

**TER-PETROSYAN'S OBJECTIVE:  
"INTERNATIONAL INQUIRY INTO THE MARCH 1 EVENTS" IN ARMENIA**

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The in-depth analysis of the recent events in Armenia is still to come; nevertheless, we can draw certain conclusions. First of all, we would like to touch upon one of the extremest statements made by former Armenian presidential candidate Levon Ter-Petrosyan. During the Constitutional Court hearing on March 5, 2008, the ex-President demanded that "an international inquiry into the March 1 events" be launched<sup>1</sup>.

Let us try to understand what an "international inquiry into the March 1 events" could mean.

We are already accustomed to seeing the first President of Armenia use terms and concepts quite readily without defining their legal content. We should keep in mind that the "international inquiry" of any event has quite specific contents and regulated procedures of implementation.

First, this means that the UN Security Council, which gives permission for such kind of "international inquiries", has to admit that the event constitutes a violation of the international commitments of the given state and creates security threats on the regional and global level.

Second, it is necessary to set up a special investigative body – a commission – under the auspices of the United Nations, that is to say, a committee vested with emergency powers in a sovereign state.

Third, the activity of such investigative team, first of all, envisages granting it unlimited authority for conducting a thorough study of all the materials of the "March 1" case. This would-be commission could carry out the interrogation of any citizen of Armenia, including the officials, the officers of the Police, the National Security Service and the Armed Forces, as well as the highest leaders of the state. Incidentally, these people could not refuse to give testimony.

Fourth, as international experience has demonstrated time and again, the specialists of a multinational investigative team (the investigators, prosecutors, criminologists, intelligence officers, translators, etc.), first and foremost, represent and protect the interests of their own states, in spite of the mandate vested in them. That is to say, they comply with the political agenda of their states. As a matter of fact, such commissions are set up with that particular purpose. As a rule, their work is prolonged for as long as required for accomplishing the political objectives of their respective states. Let's just recall how, in the period between 1991 and 1998, UNSCOM (The United Nations Special Commission) was engaged in the perpetual search for non-existent nuclear weapons in Iraq and how the entire process of its activities was used to impose all kinds of pressures and introduce ever newer sanctions restricting the sovereignty and undermining the state machinery of Iraq.

Of course, proposing to launch such an international inquiry into "the March 1 events", the first President of Armenia might have been unaware of these basic truths, which are the subject of study for the experts in international law and national security. But then we have the right to

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<sup>1</sup> "Тер-Петросян: Серж Саркисян не мог баллотироваться в президенты, будучи премьер-министром", [www.regnum.ru/news/967349.html](http://www.regnum.ru/news/967349.html), 13:13 05.03.2008.

conclude that Ter-Petrosyan is unaware and ignorant of the issues about which he makes public statements. However, if he is aware of the subject matter and nonetheless continues to insist on his proposal, the strongest doubts emerge whether he believes in the very idea of an Independent Armenia. No special mental efforts are required for imagining what statements Ter-Petrosyan's proponents will make in response to our judgments: "The authorities are afraid of an international inquiry, and this proves the righteousness of the opposition" etc. But let's refrain from hysteria and examine the essence and possible consequences of implementing the proposal by the former Armenian President.

It is not a secret that the United States and its allies play first fiddle in many international organizations, under the auspices of which the international investigative commissions are set up. If we, for a moment, conditionally imagine that a similar commission has been set up with the purpose of investigating the March 1 events, it won't be hard to guess that the predominant role in the international investigative team will belong to the representatives of those Western countries which have specific geopolitical interests and tasks in our region. The members of the investigative group will be granted legal immunity throughout the territory of Armenia, in accordance with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. In the meantime, they will be actively engaged in espionage, as did, for instance, the UNSCOM leaders and members who later made public statements about their activity. Thus, citing anonymous sources, the *Washington Post* and *Boston Globe* reported that Richard Butler had known of and cooperated with a US electronic eavesdropping operation that allowed intelligence agents to monitor military communications in Iraq. This was confirmed by UNSCOM insider Rod Barton on Australian television in February 2005. This intelligence was used to target US air attacks on Iraq.

