


OUR ROLEX AMBASSADORS


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 Editorial, 21 August 2014


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It's a tall order.

And yes, an ambassador should also be above reproach.

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Murad Muradyan, Armenia's ambassador to Iraq was recalled recently because he was involved in a massive financial debacle. Muradyan, ostensibly representing Armenia in a turbulent Iraq, spent most of his time playing mogul in Baghdad. He owned hotel complexes, development companies and a medical insurance company in Iraq. Apparently, the overworked "diplomat" still had time to plan a joint business with Mikail Baghdasarov, the disgraced former owner of bankrupt Armavia airlines. Muradyan recently went bankrupt when his grandiose and extracurricular activities fell to pieces.

Then there is Armenia's man in Belgium: one Avet Adonts. Ambassador Adonts must be the most punctual ambassador on the international diplomatic row. How else to explain his purchase, in Brussels, of several dozen pricey Rolex watches in one year? Then perhaps it was a case of "if it's Tuesday this must be Belgium Watch Sales Day".

According to European Union regulations, diplomats qualify for a 21% refund on purchases

exceeding 300 Euros. Ambassador Adonts and his equally-punctual wife, according to Belgian special services, were buying Rolex watches and diamond jewelry worth 30,000 to 40,000 Euros like there was no tomorrow and taking them to impoverished Armenia. The Belgians eventually asked Armenia's National Security Service and the Foreign Ministry how could the ambassador make these large purchases with his limited salary. The Belgians also wondered how the enterprising couple had managed to import the luxury items without hindrance from Armenia customs.

Rather than recall Adonts, who also happens to be no less than Armenia's top diplomat in Europe as the head of the Armenian representation to the EU, "optics be damned" Yerevan appointed the eminent smuggler ambassador to Spain.

Ashot Grigorian, president of the Forum of the Armenian Association of Europe (FAAE), said a few months ago that Armenian ambassadors in Europe were using their position to run their personal business. He added: "...they are not carrying out diplomatic activities. Armenian diplomats are doing nothing, but running their personal business. They have forgotten their work for the state. They are not capable of dealing with serious processes because diplomats are a random choice in Armenia, without diplomatic education or economic experience." Mr. Grigorian condemned all Armenia diplomats in Europe except for Ambassador Armen Kirakosyan in Austria.

It would be redundant to point out that good relations with Georgia are extremely important to Armenia. Thus it's imperative that Yerevan have a superb ambassador in Tbilisi. And who did Armenia appoint as ambassador to Georgia this June? No other than former weightlifting champion Yuri Vardanyan who had become minister of sports barely a year ago.

The Armenian and English languages have identical sayings about the fish being rotten starting from the head. Why wouldn't Armenian diplomatic posse not be corruption-ridden when former Prime Minister, Tigran Sarkissian, has been implicated in a multi-million offshore financial finagling? A scandal which the government has been trying to hide to protect Mr. Sarkissian. But despite the dark clouds hanging over his head, Mr. Sarkissian was appointed ambassador to the United States. The appointment decree was signed by no other than his buddy, President Serge Sarkissian. Armenian Forum in the United States tried to stop the appointment through a petition but to no avail. Some observers alleged that the appointment was intended to protect—through diplomatic immunity—the suspect former foreign minister.

The three key ministries of any country are finance, defense, and foreign relations.

We have seen that there's something rotten in Armenia's foreign affairs ministry.

We know that Armenia's finances are a disaster.

When two of the three key ministries have a big question mark hanging over their heads, how can we believe that our ministry of defense is robust? How can we believe Armenia's minister of defense when he assures us that Armenia can beat the Azeris hands down if weapons-laden Aliyev decides

