

US AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA PROVIDES FOOD FOR THOUGHT


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By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA USA, 5 October 2010

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Her Excellency Marie L. Yovanovitch, America's Ambassador to Armenia, is visiting some American cities to tell the Armenians how much America loves the Armenians and how much America's leaders would like to chuck it all in and move there were it not necessary to stay in Washington to tend to such minor chores as trying to run the world, telling China how to behave itself, and not solving the problem of the drug invasion from Mexico.

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To be sure, the Ambassador does a good job. She tells her selected audiences--in Philadelphia she met privately with the clergy (one must presume all six of them), with the key leaders (how determined and number unknown), the youth (ages not defined), and the rest of the community--what the Americans are doing in Armenia, how they work closely with various non-governmental organizations, co-operate with the Armenian government on joint projects such as the Millennium Fund project(s), etc.

In short, America is a very concerned friend, and acts as such--but does not interfere.

She feels that the Diaspora has a vital role to play in the affairs of Armenia, and urges it to do so. Not only, she says, with money but also with skills and actual participation.

In a question about corruption in Armenia, she indicated that America was doing what it could--this side of direct interference, of course--but that this was another matter in which the Diaspora could get involved. She did see signs, however, of improvement in this area.

And, so it went, until the Ambassador violated a major rule of social intercourse--never bring up the subject of rope in the home of a man who has been hanged.

She mentioned the events of 1915. No, she did not use the words "Armenian Genocide"; no fool, she.

But she did tell her Armenian audience that President Medz Yeghern, in one of his April 24 messages indicated that the Armenians suffered a tragedy in 1915. There being no gasp of discovery in her

audience, one must presume that her Armenian audience knew that something terrible happened to the Armenians in 1915, and the Armenians of 2010 didn't need an American president to tell us what we knew. (During the question period when a member of the audience said as much and said that "We need a president to tell the world that the Armenians suffered a Genocide in 1915," she politely said "Your comment is noted," and turned to another questioner.)

While she was on the subject of the unspoken Genocide and the problems with Azerbaijan and Turkey, almost every statement that she made could have been refuted, had the meeting been a debate or a round-table discussion.

As the diplomat Sir Henry Wootton wrote, many years ago: "An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country," it is difficult, if not unfair, to expect this or any other ambassador to state any opinion contrary to--in this case--her country's policies. If America decided that the sun rises in the west, the ambassadors would state as such.

But one cannot help but wonder why this--or any other American--ambassador would touch on the delicate subject of the Genocide and not refer to it as such. But, in so not doing, she more-or-less confirmed that Turkey dictates policy to America in matters-Armenian (and matters-Cypriot and matters-Greek, as well).

She said that it was America's hope that the Armenian problem with Azerbaijan regarding Nagorno Karabakh (note not "Artsakh") will be resolved peacefully, since it would be a benefit not only to the two countries (note, not Artsakh) but also to the region, and that the agreement should acknowledge the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Were the evening the debate referred to above, she would have been asked, "But, in the matter of Kosovo, wasn't the principal of self-determination of peoples America's argument as it rammed down the throat of Europe the Muslim state of Kosovo, in separating it from Christian Serbia?"

And, if it were a debate, she would have been asked if it is the principle of territorial integrity of a state that prevails, why is America not doing anything to get Turkey out of Cyprus, whose territorial integrity was violated in 1974 and is still being violated. In the question period, someone asked what would be America's reaction if Turkey were to invade Armenia.

The Ambassador smiled (she does have a lovely smile) and said that such a thing would never happen. However, when Turkey invaded Cyprus using NATO-provided arms, not only did America support the action but also America made it clear that no other country should come to the aid of tiny Cyprus. What she did not say, also, was that the reason Turkey does not invade Armenia (and finally resolve "The Armenian Question") is not because it fears what America would (not) do but she fears what Russia would do. Which also explains Turkey's increased flirtation with Russia. But, that is the color of another horse.

She said that America supported the Protocols signed last year and felt that their implementation would benefit not only the two countries but also the entire area. But here, too, she showed how

much Turkey dictates American policy that she did not lay any blame on Turkey for the hold-up. Had she done so, she could have cited the many instances where Turkey signs an agreement and then adds post-agreement conditions. There are scores of such examples, but the most recent is Turkey's signing of the Ankara Protocols (to get into the European Union) and then saying, in effect, "However, we will not recognize the Republic of Cyprus" (a member of the EU), thus enabling it to violate one of the provisions of the Protocol that would permit Cypriot-flagged vessels to enter Turkish ports, and Cypriot commercial aircraft to over-fly Turkey.

Had the ambassador stayed with the "America loves Armenia" theme and stayed away from the contentious issues, her talk would have been accepted as the "Report to the People" it was alleged to be. But, having ventured into the areas so close to the Armenian soul, she may have showed that she is an honorable person but she also must have known that she was insulting the Armenians by stopping just short of satisfying them with truth.

To this member of the audience, she confirmed that Ankara dictates to Washington.

According to my notes, there were two places which I indicated with "blah," the second of which must have really been high-grade waffle because I had added two exclamation points. I did not bother recording her comments, for which I apologize.

By the time this appears, the Ambassador's tour may be over. However, if it isn't and if she is to bring her dog-and-pony show to your city, please go. It will be informative.

On second thought, however, Belgium has nothing to fear. Its waffles are for the mouth; the Ambassador's are for the ear.

