EXTREME NATIONALIST ARMENIANS IN THE USA OPPOSING CHUCK HAGEL'S CANDIDACY AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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According to the press reports, the US President nominating former senator of Nebraska Chuck Hagel as candidate for the US Secretary of Defense has disturbed the extreme nationalist and fanatical Armenian circles who in turn have started a campaign against him. One could skip the issue as an internal affair of the US which is not of concern to non-Armenians, had the substance of objection not been the Armenian allegations against Turkey and an attack on the founder of the Turkish Republic and great statesman M. Kemal Atatürk. That makes it impossible to remain silent. Before anything else, it is yet another demonstration of the fact that some Americans of Armenian origin have not been able to associate Armenian identity with American citizenship and have failed to identify with the American dream, ideals and values. This is not only a deficit for them, but also does not serve the good name of the country they are citizens of.

It is well worth to look into the statements of the California Courier newspaper and its publisher, one of the well known influential voices of the campaign against the candidacy for the Secretary of Defense, which display an abominable approach towards C. Hagels ideas and statements. Senator Hagel has visited Yerevan in June 2005 and in a press conference organized on this occasion, has given the following answer in response to a question concerning the Armenian allegations: Historians and others should deal with it. I do not think that the US Governments should become involved in the issue based on a resolution or any other way. What happened in 1915 happened in 1915. As one US senator, I think the better way to deal with this is to leave it open to historians and others to decide what happened and why.

At the same press conference, former senator of Nebraska has also said the following: the fact is that this region needs to move forward. We need to find a lasting peace between Turkey and Armenia and the other nations of this region. I am not sure that by going back and dealing with that in some way that causes one side or the other to be put in a difficult spot, helps move the peace process forward. These words are worthy of a statesman of a country which has assumed global responsibilities.

It is also known that the new candidate for Secretary of Defense highly admires the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The Atatürk Society of America has granted the Leadership Award to senator Hagel on 19 May 2005. Why this award was granted to senator Hagel could be understood from a speech he delivered in 2008 on the

father of modern Turkey. The senators words were as follows: Atatürk is one of the most valuable leaders of the 20th century. Children in the US know nothing about this great leader. They should teach about him in schools and write about him in history books. Ataturk played a leading role in shaping todays world.

The new candidate of Secretary of Defense being perceived as a problem among some Armenian circles and the attempt of presenting him this way and opposing him might not be surprising for those who well know the inflexibility and bigotry of the Armenian allegations. However, attempting to use the slander and attacks, which they always use against Turkey and the Turks, this time against a candidate for Secretary of Defense and asking from him an apology in remorse for his statements mentioned above is a case in point showing the limits of imperviousness they have reached.

A final observation is that senator Hagel has not conveyed his thoughts and his ideas indirectly or through third parties, but directly to the Armenian audience in the capital of Armenia, looking at them straight in the eyes. This in itself is a strong clue to have trust in the integrity and character of the former senator. The former senator, whose military courage has been recorded, merits to be included in the current chapters of Profiles in Courage also due to his civil and moral standing.

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