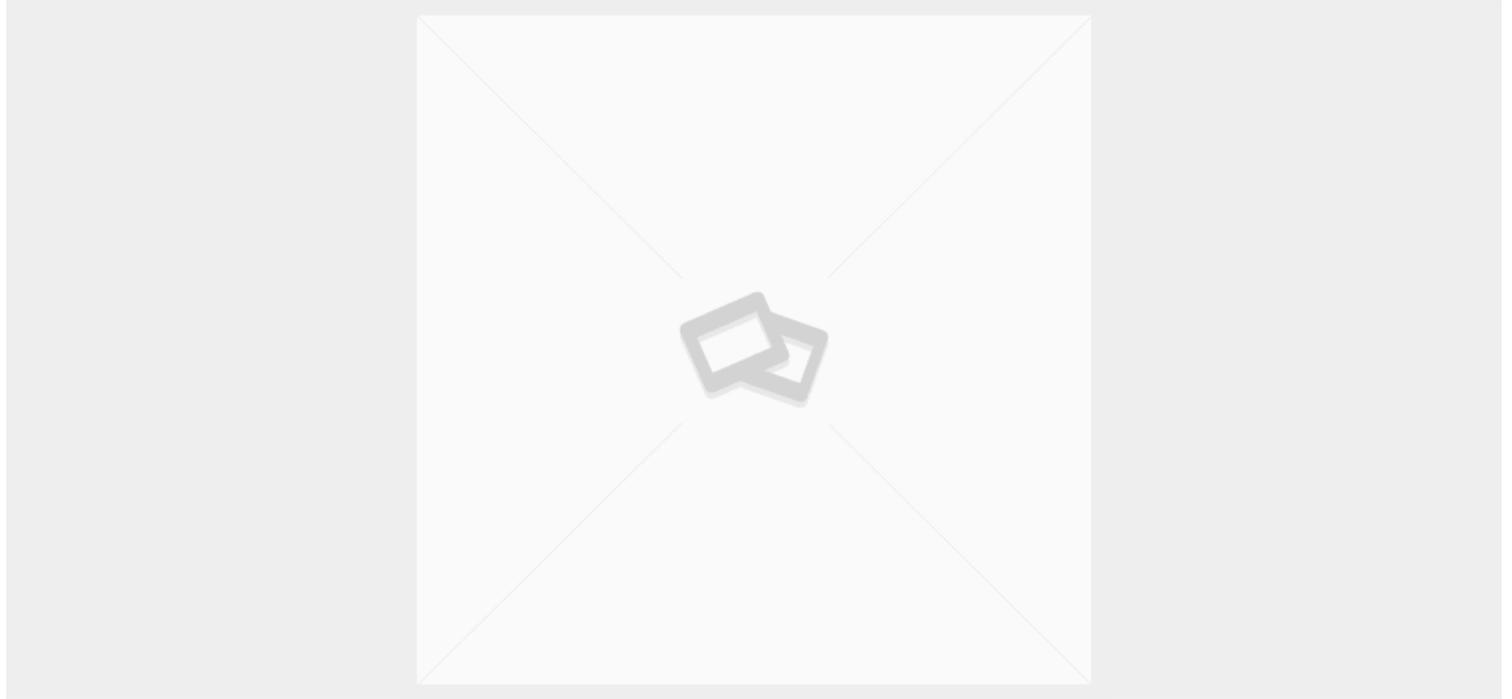


MCCAIN, ROMNEY & HUCKABEE NOT INTERESTED IN ARMENIAN VOTERS

Posted on December 27, 2008 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



Harut Sassounian, Publisher, The California Courier, 7 February, 2007

While Democratic presidential candidates Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards issued strong statements last month recognizing the Armenian Genocide and expressing support for other Armenian issues, Republican candidates John McCain, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee do not seem as interested in courting Armenian-American voters.

Harut Sassounian, Publisher, The California Courier, 7 February, 2007

While Democratic presidential candidates Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards issued strong statements last month recognizing the Armenian Genocide and expressing support for other Armenian issues, Republican candidates John McCain, Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee do not seem as interested in courting Armenian-American voters.

Sen. McCain sent a letter to the Armenian National Committee of America last week in which he avoided using the term "Armenian Genocide," while heaping praise on Armenia and Armenian-Americans. As I have noted in previous columns, Armenians do not need presidential candidates to reaffirm the Genocide which is a proven fact independent of anyone's acknowledgment. Any candidate who reaffirms the facts of the Armenian Genocide does so because it is the right thing to do, and wishes to gain Armenian-American votes.

In the case of Sen. McCain, he is simply alienating Armenian-American voters by issuing a statement that uses words such as "tragedy," "suffering," "brutal murder," and "painful experiences" as substitutes for "genocide." Sen. McCain is sadly mistaken if he believes that such words will win him any supporters in the Armenian community. After enduring similar insulting euphemisms from Presidents Bush and Clinton for the past 16 years, it is highly unlikely that Armenian-Americans would be satisfied with yet another politician who makes such flawed characterizations! Since Pres. Reagan recognized the Armenian Genocide in his 1981 Presidential Proclamation, what would Armenians gain by having yet another president acknowledge it, or even worse, mischaracterize it? Sen. McCain would have been better off to say nothing. Since he is reluctant to properly characterize the Armenian Genocide at a time when he is seeking the votes of Armenian-Americans, imagine how much more reluctant would he be, if he becomes president!

Another Republican presidential candidate, Gov. Mitt Romney, has decided not to make a statement on Armenian issues, even though he has been asked to do so by two Armenian-American organizations. During his four-year term as Governor of Massachusetts, Romney issued four proclamations on Armenian issues. The first three properly characterized the Armenian Genocide, while the fourth did not. As is the case with Sen. McCain, Gov. Romney refuses to make a statement on Armenian issues at a time when he desperately needs Armenian-American votes. How much more reluctant would he be, if he is elected president!

Mike Huckabee is in a similar situation. During his long tenure as Governor of Arkansas, he issued one statement that properly characterized the Armenian Genocide and one that did not. During the presidential campaign, Gov. Huckabee has not made any statements on Armenian issues even though he has been asked to do so.

Since Democratic presidential candidates are the ones that made strong statements on Armenian issues, Ankara has concentrated

its attention on them, ignoring the Republican candidates. As reported in my previous column, Turkish Prime Minister Rejep Erdogan harshly criticized Sen. Obama for stating that he recognizes the Armenian Genocide. I had expressed the wish that it would be very helpful for the Armenian Cause, should Erdogan also insult other U.S. presidential candidates, thus antagonizing the next American president. I am pleased to report that my wish came true.

Levent Bilman, a spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry, said: "Turkey feels regret over recent statements of U.S. presidential candidates supporting the Armenian stance on the events of 1915. The attempts to cast a shadow over our history in the name of competition among candidates within a political party deeply hurt the Turkish nation. We invite the U.S. presidential candidate nominees to act responsibly in regards to both the past and future, to pay attention not to hurt an ally country and its nation with baseless statements and keep in mind in this respect the delicacy of the Turkish-American relations."

Similarly, Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) condemned Senators Obama and Clinton for recognizing the Armenian Genocide. "The Armenian issue, which has become a matter of history, is being used as a tool to exert pressure on Turkey. We are strongly condemning these unfair and unfounded statements which were made to receive a handful of additional votes," the AKP said.

It never fails. Sophisticated Turkish diplomats routinely lose their cool and react emotionally whenever they are confronted with any one of the following three issues: The Armenian Genocide, the occupation of Cyprus and the Kurdish conflict. On this occasion, Democratic presidential candidates drove the Turkish leaders over the edge!

