A WOMAN PRESIDENT FOR ARMENIA

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Category: Opinions

By Prof. Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian, Los Angeles, 28 September 2022

It's no secret that since independence Armenia has struggled under the "leadership" of four men who have been incompetent or corrupt or incompetent and corrupt. While their decisions have hurt Armenia in diplomacy, in economics, in cultural affairs, and in half-a-dozen other vital areas, I would like to focus here on their deleterious decisions regarding Armenia's military standing. As a result of the policies of Nikol Pashinyan's predecessors Armenia lost in April of 2016 soldiers, villages, and hilltops (strategic military positions) to the invading Azerbaijanis.

Then there was the disastrous war of 2020.

In July 2022, Azerbaijan's artillery barrage and drones did not make Pashinyan look into the situation to see if Armenia/Artsakh defense forces could withstand Azeri aggression.

Then on Sept. 13 Azerbaijan attacked again.

What does it take to get ready to face the enemy? A total loss? A humiliating defeat? Well you got it, Mr. PM! While Pashinyan is seemingly a sincere person, honesty is not sufficient to lead a country out of an existential predicament.

The blunders of Armenia's presidents and prime ministers made me wonder what it would be like to have a woman become president of Armenia.

I shall not get into the topic of the derelictions of former presidents of Armenia. The naiveté, ignorance, and irresponsibility of Ter-Petrossian and the incompetence and corruption of Kocharian and Serge Sargsyan governments need no documentation.

Due to the dereliction of our political and military leaders, we lost too many people and huge swathes of territory during the Second Artsakh War of 2020. Worse yet, Armenians around the world are in a funk and their hopes are shattered as to how to get out of the quagmire. On a daily basis, Azerbaijan is nibbling away Armenian territory with no end in sight. Many people expect a large-scale attack by Azerbaijan any day.

Drawing upon many studies, let us explore how well have women handled high-ranking, high-level leadership positions such as chief-executive officer, secretary of state, president of a corporation, and the like.

Briefly, the following characteristics of women are the consensus of many researchers who have scientifically determined as to what makes women stand out compared to their male counterparts: Women are…

- Great Listeners. Research shows that women in leadership positions are better listeners. They listen, appreciate diverse view points, and make informed decisions after hearing all points of view. In this way, they learn, reflect, and implement a plan that incorporates the best of ideas.

- Great Team-Players. As leaders, women are team-oriented. Unlike men who are usually lone wolves, women are more nurturing, and help the team members grow professionally. They are effective collaborators and strive to succeed, which boosts teamwork and helps implement a new culture within the organization. The end result is synergy.
- Great Communicators. One of the strongest skills of women is communication. Generally, they are better at getting longer lasting results because they have an open and more communication-friendly or naturally interactive style and this encourages participation as opposed to men's command and control approach. Also, women's command of the language and articulation is much better than that of men.
- Great in Defying Challenges. Over the years, the world cultures have made it very difficult for women to succeed. The odds are always against them to lead and it is an uphill battle for them to get to the top. Those women who have acquired a position of leadership, after overcoming many hurdles, would tend to emerge stronger and more determined to succeed. The rough experience of shattering the glass ceiling would make them great leaders to face even complicated challenges. As a result, they believe in gender equality for all.
- Great at Multi-Tasking. Due to different roles that a woman plays in her own life (e.g., wife, mother, writer, publisher, etc.), multi-tasking comes naturally to her. The ability to switch among tasks and handle multiple tasks simultaneously, helps women decisively and rapidly respond to different tasks or situations at the same time, a time which is a critical component to successful leadership.
- Great at Leading by Example. Women leaders are petrified to have a blemish on their reputation. Therefore, the tendency is to operate openly and candidly in carrying out the responsibilities of their position. Women believe strongly in transparency in conducting national affairs. For them honesty is the best policy to avoid embarrassment and disgrace.
- Great at Emotional Intelligence. In interpersonal relations, women show higher emotional intelligence, which is the ability to use emotion to increase one's own and others' success. Women are quicker than men to recognize emotions in themselves and in others and relate. This trait comes to women more naturally to aid them sense in the moment how others are reacting and makes them good mentors, teachers, and group leaders.
- Great Transformational Catalysts. Women are more concerned to making a difference in people's lives. Women leaders usually serve to transform people's lives, male or female, for the better. A great leader, for instance, never fails to influence people around him or her by inspiring their thoughts for greater success in life. A woman's charismatic leadership style is well established to draw people towards organization's mission and vision.
- Great Stamina to Persevere. It has been established that women have higher level of stamina than men do. Like in a prize fighter, stamina is essential to endure the torturous rounds to either knock down or knock out one's opponent. Men are known to have shorter stamina in handling long-drawn problems facing the organization they happen to lead.
- Great at Telling the Truth. Since the previous presidents of Armenia have enriched themselves

at the expense of the country they ruled by embezzling and telling lies, and since I have a firsthand experience with this topic, let me elaborate on this important honesty virtue of whose lack has caused a lot of problems to the national security of the Armenian people.

