THE FAIRYTALES OF THE DASHNAK PARTY

Ömer Engin LÜTEM

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In yesterdays commentary, we touched upon the fact that various demands from Turkey by the Armenians are being brought to the agenda again for the centennial of 1915. Some people as well as some institutions from the Diaspora have started to publish their writings that lay out their opinions in the issue. Among them, the opinions of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation that is of Dashnak origin is prominent, yet political opinions and leanings generally originate from this party; in other words, majority of the Diaspora Armenians follow this party or are under its influence.

Armenian Revolutionary Federation Western U.S.A made a statement on 23 June 2014 titled as Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide. We are presenting a summary of the list of demands that we consider to be the most important.

- The Republic of Turkey must unequivocally acknowledge and bear the consequences of the so-called Armenian genocide.

- International borders should be redrawn on the basis of President Wilsons decision issued on November 22, 1920. The Republic of Armenia should reunify with the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum, Trabzon, Kars and Ardahan, as well as Mount of Ağrı and its surrounding territories.

- Territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation should be restored. This should include Nakhichevan with recognition of the independence and international sovereignty of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh and its current borders.

- The Republic of Turkey must make financial restitution to the descendants of the victims of the so-called Armenian Genocide or their designated community or organizational representatives and provide economic assistance to the Republic of Armenia.

- The Republic of Turkey shall provide unrestricted access to its judicial system and courts for any descendants of the victims of the so- called Armenian Genocide, to assert real and personal property rights with a complete waiver of any statutes of limitation.

- The Republic of Turkey shall adopt as a part of its national educational system an acknowledgement of the so-called Armenian Genocide and allow hidden and/or Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities if they so wish.

- The Republic of Turkey shall designate April 24 of each year as a Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the so-called Armenian Genocide and shall permit commemorative events in this regard.

There are matters in the statement that are requested from Turkey and Azerbaijan together as well. According to this, Turkey and Azerbaijan shall protect and preserve the hundreds of ancient churches, monasteries, cemeteries and other historical and cultural structures, and restore them to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul and the Great House of Cilicia. Moreover, they shall remove all blockades to Karabakh.

The statement, in conclusion, states that, with the implementation of these demands, the Armenian Nation can move toward a lasting reconciliation and peaceful coexistence with the Turkish, Azeri and Kurdish populations of the region.

Our initial observation with regard to this statement is that the time has stopped in the year 1920 for the Dashnaks and Diaspora Armenians in general. Yet, the conditions present in 1920, when the Treaty of Sèvres was signed, disappeared completely in three years and Turkish-Armenian relations reached a new legal and political layout. In this regard, Turkeys eastern borders were determined by Treaties of Moscow and Kars of 1921, which are still in force. Treaty of Lausanne, meanwhile, ruled that there would not be any war reparations.

In addition, a new legislation was adopted regarding unclaimed properties belonging to non-Muslims, including Armenians. According to this, there is no legal basis for Armenians

to demand land or compensation from Turkey. As for properties, it is required to abide by the aforementioned legislation.

Since it is not possible for Armenian claims to be realized in legal ways, is there another way for them to be realized?

Armenia using force against Turkey to have its demands carried through is out of the question. Furthermore, no state is interested in or capable of providing help to Armenia on this issue. What is left is for Armenia is to put political pressure on Turkey, but its capabilities are inadequate in this respect. In spite of this however, the parliaments (but not the governments), media, and non-governmental organizations of some countries provide help to the Armenians. This help provided to Armenia; however, has not made any notable changes in Turkeys stance on this issue. Starting from next year; the pressure on Turkey to recognize the so-called genocide, to open the borders, and to establish normal relations with Armenia will increase. However, due to this already strong status and very important strategic position, Turkey will be able to easily withstand such pressures.

As can be seen, it is not possible for the Armenian demands elaborated above to be realized, but it is possible to daydream and to believe in fairy tales on this issue, and to distract the Diasporas and Armenias public with such things.

About the Author :

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Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
Tel: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26
@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi

E-Mail: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

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