To have a more complete picture as to what powers are vested with such investigative bodies, let's quote several paragraphs from the UN Security Council Resolution 1595 which led to the creation of the "UN international independent investigation Commission based in Lebanon to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of this terrorist act (i.e. the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri), including help to identify its perpetrators, sponsors, organizers and accomplices":

*[UN Security Council] Decides that, to ensure the Commission's effectiveness in the discharge of its duties, the Commission shall:*

*– Enjoy the full cooperation of the Lebanese authorities, including full access to all documentary, testimonial and physical information and evidence in their possession that the Commission deems relevant to the inquiry;*

*– Have the authority to collect any additional information and evidence, both documentary and physical, pertaining to this terrorist act, as well as to interview all officials and other persons in Lebanon, that the Commission deems relevant to the inquiry;*

*– Enjoy freedom of movement throughout the Lebanese territory, including access to all sites and facilities that the Commission deems relevant to the inquiry;*

*– Be provided with the facilities necessary to perform its functions, and be granted, as well as its premises, staff and equipment, the privileges and immunities to which they are entitled under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.*

In February 2006, a decision was made for setting up a Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and in December 2007 the Netherlands agreed to host the tribunal in The Hague.

Now, a couple of words about the inevitable consequences of the implementation of Ter-Petrosyan's proposal.

The very process of setting up such body – i.e. including the proposal in the agenda of the UN Security Council, discussing and voicing Armenia’s internal problem in that tribunal, disputing the mandate etc. – will be a powerful blow to Armenia’s sovereignty and international reputation.

The activity of such a would-be team in Armenia will, in its turn, undermine the country’s fledgling national security system which, as shown by the recent events, has serious flaws and is in its formative stage. Actually, the ex-President proposes to hand over a most important component of Armenia’s sovereignty, its justice system, under the control of the international forces which are absolutely not interested in the strengthening of Armenian statehood. If we take into consideration the factor of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict which may, at any moment, revert into a new aggression against Armenia, independent Armenian statehood will “sing its swan song” as a result of the formation of such a committee. Perhaps, during the rally of February 22, 2008, Ter-Petrosyan had a good reason to inspire his audience with the following thought, “freedom is a value higher than independence, higher than all the victories, higher than statehood itself. Who needs such a state, such authorities and such independence that do not bestow freedom to the individual.”

Comparing this anarchist doctrine by Ter-Petrosyan with his obsessive idea of handing over Armenia’s liberated territory to Azerbaijan and deploying international “peacekeepers” there, his continuous calls directed to the West for intervening in the internal affairs of Armenia<sup>2</sup> as well as his most recent proposal on launching an “international inquiry into the March 1 events”, it is possible to conclude that the ex-President of Armenia presents and lobbies the interests of certain authors of the international political system, entities which have demonstrated no support for the interests of Armenian statehood and the Armenian people. It is likely that the principal thesis of Ter-Petrosyan’s pre- and post-election program was precisely the international investigation of the events in Armenia, as declared in his March 5 speech; this is why the disorders of March 1 were provoked.

The implementation of the programs authored by such virtual and at the same time recognizable actors are clearly obvious in Iraq where the loss of statehood and the collapse of the country are just a matter of time, as many analysts believe. It is also necessary to admit that the events which took place in Iraq were predetermined by the activity of the above-mentioned UN Special Commission. But if Saddam Hussein’s regime was really criminal and deserved the condemnation of the international community, the matter in our case is different as it deals with the ambitions and harmful activities of the first RA President who is trying to strike an equally undermining blow to the re-established Armenian-statehood which, in the course of less than 20 years of its history, faced a war of existence and an economic blockade; a country which is even now subject to most powerful informational and psychological attacks and the threat of a new Turkish-Azerbaijani invasion. It is also interesting to underline that during his tenure, Ter-Petrosyan never raised a question for launching an “international inquiry” in connection with the slaughters and massacres of Armenians, organized by the Azerbaijani authorities in Sumgait, Baku, Kirovabad, Getashen, Maragha and other Armenian-populated areas.

What’s described above are just some of the possible consequences of Ter-Petrosyan’s demand for conducting an “international inquiry into the March 1 events”, and we hope that they will never come true as far as Armenia is concerned; the Armenian people will never allow anything of the kind to happen.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Levon Ter-Petrosian, “Silence on Armenia,” *Washington Post*, March 5 2008.

Nevertheless, the Armenian authorities have to admit that along with many other mistakes and shortcomings (social and human resource policies, the inability to hear the voice of the public, etc.) they also committed a strategic mistake: With their acquiescence – and sometimes even support – and through foreign assistance, a powerful fifth column, headed by Ter-Petrosyan and the Armenian Pan-National Movement, has struck roots and organized itself in Armenia.

To cure this disease without pain is, alas, no longer possible; that time has now passed. But removal of the malignant tumor is, nonetheless, mandatory.

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