My academic studies demonstrate men engaged more in Response Error than women did, namely they lied more often than women. I tend to subscribe to the belief that women are more straightforward than men. Honesty is one quality that Armenia direly needs in its leaders.

In addition to gender difference, Response Error studies have shown that young people distort more verifiable information than older ones. Also, people who live in rural areas engage less in Response Error than those who live in urban areas.

In the final analysis, on account of the superior characteristics of women to serve in leadership roles, maybe Armenia should try to elect a woman for the presidency or prime minister's office to avoid this time electing congenital, shameless liars bent on pursuing their own personal gains.

Based on many of their admirable traits, women would listen to the Diaspora better than men presidents for women's ego are not as overly inflated when they get into office. After all, we have only male chauvinists, and no female chauvinists. As you know, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, but men are more susceptible to that temptation than women are.

After being elected to the office, suppose the Armenian head of the government enlisted my help as a Diaspora member to serve in a advisory position, I would suggest: he or she should ask first of all two short questions about two little words that would make a hell of a lot of difference about the national security situation:

"How safe are the people?" "How secure are they?" Two short sentences would make a whale of a difference for the destiny of the country.

“Safe” and “secure” mean free from danger. Nevertheless, there is a shade of difference in meanings between the two words. Safe suggests freedom from a present danger (e.g., I felt safe as soon as I crossed the street, or we do not feel safe with our current outdated weapons). As for secure, it suggests freedom from possible danger or risk. (e.g., locks on the door made us feel secure, or attack drones will make us feel secure against a foreign aggression.

Any response that shows weakness in our national "safety" and "security," will have to be treated as top priority. Had Pashinyan asked these questions when he became the prime minster in 2018, we would have been better prepared to face the combined forces of Armenia's adversary in 2020.

Any national leader's first and foremost responsibility is the safety and security of the people, of the country, of the nation. Armenian leaders lack knowledge and experience in leading a country surrounded by belligerent enemies.

Safety and security, like bread and shelter, come first, then building theaters and operas or treed

boulevards and marble monuments.

In my review of the literature, I did not come across a single article or study which concluded that women do not make better leaders.

The year 1991 marked the first year when more female students began to attend colleges and universities in the US than male students. In every human endeavor, women are advancing in leaps and bounds. Women have proven their worth in every discipline, including astronomy, athletics, entertainment, writing, business, politics, science and technology, and so on.

Gender bias aside, the above listed characteristics give us more than a glimpse of their grit and perseverance. Even when faced with uneven playing fields, many women defied all odds with their honesty, intelligence, boldness, hard work, and determination.

Many countries have chosen women as president. Mao Zedong, former President of the People's Republic of China, stated, "Women hold up half the sky." He was referring to women being a resource that ought to be utilized in the professional workforce. We probably should say: "Women hold up most of the sky over the heads of men," for bearing, rearing, and nurturing the next generation of a nation.

Leadership cannot be gender specific – a person's leadership abilities should depend on their individual strengths and personality traits. Yet, studies have shown that women often surpass men in leadership positions.

Armenia is facing a sea of problems. Perhaps a women president or a prime minister would be able to alleviate its woes and boost its defense capabilities and economy while stamping out corruption, domestic crimes, etc.

Also, Armenia should reach out to its Diaspora to serve as a straw to save it from drowning. As selfless Mother Teresa once said: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." The Armenian Diaspora is waiting for the leader who would "cast the stone" so that they would come to the rescue of a leader whose competence is based on honesty, obligation, altruism, commitment, emotion, and shared vision for the advancement of the Armenian nation.

Comments

Z. S. Andrew Demirdjian – 2022-10-14 03:16:37
In reply to Kev: Question 1: How long will it take to change the attitudes of Armenian men towards female candidates? First off, thanks for asking great questions. As you well know, attitudes of the people are part of the overall culture of the society. It would take a long time to change it; however, by the combined efforts of parents, teachers, the government, the press, and society at large, it would be possible to change this recalcitrant aspect of the Armenian tradition of being male oriented. . Just because changing culture is a difficult task, we should not despair; Instead begin the education to prove that woman can also make great leaders in high-ranking positions. Question 2: Does the Armenian constitution require candidates to be of any gender? To be certain, I called a friend in Yerevan who is well-versed in Armenian constitutional matters. She indicated that the constitution n does say that male and female citizens must be treated equally. Therefore, the constitution does not seem to be biased against females in general. You and I have shown great interest in this subject. I hope others will also join our band wagon to keep the ball rolling toward electing a female president for a change. Hope these short answers will satisfy your intellectual curiosity. Best regards, Andrew

Kev – 2022-10-11 18:21:03
Thank you, professor, for the novel idea of an Armenian woman president and prime minister for future consideration. Would it then be appropriate to explore the following: 1) How long would it take to reset the “macho” attitudes of Armenian men within and outside the government to acknowledge honest, educated, capable, articulate, experienced, politically savvy women, who should not be ridiculed or harassed as sex symbols by incompetent male members of the community and leadership? 2) Is there a reference to the sex of candidates in the Armenian Constitution which will require modification/change going forward?