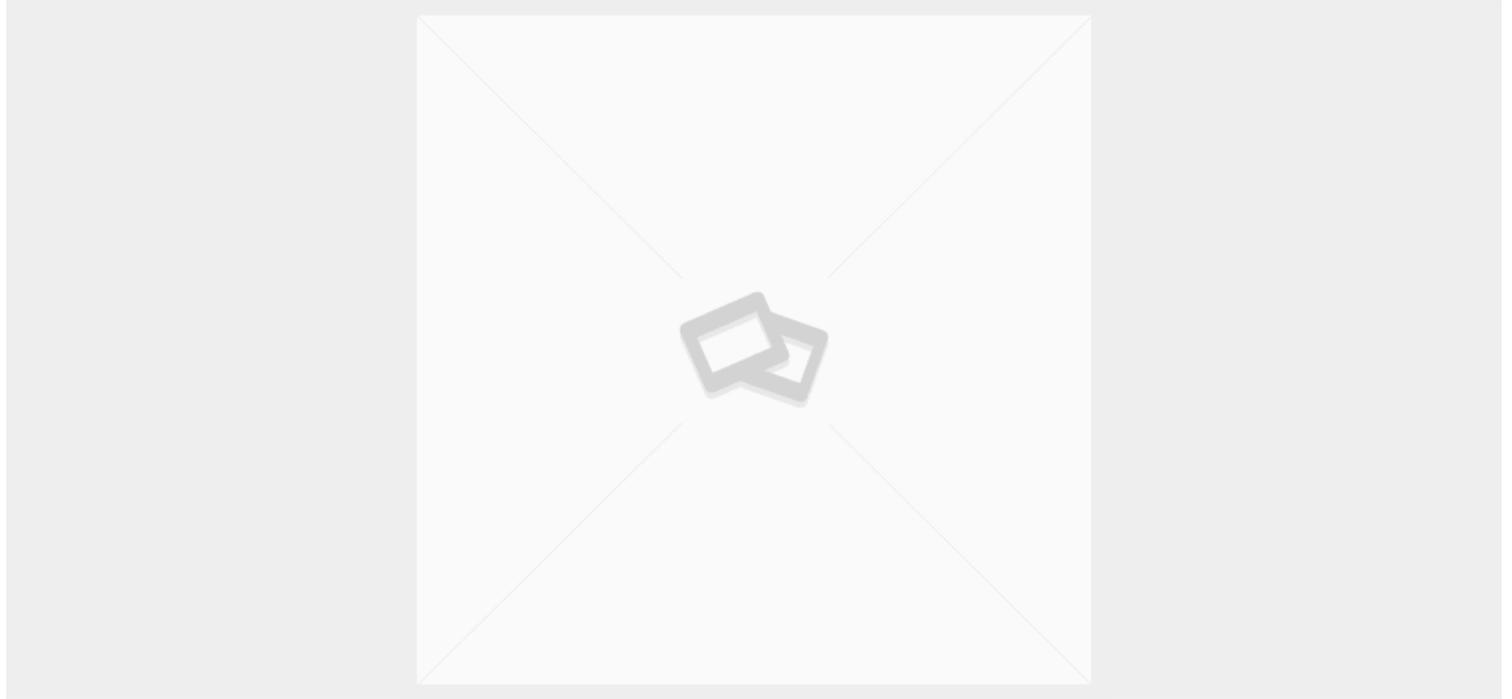


LOOKING AHEAD INTO THE FUTURE AND DISTANCING FROM THE PAST IS UNEQUIVOCALLY OBAMA'S PATH

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By Dikran Abrahamian BA, MD, Toronto, 2 February 2008

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Both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton will usher in changes that may affect the geopolitics of the Near East that has been so unstable for so long and has caused untold human losses and violations of human rights over so many decades. Both will champion the cause of restoring some sanity in how a colossus conducts itself in the world. Whether Obama or Clinton gets elected the poor, the disadvantaged and the millions denied from reasonable health care will have a chance to ameliorate their status. "Illegal immigration", which in its origin was the result of greed and exploitation, will have a chance of being redressed.

