WHEN HOMELAND SECURITY IS AT STAKE...

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Category: Opinions

Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 14 February 2023

***Prof. Demirdjian's article was penned prior to dismissal of Mr. Rouben Vardanyan as Artsakh's State Minister. The article, however, remains relevant to the current existential crisis with the messages of "acting in unison should be the norm" and "internecine fights are counterproductive during a crisis or war time."* - Editor.**

"We cannot be separated in interest,
or divided in purpose.
We stand together until the end".
Woodrow T. Wilson

In early January, I was having a casual conversation with a friend in Yerevan, who, like all concerned Armenians, has been following the events in Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) closely.

When I said to my friend I had read a positive piece of news that Ruben Vardanyan had joined forces with the Artsakh people to get a foothold against Azerbaijan, she expressed mixed feelings about it. At first she agreed with me about Vardanyan, but then ruefully indicated that the "oligarchs" and "ignorant politicians" were already lining up to oust him from his recent position as Artsakh's Minister of State .

I would like to explore with you how we should come together in the midst of a national crisis and exploit the power of unity.

Unlike millions of Armenian Diasporans, Vardanyan gave up his comfortable life in Russia to try to steel, to energize the people of Artsakh for the struggle ahead to remain independent of Azerbaijan, which is backed by Turkey, Israel, and Christian-hating Pakistan.

Vardanyan has succeeded in gaining the support of Artsakh people to remain steadfast in fighting for the freedom and independence of the Republic of Artsakh.

Considering the dire circumstances, Vardanyan's decision to throw his hat in the politics of saving Artsakh from the jaws of Azerbaijan is commendable. This is a kind of sacrifice rarely happens in the present Armenian Diaspora, which has many more multimillionaires and billionaires to come forth and lend a helping hand to their brothers and sisters in distress.

In the absence of any other source to come to the rescue, Vardanyan as a ray of hope is much better than despairing in the darkness of helplessness.

A perusal of his background would indicate that Vardanyan is highly educated with a Ph.D. in Economics from a blue chip university, has had vast experience in business, and also a philanthropist as the co-founder of Aurora Prize --Awakening of Humanity, a yearly event to select a dedicated person to win one million dollars.

Unlike pre-Nikol Pashinyan presidents of Armenia who became rich at the expense of the people, Vardanyan is already a billionaire and may not have the aim to plunder his people, but perhaps to become the president of Armenia when the opportunity presents itself.

Some say he has delusions of grandeur. If that were true, it would serve him as a motivator in this critical case, propelling him toward success.

Before Vardanyan is given the chance to prove himself, oppositions in Armenia are out there trying to discredit him on account of his ties with the former egotistic presidents.

In Artsakh, the criticism is that he became the Minister of State without democratic elections. During a crisis such as a war, democracy is dispensed with for the sake of saving the country from a cruel adversary.

Vardanyan's meteoric rise to power has baffled the Azerbaijanis. They think he is an agent of Kremlin, dispatched to Karabakh to work against Baku's interests. As a result, Azerbaijani press has been expressing its hatred toward this man.

Fault finding, blaming, reproaching, and criticizing are counterproductive when a nation is in a crisis. As of this writing, the people of Artsakh have been stranded for over 65 days.

At a critical time when Armenia and Artsakh should show the world solidarity, a united front, speculation has it that Armenia and Artsakh are now divided.

At a press conference on January 11, 2023, PM Pashinyan said that "it is not the government of Armenia that should decide the fate and relations of Nagorno-Karabakh". If it is true that PM Pashinyan is washing his hands off of Artsakh publicly, he is a genuine liability.

How can anyone distance Armenia from Artsakh, when the latter is a historical province of Armenia? Pashinyan at the above press conference further added: "The people of Karabakh should decide for themselves and should have communication, including with the authorities of Azerbaijan."

However, this last remark does not mean Armenia is washing its hands off of Artsakh. Rather, it insinuates that Artsakh should participate in the negotiations with Baku.

A wide diversity of opinion or strategy is only a peace time topic or activity. In other words, acting in unison should be the norm during wartime.

Marooned in a hostile territory of Azerbaijan, Armenians of Artsakh are trying to survive a second genocide. So, what should we do?

Ideas have changed the world; ideas, old or new, can also improve Armenia. Here is a classic lesson to learn from the past.

When Germany began the air raid on London (i.e., the Blitzkriegs), most people were skeptical about winning the war against Hitler's might. However, Churchill led his team with his courageous spirit and

inspired the British people by insisting that they will win as opposed to a "negotiated settlement" proposed by the British Foreign Secretary, Viscount Halifax.

In 1940, during WWII, the British war cabinet was split on the question of whether to make terms with Germany or to continue hostilities. The main protagonists were PM Winston Churchill and the Foreign Secretary Viscount Halifax..

Considering the retreat of the British Expeditionary Force in Dunkirk and the imminent fall of France, Halifax believed that the government should explore the possibility of a negotiated peace settlement.

Churchill, on the other hand, opposed the idea of making terms with Germany for the act would have been tantamount to capitulating or surrendering to Hitler. Instead, Churchill said: "Never, never, never, give up."

When a memorandum proposing the settlement approach was discussed at the War Cabinet, Churchill opposed it and urged his colleagues to fight on without negotiations. He was supported in the war cabinet by its two Labor Party members, Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, and also by the Secretary of State for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair. The issue was settled peacefully.

The rest is history. In addition to the unified British citizens, many volunteers from the British Commonwealth countries joined in with the locals to rally for the cause to defeat Hitler. As a result, Churchill emerged victorious on account of acting in unison against a formidable enemy.

