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## Armenian Parliamentarian Tells U.S.

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# Law must reign in Transcaucasus

by Leo F. Scanlon

The American people have been asked to join an effort to avert the bloodshed which threatens the people of Armenia, in support of peace based on international law. This means that pressure must be brought on the Bush administration, to abandon its cynical support of Russian imperial aims, and back, instead, an effort of international bodies to mediate the crisis in Armenia on the basis of existing international.

This message was carried by Hrand Khachatrian, a leader of the Armenian independence movement, who has completed a tour of the United States sponsored by the Schiller Institute. Mr. Khachatrian, who represents the Union of Constitutional Rights of Armenia, is a deputy in the newly elected parliament of Armenia and is a member of the parliament's Permanent Commission on State Sovereignty. The nationwide tour included meetings with Armenian-American organizations, interviews with English language and Armenian newspapers and radio stations, and a series of public meetings in Boston and Los Angeles.

Throughout, Mr. Khachatrian emphasized that a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh can be found in existing international law, and stressed that therein lies the only path which can prevent regional powers from cultivating the conflict in order to dominate Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan as well. Americans can play a crucial role in supporting such efforts, said Mr. Khachatrian, by pressuring their government to recognize the rule of law internationally, and by joining with the Schiller Institute in its demand that justice be done in the case of Lyndon LaRouche, who has distinguished himself as an uncompromising advocate of sovereignty and independence for the former Soviet republics.

### Geopolitics subvert international law

According to a declaration issued by the Union of Constitutional Rights of Armenia and the Republican Party of Armenia, the historical basis for Armenian sovereignty is solidly grounded in law. The Armenian territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was placed under the administrative control of Azerbaidzhan by Stalin, as part of a scheme which broke Armenia into the separate administrative units of the Armenian S.S.R., which included the autonomous republic of Nakhichevan and the autonomous region of Mountainous (Nagorno) Karabakh. The partition of Armenia by Stalin

overturned decisions of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia, which had unified the region in the period following the collapse of the Russian empire in 1918. This territorial unity was even reiterated by the government of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1921, and has been asserted again by the parliament of the region in 1988, by the conference of plenipotentiary representatives in 1989, and finally in 1991, by referendum.

The declaration points out that "there is no document signed by an international organization, Armenia, or any body reflecting the will of the people of Mountainous Karabakh which makes Mountainous Karabakh part of Azerbaidzhan. The separation of Mountainous Karabakh from Armenia is reflected only in the constitution of the U.S.S.R., which is not a democratically established document and is thus null and void." The basis for U.N. recognition of national self-determination of Armenia is well established in international law, the document points out, and should be based on resolutions such as that of 1960 which dealt with the independence of colonized nations, the 1966 resolution on the Strict Prohibition of the Threat and the Use of Force in International Relations, the 1973 resolution governing the principles regarding combatants fighting colonial regimes, and the 1977 resolution defending human rights and granting colonized nations their independence.

The Bush administration has insisted that the illegal borders of the Soviet empire—ratified by the Yalta agreements—are more important than the legitimate claims to sovereignty raised by the newly independent republics. It has abandoned that shameful policy only when other nations have taken the lead, as in the case of Germany's recognition of Croatia.

Mr. Khachatrian points out that because the international community is refusing to recognize the lawful basis for Armenian unity, "Nagorno-Karabakh has become one of the main levers for realization of influence in the Transcaucasus by outside forces." Russia, in particular, wishes to suppress the aspirations of minorities which are still captive within its borders, and can do so as long as legal claims to sovereignty are reduced to issues of ethnic conflict. "For example," he said, "the governments of the CIS, the U.S.A., and the CSCE are treating the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh as a self-determination issue of a minority living within the borders of Azerbaidzhan, thus concealing the real nature of the conflict, which represents the struggle of the . . . Armenian people, including Nagorno-Karabakh, to rid itself of all colonial rule by becoming an independent state."

The danger in the situation is grave. The Russian military has provided just enough weapons so that the Azeri minority (which is now almost exclusively composed of military combatants, according to sources) can maintain the blockade against the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabakh, and conduct military operations which the Armenians, in turn, are able to resist, but not defeat. Such manipulated conflicts have led to repeated massacres and genocide of the Armenian

people in the past, and threaten to do so again.

