
Russian Paper Compares Armenian Protests With Earlier Events In Georgia, Ukraine

Gazeta, Russia - 28/2/2008

[Commentary by Vadim Dubnov: "Personality Revolution" - taken from HTML version of source provided byISP]

The Yerevan revolution, which is approaching its finale, can be easily taken for a genetic modification of the same phenomenon that took place in Tbilisi a little more than four and in Kiev a little more than three years ago. All the circumstances seem to be the same: Shamelessly rigged elections, tens of thousands of indignant people, and an opposition tribune transforming into a leader. The tents in the square in front of the Yerevan opera seem to be the same as those in Kiev and the only question is what romantic colour should be chosen for the new revolution.

However, while the Ukrainian orange revolution was far from being a political clone of the Georgian rose revolution, the Armenian revolution, regardless of its outcome, is an absolutely unique phenomenon altogether by modern standards. The triumphant return of a reformer of the 1990s is not the point. The point is how he is trying to return.

Armenia, unlike Georgia and Ukraine, is not choosing between particular foreign policy biases. This issue cannot be seen even "between the lines" of the masses' revolutionary expectations. The current events reflect deep confrontation within the regime itself.

Both Saakashvili who had waited in vain until Shevardnadze would appoint him as the No 1 presidential successor and Yushchenko and Tymoshenko who had lost an apparatus game, but took revenge in city streets were the winners of elite wars that acquired such enthusiastic forms.

A real unadulterated revolution is taking place in Yerevan. There are oligarchs there who have something to lose. However, there are almost no oligarchs who could count on a great post-revolution redistribution. Other members of the former 10-year-old elite would probably want to return, but revenge is not the main and primary reason for the revolution. No generation hungry for power has grown up there. The generation that has grown up in Armenia adapted to the existing regime quite well.

Briefly then, there is no main component of a colour revolution in Armenia - a clash of consolidated elites. There is a revolution that seemed absolutely unnecessary. There is nothing that would betray the existence of any hidden mechanisms to which we are accustomed now that we know what happened in Tbilisi, Kiev, and even Bishkek. Nobody is even trying to scare people with Soros's involvement. The people in the square are listening absolutely calmly even to statements about democracy, for they realized long ago that it is not for the sake of democracy that they have been freezing outside for a week now.

Everything is black-and-white, just the way it should be amid revolutionary enthusiasm. Those who have come to the square can no longer tolerate something that, as they have found out, they do not have to tolerate. Those who have not come to the square are ready to tolerate it further. Basically, this is all. The difference between those people is not great. After all, as recently as yesterday, those who are standing in the square did not even think that the regime that is currently being overthrown can no longer be tolerated.

A real unadulterated revolution is virtually spontaneous and Armenia is almost an ideal illustration. The point is that if Ter-Petrosyan had not undertaken his miraculous comeback, the situation that lasted for 10 years would have persisted for another 10 years and nobody would have suspected that the regime was unbearable and everything could be changed.

People's opinions about Ter-Petrosyan may differ. One can find his Karabakh proposals disputable. One can ascribe all kinds of negative traits to him, just as to any politician. However, no other person in Armenia could have made the revolution. People's demand for a change appeared only some time after this alternative became visible. Only Ter-Petrosyan could start the revolution after his return from the historic oblivion, a return that is considered prearranged. He did not start the revolution from zero. He started from hopeless minus and only he could transform it into a plus regardless of what he is going to do with Karabakh. The intrigue no longer boils to the fact that if mutiny ends successfully, it acquires a different name. The intrigue boils down to the fact that when this happens nobody cares about the fact that there had been no demand for revolution because it seemed impossible.