Despite similarities between the two candidates there are substantial differences in outlook that have been only partially brought to the surface during the campaign. While Obama's humanitarian uplifting stance and repudiation of interference of multinational corporations and lobbyists in the affairs of the public life and consequent disempowerment of the common people have been amply highlighted, Clinton's old baggage with intricate connections to the components of the establishment have not been adequately scrutinized. How the two campaigns are financed and who the donors are, private or otherwise, will have an impact on the outcome both in substance and style.

Looking ahead into the future and distancing from the past is unequivocally Obama's path. For exactly this reason Caroline Kennedy wrote, "I have never had a president who inspired me the way people tell me that my father (J. F. Kennedy) inspired them. But for the first time, I believe I have found the man who could be that president - not just for me, but for a new generation of Americans."

Both candidates talked about the common threats of the present century including spread of nuclear weapons, terrorism, climate change, poverty and disease. However, it was Barack Obama who more often and forcefully addressed the issue of genocide. It leads one to believe that his concern is genuine and not a lip service to score points and get more votes from people who are directly affected by Genocide and its aftermath. Samantha Power's testimony about Obama's stance towards Genocide in general and the Genocide of the Armenians in particular should not be treated lightly. In a recent address to the American Armenians she underlined Obama's "very forthright statement on the Armenian Genocide, his support for the Senate Resolution acknowledging the Genocide; his willingness as President to commemorate it and call a "spade a spade" and to speak the truth about it".

Where does Hillary Clinton stand on this matter? Like Obama she supports the resolution and she proclaims that she will

acknowledge the Genocide once she gets elected as president. It's hard to forget though that a similar promise was made by her husband Bill Clinton who made an about face and obstructed introduction of the bill to the congress. He never uttered the words "Armenian Genocide" once he was elected.

Someone's entourage is sometimes more telling than promises made. In Iowa, at the end of the primary, when Hillary Clinton delivered her speech, none other than Madeline Albright was right on her side clapping and at one point almost hugging her. This is the same person who along other secretaries of State urged the public and the congress not to adopt the resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

At times it is hard to ascertain the truthfulness of what is reported in the press. However, based on past events, allegiances and loyalties, an educated guess is made to give credence to some reports. In that vein a news clip is brought to the attention of the reader. Purportedly it originally appeared in the Turkish newspaper Milliyet, and subsequently it was made public on January the 28th by Nor Marmara Armenian newspaper in Istanbul. Apparently a certain Mehmet Celebi is one of Clinton's Turkish advisors. In an attempt to reassure the Turkish public that no harm will come from Clinton's camp this person has claimed that Hillary Clinton's support for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide "is an electoral tactic" and that the Turkish people should not be upset. Elaborating further he had stated "1.5 million Armenians live in the States and California Armenians constitute a large number; while California constitutes 28% of the electorate. For this reason the latter is important, since the one winning there wins the final presidential elections."

The overriding issue that motivates American Armenians to participate in the primaries and later in the general election, is the passage of the resolution recognizing the Genocide and expecting that the next president will publicly and unambiguously state that it was Genocide like Ronald Reagan did. To achieve such a result the most important asset that is at hand is moral above all. That approach will resonate only with a person whose heritage not too long ago was witness to oppression and deprivation of human rights. Neither numbers and funds, nor overseas concerns of securing bases and security of a threatened friendly state are in the armamentarium of the Armenians.

Pretending that political games will save the day by applying laws of probabilities and investing time and energy in opposing camps is suspect. Any person can see the flimsiness of that strategy. You can afford it if you have the numbers and the funds. Armenians don't. A victor who will support the resolution and call "a spade a spade" will do so predominantly based on moral convictions and not on other considerations.

Obama is that person.

