have always known you to be a champion of democracy. On account of your dedication to objectivity, you have held key senate positions. For example, in 2008, you voted for the independence of Kosovo despite being pressured to veto it. As a member of your constituency, I have always respected your fair and just decisions (appeal to ethos that I am current with the senator's past political behavior).

As you are aware, the de facto Republic of Artsakh was subjected to an unprovoked surprise attack on September 27, 2020 by the combined military forces of Azerbaijan, Turkey, ISIS jihadists, Syrian and Libyan mercenaries, and Pakistani volunteers. The result was death and destruction of 5,000 Armenian soldiers. Thousands of civilian men, women, and children became homeless as they lost 30 percent of their ancestral lands through the use of certain weapons in contravention of international law.

The United States was founded on the bedrock of democracy. American colonists declared independence based on self-determination just like the indigenous people of Artsakh had to in 1988. After eight years of warfare, the colonists succeeded in achieving independence (1776) with the help of French forces and finance. Without the external assistance, the Americans would have lost their quest for independence against the well-trained and well-equipped British.

Artsakh now is facing a turning point in its self-declaration of independence from the yoke of Azerbaijan. Like the United States in the 1700s, Artsakh needs assistance to continue with its struggles for survival and freedom to uphold democracy in a hostile environment. Therefore, the Armenian people around the world will be thankful for your advocacy to get the United States government recognize the independence of Artsakh which is in the throes of losing its ancestral homeland and democracy (appeal to pathos).

Your re-election to the senate begins on September 28, 2021. Armenian community volunteers will help make your campaign successful by offering their assistance. In recognition of your kind and historical assistance to a little democratic nation, your name will be inscribed in a Golden Book to be on display at Artsakh capital's city hall for posterity along with the names of others who were champions of democracy (appeal to logos/self-interest).

As always, I thank you for your contributions to the United States and for being a staunch advocate of democracy around the world. I especially would like to acknowledge your solidarity with the Armenian people and for your kind assistance for the survival of Artsakh as a democratic republic (appeal to pathos).

Very truly yours,

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Please note that this is a long letter. I am using it to show the sequence of using appeals. Additionally, this sample letter shows the need to use all three persuasive appeal strategies (ethos, logos, and pathos), including the idea of self-interest.

At the beginning, after establishing your credibility as a trustworthy person, make your readers/listeners relate to you (ethos); use logos (logic) to argue and build your points. Finally, finish with pathos (emotional appeal).

And please do not forget the age-old wisdom: Self-interest, not self-sacrifice,

The success of the three pillars of persuasion is predicated as well on the concept of *Kairos* (ancient Greek meaning the right, critical, or opportune moment). The opportune time to engage in the persuasion process is now more than ever. For Artsakh, the window of opportunity is open now--it is just the right time to campaign for its recognition as a democratic republic. Its story is still fresh in the minds of the concerned members of the world community.

The world has come to know that this tiny de facto republic of 150, 000 brave people were subjected to the onslaught of Turkey and Azerbaijan. One of the unintended consequences of the second Artsakh War is that during the war Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh was put on the map by the journalists and war correspondents. Most of the Western world is indignant about the nefarious assistance of Turkey in the war.

We waited too long to get the US Senate to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Before Artsakh's situation becomes history, we should make sure its independence is recognized, especially by countries that have recognized the Armenian Genocide. Let us keep Russia on our side, but build our strength and depend on ourselves.

The enmity between Armenia and Azerbaijan is extreme. Armenians cannot live under the latter's oppressive rule. The fork in the road is to enlist the talents of the Diaspora to the enterprise of ensuring Artsakh's freedom, independence, and sovereignty. Let us ride on the momentum Artsakh gained from the international press coverage of the war, especially for being brutally treated by Azerbaijan's and Turkey's allied forces. Like numbers, words have power; they can move mountains. Instead of glorifying defeat, we shall be able to celebrate victory if we are prepared to face the foe.

There are no comments yet.