KEGHART OPTS FOR WESTERN ARMENIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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Within a span of fewer than three years (Oct. 2007 to March 2007) two United States congressional foreign affairs committees have gone on public record recognizing the Genocide of the Armenians. Of the 50 states, 42 have acknowledged the Genocide. In recognizing the Genocide, President Ronald Reagan spelled out the sentiments of the average American while three recent presidents, during their election campaigns, promised to acknowledge the mass killings as Genocide.

Whether the latest decision of the U.S. foreign relations committee will be debated in the full house and a corresponding resolution passed remains a moot issue. As expected, the Turkish ambassador was called back and "all hell broke loose" in Turkey. The usual threats that the U.S may lose its NATO ally and hence compromise mutual interests abound in the Turkish media. Some have blamed Erdogan's government for not doing enough to prevent the passage of the resolution. Others are threatening to topple Erdogan's government in the next election. No wonder the voices against lifting the blockade and opening the border with Armenia have become more forceful. In all likelihood the Protocols will be shelved as their predecessor the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) was.

There is much media speculation that the latest decision of the committee of the foreign affairs is partly a reflection of Israel's resentment with Turkey's criticism of Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza and Turkey's rapprochement with Iran. The assertion might be partially justified since this year the Jewish Lobby did not demonstrate any overt signs of campaigning against the resolution.What's clear is that the Genocide of the Armenians is being treated as a toy in international politics, and moral imperatives are not part of the deliberations at the highest levels of either the U.S administration or related parties.

Once more realpolitik is front and centre.

It's been a while since Armenians realized this fact. Yet to counter and neutralize such a bitter reality has been increasingly difficult given the present geopolitical atmosphere which will likely continue to prevail in the foreseeable future.

So what course of action should Armenians pursue? Is there a strategy that might increase the chances of finally getting the congress to acknowledge once and for all the veracity of the Genocide of the Armenians? Should Armenia be more assertive in voicing the claims in the international arena? Are Armenians investing time, money and effort in the wrong strategy? Should Armenians "punish" those who did not keep their promises during electoral campaigns and give their votes to the opposing parties? What guarantees are there that the candidate of the opposing party will not renege on promises once elected? These are some of the questions that are being asked publicly, in chat rooms, in forums and in Armenian living rooms.

The multicentric Armenian Diaspora, despite its well-intentioned and heightened interest in our past,

is at a loss in providing a realistic outcome. Except for the usual ritual of lobbying American congressmen, all other efforts are fragmented, and at times contradictory. This reality too is recognized by all interested parties--whether affiliated with organizations or not. Yet they seem to lack the faith or perhaps the confidence to take matters further and make a much-needed leap forward. Understandably, scepticism and unfortunate experiences seem to hold them back, languishing in limbo.

Isn't it time, as we approach the centennial of the Genocide, Armenians left behind their parochial differences and joined forces to commemorate the horrific anniversary with a significant move forward? Proposals to gather our forces are not lacking. Some cover all-encompassing interests: politics, culture, religion, etc. Others are focused on the political aspect of the issue, primarily involving the recovery of our territorial losses in Western Armenia and in Cilicia, including personal property.

At this important juncture, Keghart has made its choice by backing the proposed Western Armenian National Congress. We do not see such a move detrimental to the fulfilment of other proposals. On the contrary, we believe that if properly executed, the various proposals now on the table can complement one other. Given the Diasporic diversity, Keghart believes that a focused organization has a far better chance of getting up and running sooner, and in the long term walking tall not only to assert but also claim our rights in the international forums.

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