
THE ARMENIAN KARMA OF SENATOR BOB MENENDEZ

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In April, New Jersey's long-serving and controversial senator Bob Menendez got engaged to a self-described international businesswoman Nadine Arslanian. Along with congratulations to the couple, it is worth mentioning that engagements and marriages should, in principle, remain strictly personal affairs. Even if the Senate's most pro-Armenian advocate is getting engaged to an ethnic Armenian lady, who he met at a campaign rally.

However, there is a small issue of karma in this case. In 2010, Senator Menendez blocked Matthew Bryza from being appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan because Bryza's wife, Zeyno Baran, is ethnically Turkish. Yes, this is not a typo- a sitting U.S. senator denied an appointment to a career official based on the identity of the latter's spouse, and was duly chastised by the Washington Post editorial board for that. Logically then, by his own, somewhat racist, standard, pushing every piece of Armenian agenda in Congress and now having been engaged to an ethnic Armenian, Senator Menendez should resign from Congress. The absurdity of ethnic politics played by Menendez is so convoluted that his only hope is that his critics hold a higher moral ground than him and would not point out the obvious irony here. Like so many overt zealots of intolerance and homophobes, Menendez was fervently attacking a person in public for exactly the same thing he is doing now. Another sad twist in the Bryza story was that he was nominated by Barack Obama, the first bi-racial president in history from the same party as Menendez.

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