WAR BY OTHER MEANS

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Editorial, 30 June 2016

When historian Taner Akcam, a pioneer among Turkish intellectuals who have recognized the Genocide, landed at the Montreal airport on Feb. 11, 2007, he was shocked when he was detained by the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). After all, he had a tourist visa and was due to deliver a lecture at the McGill University's Faculty of Law in a few hours.

The CBSA maintained that the Turkish historian was a terrorist and thus barred from entering Canada. Why did Canadian authorities believe the professor was a terrorist? Because Turkbeijan calls Akcam "terrorist" for using "genocide" to describe the Genocide of Armenians. According to Article 301 of Turkey's penal code, Akcam's designation was "insulting to Turkishness". Ergo the historian was a "terrorist". The train of thought is logic which only Turkish judicial minds are qualified to parse—of course with a nudge and push from legal guru President R.T. Erdogan.

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Upon hearing about Akcam's plight, Canadian-Armenian activists scrambled and contacted politicians and civil servants so as to release the historian. Akcam was finally allowed entry after a federal cabinet minister intervened. Akcam made it to the speech podium one hour late.

The Akcam detention was not a one-off incident. Turkey and Azerbaijan have been waging war on various fronts against the Armenians. An important target of the Turkbeijan pair is Artsakh personalities scheduled to visit Canada.

The Turkic Twins have given Canadian authorities a list of Artsakh and Armenia personalities whom they have branded terrorist. Thanks to the Turkbeijan report, in the past decade a number of Armenia, Artsakh, and Diaspora personalities have been denied entry to Canada.

Since Canada has no embassy or consular office in Armenia, Artsakh and Armenia residents planning to travel to Canada have to apply for visa at the Canadian embassy in Moscow. In most instances they want to travel to Canada to attend community events. The embassy often denies visas outright or has delayed the processing of the applications by demanding an unreasonable amount of documentation. A number of Armenian MPs have cancelled their trips to Canada because of the embassy's time consuming and unreasonable demands for elaborate documentation. A dragged out application process almost guarantees that the paper work will not be completed by the Canadian-Armenian event's date. Several years ago such a suspicious delaying tactic was employed by the embassy to deny a tourist visa to Gen. Norad Ter-Grigoryants, the vice-chairman of the National Congress of Western Armenians. The general was a key figure in organizing Armenia's army immediately after the collapse of the USSR.

Among other Armenian leaders who have been refused tourist visa to Canada is Artur Aghapekian, then deputy defense minister of Armenia; Artsakh singer and hero Magitch (Mgrtich Mgrtichian); and Hrant Markarian, a member of the ARF Supreme Council in Armenia. The latter had been to Canada a number of times.

Artsakh and Armenia personalities, who have been refused Canadian tourist visa, are often people who participated in the struggle against Azeri aggression more than twenty years ago. They are now being punished by Canada for liberating their land from illegal Azeri rule, not to mention oppression. By refusing to grant the Armenians tourist visa, Canada has apparently joined the anti-Armenian campaign of Turkbeijan.

Ottawa's kowtowing to the dictatorial Erdogan/Aliyev duo is particularly galling since other Western countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States do not refuse entry to Armenians who took part in the war of liberation. In fact, at least six American states recognize the independence of Artsakh.

Residents of Armenia and Artsakh aren't the only Armenian leading figures who are discriminated by Canada. Garo Markarian, ARF's political director and an American citizen, was refused entry by the CBSA in Toronto, although he had been to Canada a number of times.

Turkey and Azerbaijan are free to brand anyone "terrorist", but a democratic government which observes the rule of law, shouldn't obey the two dictatorial and racist regimes which don't hide their intention to erase Armenia from the map. Why is Canada debasing its values to please the two genocidier states?

Canada's policy is also galling in light of the mid-March visit to Canada of the head of France's far right Front National party. During her visit to Quebec, fire and brimstone Marine Le Pen—who has been called racist and xenophobe by Frenchmen—attacked the Canadian government and said that the country is "in the wrong path with its immigration policy." She added that the federal government's decision on immigration, particularly its welcoming of Syrian refugees, is "erroneous."

Le Pen went on to say that Canada's political leaders have shown little regard for the consequences of their decision and continued that "a multicultural society is a society in conflict."

Continuing with her agitprop pronouncements, Le Pen added that her party, if elected, would recognize Quebec as an independent state. Her pro Quebec separatism views were no secret before she was allowed to visit Canada. Knowing the long and notorious history of Le Pen and her party, why did Canada grant a visa to the notorious French politician? A politician who openly avows the undermining the integrity of Canada as a state?

How would a brief—and often ceremonial visit to a Canadian-Armenian social event by an Artsakh or Armenia leading figure--undermine or in any way be detrimental to Canada? Why is Ottawa so supine when the Turkbeijan Tyrants push their policy of isolating tiny Artsakh and Armenians in general? Why grant a visa to politician who wouldn't mind seeing Canada dismantled and then deny admission to heroes who battled for their national rights and won? Not only are the Artsakh and Armenian leaders not terrorist… they were victims of Turkbeijan during the Azeri invasion of historic Armenian lands.

The Canadian-Armenian lobby should demand that Ottawa tear to shreds the Turkbeijan black list. More than two decades after the Azeri pogroms of Armenians, the war against Armenians, not to mention Baku's early April attack, it's shameful to see the Canadian government become party to yet another form of Armenian persecution. The Turkbeijan goal is no secret: the Turanic Twins want to isolate Armenia and Artsakh. Ottawa should be apprised of the fraudulence of the Turkbeijan-concocted terrorist list and stop obstructing visits to Canada by Armenia and Artsakh personalities. The It's the duty of the Canadian-Armenian lobby to impress upon Ottawa to toss the Armenian "terrorist" list into the dustbin.