THE DIASPORA AND YEREVAN

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Category: Opinions

By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA USA, 9 july 2012

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What started my thinking is the fact that there is a Petition being circulated calling on the Yerevan government to do something about a murder. I have refused to sign the Petition.

Permit me to take a step back and explain the situation. Not too long ago, a prominent young doctor was severely beaten in a restaurant, and he died of his injuries in the hospital. For some time, nothing seemed to have been done by the previously inept police, although "everyone" knew what had happened.

Hence, the Petition circulating in the Diaspora.

Then, as I was beginning to vent my spleen about another crime that was going unpunished, I learned that the six thugs involved have been arrested and that the influential MP who owned the restaurant has resigned.

What brought about this unexpected action? The people, bless them, started to protest, and the protests grew and grew. Even crooks and thieves and thugs cannot fail to see that perhaps––just perhaps––"we have gone too far, this time."

But, being the obstinate character that I am, I feel certain it was not the fear of futile Petitions circulating in the West.

What, then, is the best way that the Diaspora can bring about change in a corrupt Yerevan? What will get the attention of those crooks and thieves and thugs is––are you ready?––BOYCOTT. That is right. All Armenians in the Diaspora should boycott Armenia.

That means no sending of money, even to destitute relatives and friends. It means no tourism, It means no investments, no joint ventures, no partnerships. It means no supporting of cultural institutions and artists. It means the breaking of all ties.

It also means that the Armenians in the Diaspora should no longer pressure their host countries to invest in Armenia. No more loans, no more loan guarantees. No buying of Armenian products, no

selling to Armenia.

It also means that the Armenians should tell the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank no more loans to Armenia, no more loan guarantees, no more anything.

It means no more honoring and flattering and being photographed with Armenia's ambassadors, and no more free dinners for them.

It means: "Armenia? Never heard of it!"

Then, when the money stops coming in and there is no more money to steal to build bigger and better villas at home and abroad, when there is no more money to buy up the property of the poor people (steal from, really) for their own use, maybe––just maybe––the message will get through to the crooks and thieves and thugs that the Diaspora has finally decided that "enough is enough."

What is that I hear you saying? "It is your homeland you are hurting." Correction. America is my homeland. If I never set foot in Armenia again, I will not die disappointed. Sorry if that offends, but I was asked why I didn't sign the Petition that was sent to me––Please, no more, thank you. And, for those of you who throw clichés around, the full statement by Stephen Decatur is: "In her intercourse with other nations, may my country be right, but my country right or wrong." Most people quote the last five (stupid) words only.

This isn't about me, it is about the murdered doctor and the Yerevan mentality. But, let me reinforce my comment: "I was an Armenian yesterday, when Armenia was a Soviet Republic; I am an Armenian today, when it is a free nation; I will be an Armenian tomorrow, when there no longer is an Armenia. I don't need a country with borders, with a postal system, with a currency, with a flag, with a national anthem for me to be an Armenian." Satisfied?

But, surely "a Boycott will hurt the people," I hear you say. "the very people whose protests seem to have spurred a corrupt government into action." It may, indeed, hurt, but like the foul-tasting medicine that will cure the ailment, sometimes harsh measures are necessary.

After all, because six thugs have been arrested and an MP has resigned does not mean that the guilty parties will be found guilty. What this latest action may be designed to do is quell the protests and––even though they will be ignored––end the Petitions. A Boycott will say to the corrupt government in Yerevan, "we are watching." Otherwise, business as usual from the Diaspora will mean business as usual in Yerevan.

On my last visit to Yerevan, an American with a non-governmental organization said to me: "The only honest politician in Armenia is the one who is out of office." I thought he was joking. Maybe if the Armenian Diaspora Boycotts Armenia, the country will abound in honest politicians, for a change.