SALVATION IS IN OUR OWN POLITICAL STRENGTH

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John A. Keusseyan, Lt. Col. USAF (Retired)The following speech was delivered by John A. Keusseyan at the commemoration of the 95th Anniversary of Urfa's heroic battle. The event took place at the St. Gregory Armenian Church, in Pasadena, CA on 24 October, 2010 in front of the Khatchkar which was erected in memory of the martyrs of Urfa.- **Editor**

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

Last year, when we celebrated the 94th anniversary of Herosamard, I spoke about the unity of our nation and cooperation among our NGOs. I even gave examples from the Bible and Science to make my point. About a month later I received an invitation to attend a "farewell party" in honor of former consular of the Republic of Armenia. In attendance were the representatives of our political parties, benevolent unions (AGBU and ARS), three religious leaders and most of the Compatriotic Unions and other Organizations. I was so happy to see the leaders (or representatives) of our community under one roof. And, I told to myself: "wow, Armenians are fast learners", I talked about unity about a month ago and they are already implementing my recommendation.

This year I will talk about "**Self-Reliance**" and "**Long-term-planning**":

Ever since I could remember, my motto has been the following: "in order to succeed in life, one should only rely on one's own power" "*hachoghelou hamar vesdaheel sepagan oujerout*" and I think this should also be our National motto. Throughout our history, we have always relied on *Odars*, this is especially true during the last six or seven centuries. Since we were Christians, we expected that the Christian Europeans would come and liberate us from the Ottoman rule. Unfortunately our wish never materialized and we were greatly disappointed over and over again. To this day, we keep on repeating the same mistakes. We are asking *Odars* (Congressmen/Senators) to pursue Armenian Cause. *Odar* Congressmen are like "*Vartsgan Zinvorner*", mercenaries. Case in point, Congressman Richard Gephardt supported our cause for over thirty years. Now he is a lobbyist for the Republic of Turkey. Congresswoman Jane Harman, she was one of the co-sponsors of the Genocide Resolution and she had sent a dear colleague letter asking them not to support the genocide resolution. Tigran the Great built a huge Empire, but unfortunately it collapsed after his death. This is because he had *"Vartsgan Zinvorner"* in his army. I believe it was Einstein that once said: "some people repeat the same thing over and over again and expect different results".

What should we do?

"**Armenian People, your only salvation is in your own political strength"**. "*Me-yayn Kaghakaganoutiamp gah Hayots pergoutioun".* This is why we need a **long-term plan** to pursue the Armenian Cause. A plan, which will prepare our own cadres of politicians and help them get elected to the United States Congress. Yes, this will take time, it might take twenty thirty years or even longer but politicians we prepare will not stab us in the back (unlike our so-called Congressional friends). After all in the history of nations, twenty, thirty even hundred years is nothing.

Let us learn from the Jews. They have been without a homeland for over 2000 years and they have mastered the responsibility/duty of the Diaspora. This is true in most countries not just in the United States. Thus, they control or bias the decision making process in their favor (*perteh nercen ge kraven*). We have over 100 (this is an estimate, it fluctuates after each election) Congressmen of Jewish descent in the U.S Congress. Thus, they control not only the Legislative Branch of the Government, but also the Executive and other branches of the U.S. Government and Major Government Agencies (specially the Department of State). Thus, they are able to pass hundreds of resolutions through Congress in favor of Israel without discussion. In contrast, we have not been able to pass a single resolution in ninety five years, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Most Armenian parents pressure their children to become medical Doctors, Pharmacist, Lawyers, Dentists or Businessmen. Because they claim, they will make a good living in these professions. They never even consider joining the military or working for the Government, because they claim there is no money in it. But this is just a myth. Just to give you an example: Israel receives $4 Billion of U.S Aid every year and they receive over $25 Billion (estimate) in U.S. Investments/contracts and all this have been possible because of their political strength. And all this is done at the tax-payers expense at no cost to them. This amount alone exceeds the total income of the Armenian Americans. I show you how; there are 1.5 Million Americans of Armenian descent, assuming that one third of the Armenians are in working status and make on the average $50,000.00/year (the average annual income in the U.S. in 2007 was $46,000.00). The total gross income would be (500,000 X 50,000) $25 Billion/year, less taxes, net income would be a little over $16 Billion. If we donate all the money we make to Armenia, it would be less than what Israel gets from the U.S.

Therefore, the belief that there is no money in politics is just a myth. We need to encourage our youth to get involved in politics, join the military and/or work for other Government Agencies, specially the State Department if we want to influence the decision making process of the Government.

To achieve this objective, we need to prepare our youth starting at very young age. We should start teaching Leadership, Public speaking, and even have special discussions about current political events in Armenian schools.

Finally, I would like to repeat the words of our famous poet Yeghishe Charents: "**Armenian people your only salvation is in your own united power**" or unity. And he paid for this with his life. Khrimian Hairig once said "*we need Yergate Sherep*" in this case our own politicians (political power). (*Odarneroun chi vesdahink*).