

A Ray of Hope

While 2020 was a hard year for the entire world, for the Armenian people it was truly a tumultuous year. A culmination of events within the last century, such as the unspeakable genocide of Armenians living in Turkey from 1915-1921, geopolitically located in an area prone to war, politically under the stealth rule of the Communism for over seventy years, enduring the COVID-19 global pandemic at severely high rates, and the Armenia and Azerbaijan war, Armenia is now faced with the dire reality of survival with a stark disadvantage. According to Ani Mejlumyan, an independent reporter for Eurasian Weekly Newsletter, “Armenians always have been alone in their fights, and that is what’s happening this time as well (Mejlumyan October 10, 2020).” As part of the widespread Diaspora, we all have an innate obligation to remain united as a community and facilitate change and awareness so that Armenia survives and thrives in the near future. Although what happened in Armenia has held such a great significance towards the Armenian community, not everyone is aware of it, and our goal is to spread awareness beyond the Diaspora. It is my sincere intention to become a strong advocate for what can be done to enable change globally, so that our voices are heard and the rights of Armenians and Artsakh citizens are upheld and protected.

In order to become an effective advocate for our cause, we must all unilaterally take on the responsibility of thoroughly understanding the pressing issues, such as the current conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, global influence, internal political climate, the Covid-19 pandemic, and financial instability. We must further educate ourselves in geopolitical matters to acquire an understanding of global implications. Reading news, analysing recent data, consulting

experts, and having dialogue within the community are all feasible approaches we can all take in achieving our goal in stabilizing Armenia.

It is simply not enough to educate only ourselves and the people within our immediate community. We must find creative and current solutions to share our knowledge with the world at large. Some of those tools might include and involve social media, traditional media, lobbying groups, political ties, financial influence, and finally advanced intellect. For instance, anyone with a significant following on social media should constantly spread well researched, current, and relevant updates about Armenia and Artsakh.

Lobbying groups such as the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a nonpartisan Armenian-American grassroots advocacy organization, should aggressively work with the US Congress to hold Turkey and Azerbaijan accountable for their actions to prevent further aggression. According to the press release issued by ANCA on April 1, 2021, ANCA is calling for over \$100 million in U.S. aid to Armenia and Artsakh following the 2020 war. Such lobbying efforts continue to keep the issue in the spotlight as well as provide ongoing financial help for the strained country. In addition, ANCA is currently circulating a bipartisan letter which demands an end to the U.S. complicity in Turkey's genocide denial, signed by 37 Senators, and further calling on President Biden to recognize the Armenian genocide. Moreover, recruiting efforts must be explored to attract young talent for lobbying purposes. A great example would be looking into various debate teams within the Armenian schools and engaging those students who are passionate about this cause. In return, scholarships can be offered to those young students who are willing to continue their studies in political science, advocacy, philanthropy, etc . The benefits of such strategic planning benefit all parties involved.

Instead of endlessly discussing hypothetical solutions we must find realistic, easy to implement strategies, and put them into action with united efforts. For example, we can launch a global- recurring donation drive (ex. weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually) for all Armenians irregardless of their physical location. Create a database utilizing internal young talent, tapping into the technology sector here in the Silicon Valley for tracking and statistics metrics. This will introduce predictability and stability within the budget and such stability will allow the government to implement long range plans. Another example, in order to have a stronger and more prepared army we need to enlist both men and women into service, similar to what Israel is doing. Another great example would be to have all Armenian schools raise awareness within their local communities, by holding fundraisers, organizing community events, and educating the new generation about our history and culture.

Time is of the essence. We, the Armenian community, young and old, must act now to facilitate change. Each of us within our own capacity must push the Armenian cause, the Armenian voice into the spotlight. There are many subtle yet effective ways to achieve that. Let's get to work!

Cited Work

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