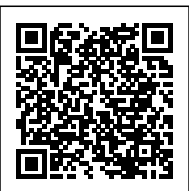


SHARING SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT RECENT ARTICLES

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By Dikran Abrahamian, Ontario, 28 July 2009

Having read the Economist article, Aram Adamyan's essay in Keghart and a transcript of Prof. Chorbajian's speech published in Hetq, I like to share some thoughts with you. Compared to the Economist, Adamyan provides almost exhaustive information and offers a novel idea. The Economist's perspective is narrow. It hardly touches upon the pivotal concern of Armenia's and Nagorno-Karabagh's security and fate. As if, they are nonexistent matters within the context of the rivalries between various powers. Dr. Chorbajian acknowledges that Armenian Diplomacy "had its successes", but he highlights some important strategic drawbacks in the process of negotiations between Armenia and the rest of the countries that are interested in the south Caucasus.

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Adamyan's proposal of **Conditional Independence** for Nagorno-Karabagh is audacious. It is worth discussing as an attempt to suggest a solution rather than sit idle and let Armenia's "friends" and foes shape its future. However, let us not ignore the presence of extreme institutional restrictions in Armenia and the inflexibility of the authorities to consider any advice. Under those circumstances new proposals, protests, petitions and calls for the resignation of the Foreign Minister will hardly make any difference to thwart the web that surrounds Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. At best, they are expressions of frustration, indignation and anger. They may help to identify a "culprit" and hence mobilize people around a cause, which so far has been vague in details. Meanwhile, creative major initiatives by the authorities addressing Armenia's interests are lacking.

Whether Adamyan's idea flies is doubtful, because the political, economic and geopolitical interests that are well outlined by him are immediate. USA, Europe and Russia, to name the principal players, are in search of a quick settlement. In addition to compromising Armenia-Nagorno-Karabagh security, there is the possibility of a future, graver danger, which appears to elude the great players.

In this haste, due to their shortsightedness and favoritism towards Turkish-Azeri positions, the movers and shakers will further encourage Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism. This may lead the extremists to revive the dream of uniting people of Turkic origin from the borders of China to that of South Eastern Europe. After all, Erdogan does not miss an opportunity to show solidarity with his brethren beyond the confines of Turkey. Furthermore, the ongoing conferences devoted to

matters of Pan-Turkism are more than meetings for theoretical discussions. For example, it was not long ago, during the conference held in Baku, that a special budget was assigned to counteract the Armenian assertions of genocide. Unfortunately, it seems, the current interests of the great powers outweigh their future "anxieties", especially for Russia.

Secondly, any new concept in international law needs the support of the very same powers that at present are against the principle of self-determination with respect to Karabagh; hence, it is highly unlikely that a new idea be entertained. It will not make even a tertiary item in the agenda of talks and negotiations. Nonetheless, Aram's proposal is meaningful in terms of enticing our authorities in Armenia to wake up and be aggressive in their approach. They should act now and be the spokesperson of the vast majority of Armenians worldwide. In no ambiguous terms they should spell out clearly and forcefully the rightful demand for full independence of Karabagh.

Thirdly, evolutions of principles in international law take decades to take firm understanding and application. A snail-pace is the mode. As Dr. Chorbajian points out, time is not in Armenians' favor. By the time that a round of fresh negotiations to discuss a new proposal is set, Karabagh's fate may be sealed. An example might illustrate the point. The term genocide formulated by Lemkin took almost three decades to be accepted, and that only after the tragic events of WWII and the Holocaust of the Jews.

The word "aggressive" mentioned earlier in no way suggests militarism or violence. It is along the lines that Prof. Chorbajian suggests. Since the negotiations are behind closed doors, one has to go by only what is made public. The Armenian team is not utilizing many of the historical and theoretical arguments that are at its disposal. Under a non-authoritarian, a non-autocratic regime, the pronouncements and actions of the "negotiators" so far observed would have led to their recall.

As a final remark, I would like to express my personal and other friends' appreciation of Aram Adamyan's work here in Keghart and elsewhere. It is fair to say that his search for a solution prompted me to write this short essay, hoping that he will continue to provide analytic commentaries. Read counts of his writings are indicators of the public's receptiveness and eagerness to hear a new voice.

It was a great pleasure reading Aram's article.

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