

US ARMENIAN LOBBY'S CLOUT AN EXAGGERATION

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Team Keghart **Editorial** 22 November 2009

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Let's examine how valid is the claim of the fabled Armenian lobby. While at it, let's also try to determine the origin of the descriptive, and most importantly, who benefits from the glittering plaudits?

To be number-two means little when number-one (the Israeli lobby) is so far ahead that both lobbies are not even in the same picture. Besides, the "number-two" tag is false because the Cuban, Greek, and Arab lobbies are as strong, if not stronger. And we are not talking about those other really powerful lobbying groups--the National Rifle Association, the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, the Christian Evangelical groups, etc.

While the Armenian lobby has been effective in a number of public relations campaigns, it has been--after more than 25 years of effort--a woeful failure regarding our primary goal, the recognition of the Genocide of Armenians by the United States government. No matter identity of the president or the ruling political party, our lobbyists have been unable to change United States policy regarding Genocide recognition.

In the past few years, the lobby also failed to discourage the US. administration from reducing its financial aid to Armenia, while increasing aid to petro dollar-rich Azerbaijan. These cutbacks also came at a time when the Republic of Armenia (ROA) sent soldiers to Iraq and has announced it would send soldiers to Afghanistan in support of the Western campaign.

The lobby has also failed to dissuade the United States from leaning too hard on ROA during the recent Armenia/Turkey Protocols signing. In fact, US diplomats have repeatedly asserted that ROA has to demonstrate "flexibility" regarding the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, before Turkey takes the documents for ratification to its parliament.

Let's see who benefits for the exaggerated assertion of our lobby's might.

Turkey, of course, loves to see the false descriptive. It gives Ankara a justification for increasing its anti-Armenian propaganda. The exaggeration of our lobby's effectiveness is also a selling point to Turkish propagandists who can claim to Americans that a tiny but rich minority is trying to determine US. policy, against the best interest of America.

The Israeli lobby, until recently the bosom buddy and even a spokesman of the Turkish lobbyists, likes to hear of the power of the Armenian lobby: such nonsense takes away some of the heat the Israeli lobby has been experiencing for its outrageous interference in American foreign policy.

Finally, our own lobbyists naturally enjoy talk of their omnipotence. The boast, coming from non-Armenian sources, justifies their work, in addition to giving a healthy boost to their ego.

Dzour nsdeenk payts shidak khosink ("Let's sit crooked, but let's tell the truth"). The Armenian lobby can be proud of many of its activities in the past few decades. The money we have allocated for their activities has been, generally speaking, well spent. But in no way does our lobby have the power our enemies and supporters maintain. Let's not delude ourselves with falsehoods, no matter how energizing they may seem.

Next time you read about the powerful Diaspora Armenian lobby, tell yourself what can we do to make it worthy of that descriptive.

