

# SIX MONTHS AND COUNTING

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By Dikran Abrahamian BA, MD, Ontario, 24 August 2008

Soon six months will have elapsed since the tragedy of March First. By now, one would have expected to see substantial initiatives towards His Excellency Serzh Sargsyan's promise to "demolish the wall" that divides Armenian Society. Alas, the rhetoric continues to dominate the political scene with no solutions in sight.

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Instead of focusing on the current regime's multifaceted violations of Human Rights and demanding fulfillment of broken promises, some circles in the Diaspora can't seem to get over a pathological fixation on an older regime. As if being revengefully critical towards it absolves a dysfunctional present. To put it otherwise, accepting that two wrongs make a right betrays an unprincipled acquiescence.

Where are those who were shouting "Barron Nah-kha-kah" at the top of their lungs a little over a dozen years ago?

Western-inspired Rose Revolution's Love-Child's recent reckless adventure has provided new ammunition to some self-righteous, sanctimonious politicians. Questioners abound in asking what would have happened if Levon Ter Petrosyan had succeeded in capturing the presidency. Of course, their unfounded forecast is that Armenia would have been a battleground akin to what's unfolding north of it with an unpredictable outcome.

Apart from the period of Karabagh Committee's struggle, liberation of Artsakh and the independence movement, this writer has not been a fan of LTP. Autocratic practices, laying the grounds for the emergence of oligarchic elite, and the handling of 1996 presidential election were the main causes. Profound differences in ideology related to fair distribution of wealth, social justice and understanding of Human Rights were additional reasons.

Unfortunately, the subsequent regime intensified the negative aspects and hence it, too, fell out of grace in the eyes of many that were already disenchanted.

During the infancy of the post-Soviet Republic of Armenia poverty and hardship were mostly secondary to the earthquake, the war of liberation of Artsakh, and the Azerbaijan-Turkey alliance tying a noose around Armenia to suffocate it. In contrast the phenomenon of wide-spread impoverishment was imposed by the second regime's inhumane treatment of its own citizens.

Despite year-to-year double-digit growth in the economy, the gap between the rich and the poor reached to the stratosphere. Whole segments of society became disenfranchised and radicalized.

It's true that in the first decade close to two-hundred-thousand people left Armenia. What about the additional at least six-hundred-thousand in the post-LTP period? Why did they leave and at a time that the economy was "booming" in a relatively more peaceful environment?

Probably the allegation that Artsakh was being sold out is pressing so hard on tender hearts that they can't get over their obsession! Whatever the proposals were (and it's history now) people easily forget and they want others to forget, too, that thanks to the Karabagh Committee's heroic struggle a portion of an Armenian land has been liberated. Rumor has it that during the same period at least a faction of a present-day power-sharing "partner" was in cahoots with the KGB to neutralize the patriotic fervor that had engulfed Armenia in the dying days of USSR.

It's so easy misinforming the public to the extent of attributing initiation of liberation of Artsakh to an entity that was not even there! The worst is pretending to be the liberator while sitting in Beirut, Boston or Athens.

For as long as the opposition in Armenia is deliberately framed as being a one-man's show in order to discredit a legitimate massive grievance, the present rulers will simply look like hiding their heads in the sand. You may fool some in the Diaspora, but not people in Armenia. Sooner or later a rupture in the elite will pave the way to re-establish the lost dignity of the common citizen.

Alternately, if civil measures fail, under duress people may resort to unconventional means. That's something that can be avoided. It's possible - provided cool heads prevail and at least some in the present elite understand that their own interest is tied to the act of empowering and involving the vast majority of the citizenry in the political process.

Those who shouted "Barron Nah-kha-kah" in the past and their followers should rise again. They should live up to their proclaimed principles of human dignity and fairness. After all, aren't they the ones who organize symposiums such as "Armenians and the Left" or "Armenians and Progressive Politics"?

If they are sincere they should call for early parliamentary elections free of fraud to have a real representative legislature and government. They have a chance now. "Political stability and economic prosperity" cannot be "achieved without due respect to civil liberties and fundamental human rights!"

"Barron Na-kha-kah", keep your promise to "demolish the wall."

