

WILL JUSTICE BE DENIED AGAIN?

Posted on October 9, 2007 by Keghart



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In less than one day the House Foreign Affairs committee in USA will be deliberating on the bill recognizing the Armenian Genocide as the first Genocide of the 20th century. Following this process and provided it meets the approval of the majority of the members of the committee the bill will be forwarded to the House for a vote.

In years past the House twice recognized the Genocide of the Armenians. The sky did not fall down. Today that's not the way it is perceived by some quarters in USA. They invoke the specter of compromising US security and its interests in the Middle East, losing a major ally which is considered a buffer zone between the West and an untrustworthy area south and east of Turkey, and setting in motion unpredictable catastrophic consequences. Negative qualifiers and hyperboles abound in this unparalleled charade of quasi-arguments depicting a day of doom and gloom, an Armageddon if the Genocide were to be recognized.

To defeat the bill, the Government of Turkey, spending millions of dollars, has recruited lobbyists who callously have become subservient to the interests of a foreign state, counting dollars rather than listening to their conscience. Joining the chorus is a host of former and present Secretaries of State. A despicable act and an unbecoming behaviour characterize their stance when they declare that the process of improving relations between Turkey and Armenia could be jeopardized if the bill is passed. The harsh fact is that there is no such course of action in place and it is a fabrication concocted at the highest level to misinform the public, elected representatives and the international community.

The state of Israel, understandably almost always in a paranoid mindset, fixated on geopolitical concerns, has involved itself in this abhorrent flow of events. Despite the outcry of a sizeable portion of Jewry in USA and Europe calling upon Israel to take a moral stand, it seems it has dishonoured its own history by trying to prevent the passage of the bill through its own diplomatic channels. A state that should feel and understand the suffering of survivors of Genocide has equated itself with deniers of the Holocaust.

Against this background it has been an uphill battle of Herculean proportions for the Armenian community and its friends in USA to bring the matter to this stage. Counting a little over one million people comprised primarily of third and fourth generation survivors, with very few representatives of second generation and a handful of actual survivors, patiently but persistently, through educating the public, it has successfully managed to bring the matter to a vote. To praise all members of various organisations that have devoted their time, energy, money, life to a cause of recognition of a traumatic memory is an under evaluation. There should be a word in the lexicon beyond and loftier than praise.

Maybe above all it's the average Joe who is worthy of commendations. Out of a sense of duty, respect to martyrs, blood and land, responding to an inaudible yet forceful call from the past, and without necessarily being instructed what to do, s/he wrote letters to editors, called representatives, implored the Commander-in-chief, "I urge you, Mr. President, to take action and declare officially, in public, that Armenians do deserve to ask for justice.."

Whether Justice will be done remains to be seen.

