
No Geopolitical Revolution To Take Place In Armenia

By Lilit Poghosyan

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Prior to the opening of the autumn political season, the "analysts" of the Armenian pan-National Movement are specifying a victorious format for the Presidential elections in which the Opposition is to act with one pan-national candidate (it is clear that such a role is reserved for the ex-President). As to the opposite camp, it is to act with two candidates ("Prosperous Armenia"-Republican coalition and ARFD alternative). As a result, the candidate belonging to the Opposition is definitely to hold a victory. To what extent is such development of events probable? ARMEN ASHOTYAN, member of the NA Republican faction gives answers to our questions.

"In general, political activeness decreases in summer, and autumn is viewed as a starting point for new political developments. This summer was specific, since the political developments recognize no time and are not subject to seasonal procedures prior to Presidential elections. It is, therefore, natural that the political forces tried to make maximum use of the summer season as well, in order to strengthen their positions and do their utmost to prepare for the 'heated autumn'.

The press also demonstrated certain activeness which is, to my mind, artificial. There was a certain vacuum in the information field, and the lack of events in the sphere of public policy led a couple of topics to become predominant during the August discussions.

However, I don't think that the Presidential elections will pursue the scenario you specify. Because, in so far as Dashnaktsutyun is concerned, the decision to run for Presidency with a candidate of its own has been mentioned many a time and, with regard to the Republican party, Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan is already the main favorite and the acting person of the electoral marathon that has already begun, while the situation on the pro-Opposition front is totally uncertain."

"Does it mean you have no trust in the cafe discussions of the pro-Opposition factions?"

"Regardless the negotiation formats and the meetings organized in 'Metelitsa' and other cafes, a number of pro-Opposition activists, especially the leader of "New Times" party Aram Karapertyan and Head of the National Democratic Union Vazgen Manoukyan have already announced that they are going to run for election on their own.

On the other hand, at least for one or two of the activists involved in the 'Metelitsa' discussions, the elections are, perhaps, the last chance to increase their role and weigh in real politics. I mean, first of all, Arthur Baghdasaryan for whom this is a last 'historic' chance to realize his own pretensions; therefore, he is unlikely to give up his ambitions. Especially, when Arthur Baghdasaryan is not perceived as a potential united candidate, at least in so far as this format is concerned. Therefore, I believe that apart from Levon Ter-Petrosyan or any other candidate belonging to the Opposition, there will be other nominations as well."

"Do you rule out any chance that, having taken lessons from the Parliamentary elections, the pro-Opposition factions will, nonetheless, be more consistent in their quests for a united candidate?"

"If we try to understand what an Armenian Opposition means, we must first of all state realistically that our pro-Opposition camp consists of political factions that have contradictory attitudes, at least with regard to a number of criteria, and first of all - their ideological bases. The Opposition consists of political factions with both obviously pro-socialist and liberal trends, and these factions are unlikely to reach a common agreement as much as ideology is concerned.

Secondly, a great number of the same pro-Opposition factions have controversial geopolitical orientations, beginning with emphasized pro-Western views, ending with extreme pro-Russian attitudes. Agree with me that in such situation it would be naive to discuss the issue that the external powers will, all of a sudden, adopt a united attitude and transfer the draw to the united Opposition's camp.

Thirdly, let's keep in mind the individual factor as well. Any Opposition leader to some extent sees the chances of his progress in the political career in the sphere of realizing his own pretensions.

And there is only one "chair" for the united presidential candidate; there can't be several united candidates. Besides, it doesn't give grounds to assume that for all its ideological discords, multi-layered political structure and the divergences of individual pretensions, the whole pro-Opposition camp is able to unite around one individual."

(to be continued)