Mr. Khachatryan warned that "attempts are being made to reestablish autocratic rule in Armenia, thus threatening not only the security needs of Armenia but also the development of democracy. In the absence of external aggression and interference, Armenians can achieve democracy and political stability.

"The goal of our organization, as well as of my visit, is to promote the establishment of stable and lasting conditions for peace in the region. The only possibility for a lasting peace is the one based on history, international law, and in particular, on the rights of the indigenous people. In this sense then, we view the recognition of the reunified independent Armenia with Karabakh as a necessity" in order to strip the veneer of legitimacy from the provocations and aggressions which now threaten war.

## Israeli massacres in Gaza, West Bank

by Joseph Brewda

Israeli soldiers opened fire on a crowded market place in Rafah, a town in the occupied Gaza Strip on April 2, killing 4 and wounding 80. The incident typifies Israel's intentionally provocative occupation policies.

"The market place was packed with thousands of people doing their shopping for the feast to mark the end of Ramadan," the Islamic holy month of fasting, shopkeeper Rawhi Subuh told Agence France Presse. "Five jeeps raced in, chasing a Peugeot car carrying members of the Red Eagles [a Palestinian resistance group], who got away. The jeeps got stuck in the crowd and then stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at them. The border police got out of their vehicles and fired everywhere for 10 minutes. Many people were wounded accidentally and people hit the ground for cover."

The day following the incident, Israeli soldiers shot and wounded 35 demonstrators in four refugee camps and Gaza city protesting the massacre the previous day. On April 4, the U.N. Security Council issued a statement condemning the Rafah killings, but called on all parties to demonstrate "self-restraint." The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) issued a statement the following day ridiculing the U.N. statement as "inadequate." "We are amazed to see the U.N. Security Council use two standards to deal with terrorism," it said, adding that such double standards would "encourage the Israeli occupation to continue mass killing operations."

Over 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israelis, approximately 300 of them under than 16 years of age, since

the beginning of the 1987 Intifada. Many of those killed were shot in the back. On April 13, Israeli soldiers shot and wounded at least 22 Palestinian demonstrators in the Nusseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The clash occurred immediately after a four-day curfew was lifted that had been imposed after the Army had killed a youth from a prominent family allegedly attempting to cross the border into Egypt.

Commenting on killings, Haydar abd al-Shafi, the head of the Palestinian delegation to the U.S.-sponsored Mideast peace talks, stated, "This has been going on since the occupation. The Palestinians put up resistance to which they are naturally entitled, and the Israelis strike back."

In addition to a proclivity to shoot into crowds, the Israelis have increasingly carried out a policy of assassinating Palestinians rather than arrest them. "The Army has adopted a policy of seeking out activists, hunting them down, and executing them," Faisal Husseini, leader of the advisory team to the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, recently charged. Eight people were killed in the first two months of 1992 by Israeli squads dressed in plain clothes, often in Arab dress, and at least another eight were killed in March, a report by the Palestine Human Rights Information Center notes. There were reportedly 29 such killings in 1991.

Describing one such assassination, that of a Palestinian youth on March 29 in the West Bank town of Hebron, an Irish nurse told the *Christian Science Monitor*: "As he was running, he was shot down without warning. At the same time, the doors of a back of a van flew open and a lot of men dressed in Palestinian women's dresses got out and there was shooting all around." The assassinations are believed to be coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office for the Warfare against Terrorism. The office has also been used to kill Palestinians overseas, often under the guise of inter-Arab disputes.

There are also reports that Israeli soldiers have disguised themselves as U.N. officials to facilitate arrests. Sandro Tucci, an official of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, told the *Christian Science Monitor* that his agency had "obviously taken this matter very seriously because it implies a threat to the security of our personnel."

On April 2, Betzelem, an Israeli human rights monitoring center, issued a new report on the systematic use of torture in interrogating Palestinians. According to the report, issued by Professors Stanley Cohen and Dafna Golan, torture has become a "normal procedure" to the 5,000 detainees who were interrogated in the past year. On April 13, the Public Committee against Torture petitioned the Israeli High Court to overturn guidelines set by a 1987 government commission which amount to a permit by the police to use torture. The guidelines, issued by the Landua commission, allow "moderate physical," and "non-violent psychological" interrogation of non-Jews suspected of security offenses.

In its argument before the court the group said the guidelines have "turned into a permit in the [Occupied] Territories to torture." The group has asked that they be made public.