
Presidential Elections in Armenia and Its Uniqueness

By Rovshan Ibrahimov

Journal of Turkish Weekly, Turkey - 8/2/2008

February 19, 2008 in Armenia will be held presidential elections. While presidential candidates registered 9 persons, the main battle will take place between the leader of the Republican Party, the current Prime Minister of Armenia Serzh Sarkisian and the first Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian advanced by the opposition. It is noteworthy, that it will be held unusual elections in Armenia in comparison with presidential elections in other countries of the former Soviet Union.

Without any doubt, these elections have nothing similar to the change of ruling power in Georgia and Ukraine, because of "velvet revolutions". However, a plan for continuity of power from the current President Kocharian to Sarkisian, so successfully implemented in several countries, such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and possibly soon in Russia, faced with unforeseen complexity in the person of Ter-Petrosian.

The first president of Armenia was forced to resign in 1999 because of the unstable domestic situation in Armenia. At the time, Ter-Petrosian was accused that he intended to "pass" Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, agreeing on the signing of the treaty with that country.

Opposition groups, trying to get into power in Armenia, using the "card" of Karabakh, were able then forcing Ter-Petrosian to resign.

Immediately came to power "representatives" of Karabakh clan, which has been characteristic of being immediately assigned key posts in Armenia. For Armenia, whose citizens flocked from all over the world, the regional division, provided by new elite is alien element. And if in the times of Ter-Petrosian in his team attended by representatives of foreign bright Armenian Diaspora, with the advent of "Karabakhian" Kocharian, Armenia has been under mortgage priorities and interests' of ruling group coming from this region of Azerbaijan.

It looks like a typical division for Azerbaijan on regional principle, twisted joke played with Karabakh Armenians who have created their clan management of Armenia.

Perhaps under normal circumstances, would be worth 19 February to expect a smooth transition of power from one representative within clan to another, however, candidacy of Ter-Petrosian, who is after 10 years remote from politics, could seriously confused cards present regime in Armenia.

First of all, this is due to the fact that in other Post soviet countries where the transfer of power was carried out by the appointment of a successor, and the opposition was not available pronounced leader, would be able to combine the resources of protest. The same can not be said about Armenia, where opposition is may consolidate own power beside a very popular Ter-Petrosian, which has experience of running the state, as well as widespread support in the west.

In spite of Armenia is not likely to expect the "velvet revolution" and appropriate support from the West, and thus erroneously compared with Saakashvili and Yushchenko, the possible return of Ter-Petrosian may be compared with returning to the power Aliyev and Shevardnadze in neighboring Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1993.

The reason that Ter-Petrosian has already led country only strengthens his position. This is also the fact that Ter-Petrosian in the event of victory in the elections will be able to create own team, as opposed to the current regime. Moreover, given the peculiarity of the Armenian nation, Ter-Petrosian if necessary will be able to use the resource of the Armenian Diaspora.

It's maybe interesting to remember the words of the ex-president when he resigned in 1999. Ter-Petrosian then uttered the phrase, that: "Today, the party of war had won and the peace party lost, the time will come when the party of peace will return to power again." Perhaps, the current elections are the implemented time for Ter-Petrosian, when he emphasized "peace party" must return to power.

Ter-Petrosian is known as a pragmatic leader. Indeed, Ter-Petrosian has repeatedly warned that the future of Armenia is directly linked with the establishment of good relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. In this case, there is hope that with the election of the President Ter-Petrosian, the Karabakh conflict and resolving historical disputes with Turkey could be have some development. In any case, it should not build too optimistic forecasts: even full determination in tackling these problems Ter-Petrosian may face multiple resistances of internal and external factors.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten about Russia influences in Armenia, which declared its "outpost" in the South Caucasus and Armenia considers its only ally in the region. Notable is the signing of an agreement on cooperation between the Russian ruling party "United Russia" and the Armenian Republican Party during the visit, the Russian party leader Boris Grizlov in Yerevan. The signing of such kind of agreement in anticipation of the presidential elections in Armenia, show that Russia's support for the current regime.

Despite this fact, one should not forget that Russia has been unable to influence in election processes in some countries of the post-Soviet space. So, Armenia could also become the exception. And so, the current regime may lose to Ter-Petrosian.

Evaluating these factors we can summarize that the presidential elections in Armenia have little similarities with those which usually held in other countries of the Former Soviet Union.

07 February 2008

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