

# TURKEY ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE OBAMA'S U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

*Posted on December 27, 2008 by Keghart*



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By Appo Jabarian, Publisher/Managing Editor USA Armenian Life MMagazine, California, 3 February 2008

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Ever since the first political guns of the 2008 U.S. Presidential Elections blasted in early January, the U.S. presidential campaign among both the republicans and the democrats has increasingly metamorphosed into a duel between the establishment candidates such as Senator Hillary Clinton (D) and John McCain (R), and candidates for change such as Sen. Barack Obama (D), Mass. Former Governor Mitt Romney, and former Sen. John Edwards.

Despite the volatility of the course of the campaign, 2008 sure seems like the year of the Democrats. With the ongoing highly unpopular war in Iraq and a faltering economy, the Republicans face an uphill battle to retain control of the White House.

The Democrats have a lot going for them. However, they face the possible fragmentation of their party by way of antagonizing the components of the party's traditional support base. As a result of their vicious campaign practices in the wake of the South Carolina primary of Sat. Jan. 26, Sen. Clinton and her husband, former president Bill Clinton have already earned the blame for being a potential source for the possible weakening of the party.

The Clintons' questionable campaign practices against Obama have reportedly backfired on Sen. Clinton.

Soon after the South Carolina primary, where Obama trounced Clinton by nearly two to one, Ted Kennedy, one of the elder statesmen of the Democratic Party and the senior Sen. from Massachusetts, feeling disillusioned with the Clintons' tactics, unequivocally endorsed Obama.

Sen. Kennedy's endorsement came one day after Pres. John Kennedy's daughter Caroline's endorsement in a New York Times op-ed article. The Senator's son Congressman Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island also endorsed Obama. Their endorsements are expected to erode the Clintons' hold on longtime Kennedy constituencies, including older Americans, unionized workers and Latinos.

According to a Jan 28 article on Newsmax.com "Sen. Ted Kennedy's endorsement of Barack Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination should come as no surprise to readers of Newsmax's Insider Report, which has disclosed Kennedy's membership in the so-called 'Gang of Four' Hillary Clinton haters. The Four — Kennedy, John Kerry, Howard Dean, and Al Gore — have pledged to stop Hillary from getting the nomination. ... Kennedy and Gore ... were disturbed by Hillary's hawkish stance on the Iraq war. ... In his endorsement speech Monday, Kennedy praised Hillary Clinton, but then made veiled comparisons with her and Obama, noting that the Illinois senator opposed the Iraq war from the beginning and that he does not 'demonize' his opponents. ...Newsmax.com cited Kerry's membership in the Gang of Four on Jan. 10 after Kerry announced his endorsement of Obama for president. ... Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has not yet endorsed a candidate, but insiders say he is working behind the scenes to promote Obama's candidacy, in the belief that Hillary is too polarizing to win a general election."

As for Armenian-American individuals like this writer and, for that matter, all Americans, I believe that positive change in Washington is the prerequisite for a healthier America. And that positive change can only be possible through replacing the old entrenched establishment politicians with a fresh leadership that is not saddled by old political IOU's.

Unlike Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Barack Obama seems to be free of political debts to the establishment and especially the neo-cons in Washington DC. Under both Pres. Bill Clinton and Pres. George W. Bush, the U.S. State Dept. continued to be infested by the dishonest elements including several deeply entrenched notorious deniers of the Armenian Genocide.

On January 3, those of us who were following the live TV coverage of the emerging results of the Iowa caucuses, noticed Senator Clinton being surrounded by an eyebrow-raising entourage. In that entourage we saw Sen. Clinton's mentor and husband, the former president Bill Clinton, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen among others. One can't help but remember Pres. Clinton's breaking of his campaign promise to the Armenian-Americans. Also, insulting for many of us, was the presence, on the stage next to Sen. Clinton, of former secretaries Albright and Cohen, the co-signers of the infamous Turkish-masterminded letter, sabotaging the U.S. House resolution 106, reaffirming U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923.

Having underlined that, one should not get too surprised when alert political observers and strategists like the publisher of the California Courier and a Senior Contributor to USA Armenian Life Magazine Harut Sassounian remind that "The Armenian American community should also judge these candidates by their circle of close advisors. If that core group includes individuals that have been antagonistic to Armenian issues in the past, there is a good chance that the next president would be dissuaded from carrying out his or her promises after the election."

On Wednesday Jan. 30, nearly a week from the Feb 5 Super Tuesday primaries and caucuses, the Armenian National Committee of America, a leading Armenian-American grass-roots political action organization joined the pro-change forces and declared its endorsement of Obama.

"The Armenian National Committee of America is proud to endorse Barack Obama for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States," said ANCA Chairman Ken Hachikian. "Based on his strong record in office, his bold statements as a candidate, and our judgment as to the policies he will pursue as President, we believe that, among a strong field of Democratic candidates,

Senator Obama will best reflect the views and values of Armenian American voters."

In a Jan 31 article, Sassounian wrote: "Last week, when presidential candidates Sen. Barack Obama, Sen. Hillary Clinton, former Sen. John Edwards, as well as Sen. Joe Biden, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued statements reaffirming the Armenian Genocide, Turkish Prime Minister Rejeb Tayyip Erdogan made rude and insulting comments about Sen. Obama, thus attracting further media attention to the Genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey."

Sassounian concluded: "Despite the distinct possibility that the statements issued last week may be useless after the election, they have already had a very positive effect on propagating the Armenian Cause, thanks to the rude reaction of Prime Minister Erdogan. According to the Turkish press, Prime Minister Erdogan called Sen. Obama 'an amateur of politics. A day may come when you will have to choose between 70 million Turkey and two million Armenia. One has to think carefully before uttering such words. I suggest that he outgrow the amateur period of his political career.' It appears that Prime Minister Erdogan is more concerned about numbers than choosing between right and wrong — truth and lies! Should Sen. Obama be elected President, he may not look kindly at Turkish Prime Minister's insulting words. Armenians would hope that Erdogan would similarly lash out at all the presidential candidates who have issued similar statements. That way, no matter which candidate gets elected, there would be a backlash on U.S.-Turkish relations, lessening the likelihood that Turkish leaders would get away with blackmailing the White House again in the future!"

Ironically, joining the Clintons in undermining Obama's campaign is the prime minister of a foreign government, Turkey. As the capital of a pariah state, Ankara is notorious for its efforts to stifle free speech not only in what is now called Turkey, but also in the United States and its State Dept. that continues to be controlled by the pro-Turkish denialist neo-cons in Washington.

Only a social and political transformation of America will foster a nation that is healthier morally, militarily, economically and politically.

Instead of being a burden on the world civilization, America must regain its moral high ground and reclaim ownership to being an indispensable beacon for peace, justice and prosperity on planet earth.

