MUSLIM ARMENIANS VITAL TO OUR NATION

Posted on August 7, 2011 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

Vahram Aghajanyan, Editor-in-chief “Third Power”
Stepanakert, 7 August 2011
In response to readers' requests the author has provided a variation of his article "Ինչո՞ւ Չենք Օգտագործում Մուսուլման Ներուժը" in English.-**Ed.**

Many Armenians have the false opinion that the root of all the misfortunes of the Armenian people is Islam with its warlike ideology and historic intolerance of Christians. Some Armenians, with inherent passion, like to condemn the "dangerous essence of Islam or Pan-Islamism for Armenians," without considering that they only contribute to anti-Armenian agitation in Muslim countries by Azeri emissaries and thus activate an anti-Armenian mood. They seem to forget that in 1915 Muslim Arabs saved the lives of thousands of Armenians. If it weren't for the friendly attitude of Iran towards the Armenian people, blockaded Armenia and Karabakh would be in acutely worse economic condition.

Vahram Aghajanyan, Editor-in-chief “Third Power”
Stepanakert, 7 August 2011
In response to readers' requests the author has provided a variation of his article "Ինչո՞ւ Չենք Օգտագործում Մուսուլման Ներուժը" in English.-**Ed.**

Many Armenians have the false opinion that the root of all the misfortunes of the Armenian people is Islam with its warlike ideology and historic intolerance of Christians. Some Armenians, with inherent passion, like to condemn the "dangerous essence of Islam or Pan-Islamism for Armenians," without considering that they only contribute to anti-Armenian agitation in Muslim countries by Azeri emissaries and thus activate an anti-Armenian mood. They seem to forget that in 1915 Muslim Arabs saved the lives of thousands of Armenians. If it weren't for the friendly attitude of Iran towards the Armenian people, blockaded Armenia and Karabakh would be in acutely worse economic condition.

Tens of thousands Armenians still live in Arab and Muslim Central Asian countries, where, according to reliable sources, there are powerful anti-Turkish forces, ready for close cooperation with the Republic of Armenia (RoA). Not building bridges with them means ignoring or being blind to our interests.
It is no secret that due to historic circumstances, many Armenians, hoping to be spared the Turkish sword, adopted Islam at the beginning of the 20th century, while retaining their national traditions. Thousands of citizens of Armenian ethnicity, who adopted Islam, currently live in Turkey and in the North Caucasus. In spite of the severe Sharia laws, Islamized Armenians enjoy certain religious liberties, and most importantly, they haven't assimilated with Moslems.

Every year Muslim states and communities convene an Islamic Conference, which, along with other issues, regulates assistance (including military) to Muslim countries. At these international gatherings Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus are represented by spiritual leaders such as Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshyukyur Pashazade of Azeri origin. The latter often devotes the main part of his speeches to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Meeting no resistance from other attendees, Azerbaijani and Turkish delegations give a religious character to the Karabakh conflict and receive huge financial aid from participating states. We all know how they spend that money. If we had a Muslim Armenian delegation at these conferences, the Azeri and Turkish delegations would face opposition and might not get the automatic backing of conference attendees, not to mention that such Armenian participation would activate pro-Armenian forces in Muslim countries.

With the above in mind, in or outside RA, it would make sense to assist Armenian Muslim groups form a "Union of Muslim Armenians". I foresee opposition from certain devout Christian Armenians, although we tolerate Hari Krishna, Buddhists and even Jehovah's Witness groups of Armenian origin, which try to penetrate the RoA army, agitate for the inadmissibility of armed struggle, and who are visibly damaging their motherland. So why not invite the participation of Armenian Muslims, especially in light of more than one-billion-strong Muslims in the world and a number of Islamic states, like Iran or the Arab League participants, which probably would support the activities of such a Muslim Armenian organization? Even if the creation of such an organization elicits historical-psychological complexes in RoA or in the Diaspora, the activities of Muslims of Armenian origin living outside will not encounter serious obstacles.

Every issue, especially issues related to state and national interest, must be approached from a pragmatic position. Whether we desire it or not, Armenian Muslims do exist. A negative stance towards this fact is not realistic, and would be based on purely emotional perception. Such an emotional approach would alienate a part of our nation, which eventually, could fall under the influence of other states. An Armenian Islamic organization, even a symbolic group, which participates in the conference of Muslim nations, would benefit Armenians generally and Armenians in Muslim countries specifically. Let's not forget that, according to the most modest estimates, the number of Muslim Armenians in Turkey alone exceeds several hundred thousands.