The intent here is not paralleling the crisis in Britain with the crisis in Artsakh. They are not of the same stature or extent. However, we can learn lessons from them that --internecine fights are counterproductive during a crisis or war time and that cooperation and collaboration are vital for success.

Citing how Britain after a debate or dispute worked together against the common enemy, we are hoping here to show how unity stands a better chance of success than wide diversity of opinions, strategies, and internecine fights carried over into an ongoing war.

Lessons from the Battle of Britain crisis should teach us the power of unity. According to historians, during the war in UK, there was "1. A clear common purpose 2. A sense of urgency and importance 3. A requirement for high standards and/or a huge challenge 4. Everyone stands to have a stake in the outcome 5. The effort is humanizing 6. A leader that united".

Churchill's stern determination plus unity in purpose of the people led Britain to victory --despite the initial superiority of German forces. This was one of the milestones of military success in the Battle of Britain to showcase the annals of WWII.

Another important lesson to learn: How did Churchill finance his war against Germany? By "crowd funding", an idea exploited by Max Aiken (aka Lord Beaverbrook), in which every member of the

British public was encouraged to do their part for the war effort. The Spitfire Fund was born to build and deliver enough Spitfires (namely, war planes) to defend Britain.

Twelve million Armenians in the world can also crowd fund for "Hye-drones" for the survival of Artsakh. With each person contributing $10 toward the war effort, we would have $120 million for the production of attack drones.

The Armenian tendency to divide the nation into "us" and "them" can produce a debilitating divisiveness. There seems to be a psychological hindrance to national unity.

Chronic civil conflict reflects the extent of widespread neurosis and even ignorance of depth psychology. The psyche of Armenians is being poisoned by divisive political, tribal infighting, which alienates the citizenry and even alarms them when the nation is faced with a crucible war.

Armenians need to deal with reality. In this time of existential crisis for Armenia, disunity makes them weaker against an enemy sworn to conquer them. National unity is vital to face crises and that shared identity, purpose, and destiny foster unity.

The 120,000 people of Artsakh are under stress, which is the psychological and physiological reaction to an event or condition that is considered a threat or challenge. Show of national unity would be an important psychosocial support during times of stress and crisis.

When Armenia is under siege, let us all unite together and stand behind Minister of State Ruben Vardanyan to play his cards against another highly educated, experienced opponent who is also a cruel character known as Ilham Aliyev, the conniving dictator of South Caucasus.

Since Armenia is not endowed with gas and oil, the West is turning a blind eye to Azeri naked aggression. Currently, Vardanyan seems to be our only stepping stone to success. Let us all support Vardanyan in his quest to save Artsakh from the sons of the Turkish conquerors, or rather marauders, of Armenia.

The wisdom of the centuries is distilled in the Bible, the Quran, and the Talmud. Looking back over his life and considering the sovereignty of God, King Solomon penned the following astute observations: "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. When the enemy is at the gates of Yerevan and Stepanakert, it is time to unite.

If King Tigran the Great were here today, he would say, let us all march in step toward saving Artsakh by stopping the plunders of our ancestral lands. And let us not forget: "When homeland security is at stake ...all Armenians should act as one"!

Unity against an enemy is half the battle. The rest is the deep pocket of the Armenian Diaspora billionaires to buy or produce attack drones for the Defense Forces of Artsakh and save the 120, 000 marooned people of Artsakh.

We must all build national unity, build all revolutionary forces, into one powerful wave to sweep away the main genocidal enemy, which is about to annihilate the indigenous people of Artsakh living in their ancestral lands continuously for the millennia. Together means stronger, together means synergy, together means victory, and together means protecting the Homeland!

Comments



Tavit – 2023-03-11 00:53:30
I am NOT defending Pashinyan one bit by any of the following: But Russia is torturing Artsakh by deliberately letting Azerbaijan continue the blockade. Russia is letting Azerbaijan do this and is letting Azerbaijan occupy southern Armenia. Russia is pressuring Armenia to become a complete Russian vassal and completely reject the West. That's what this is about. It's about Armenia's importance to Russia's future hold on the Caucasus. Armenia is essential to Russian strategy. Georgia and Azerbaijan are not, Azerbaijan, for example, is doing everything it can to pretend to be nice to Russia while secretly plotting to kick Russia out of the region. Is not Azerbaijan allied with Israel and Turkey, after all? By not getting hysterical and by not buying into Russia's pressure (especially on Artsakh) Pashinyan is not letting Russia fully exercise its pressure on Armenia. Having said that, Demirdjian's call for unity is smart. Let us work toward achieving this.



Garo – 2023-03-10 17:39:04
Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora Our INTEREST is the same ; Independent statehood for Armenia and Independence for Artsakh. Our PURPOSE is the same: To preserve our Statehood, and physical existence of Artsakh. Still we don't have National Unity and Togetherness. Something has always prevented the National Unity. Even when Armenia was fighting Kemal Ataturk in 1920 to preserve its existence; Some Armenians cooperating with Azerbaijan and Turkey marched in from Tavush region to topple our first republic and loose Independence for the next 70 years. I believe we need visionaries like Churchil to accomplish the UNITY and TOGETHERNESS. "Crowd funding" is very important concept which was utilized during Second Artsakh war in 2020, and Diaspora was able to generate more than 150 million dollars in one month. This effort should be ongoing as suggested by professor Demirdjian, which may result in huge capital to finance war, and achieve the common Purpose.