

The Triangle of Submissiveness

By Fred Aprim

The last three conferences of Ankawa (Aghajan), Ceres/Modesto (Dadesho) and Tehran (Bet Kolia) have stirred many discussions among Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans, Nestorians, Jacobites, Suryanis, and ChaldoAssyrians) around the world. The perspectives expressed on the various Internet based forums, around Assyrian dinning tables and over tea or coffee gatherings about these conferences are interesting to consider. However, while certain opinions lack touch with reality, are bias and strictly emotional in nature, there is that sound opinion, which explores the events surrounding these three conferences with untarnished conviction based on logic, competent sense, impartial and virtuous understanding. The question being asked: Where these three conferences linked to each other? What is/are the common denominator? Simple analysis of the circumstances and events suggests that the three conferences had a common mission which is in general to destroy the independent Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM). Furthermore, the three conferences construct the triangle of submissiveness; a submissiveness to the empowered and wealth augmented Kurds where they, i.e., the conferences, represent the three segments (sides) of this triangle. Further analysis indicates that certain patriarchs and/or bloc of bishops from the three main Syriac-speaking churches are the vertices of this triangle and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) as its centroid.

Allow me to present overview of the three carefully woven conferences and explore the bigger picture.

The Ankawa Conference (northern Iraq) of Mr. Sargis Aghajan

Mr. Sargis Aghajan is a member of the KDP of Masoud Barazani and he is the Minister of Finance in the Northern Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). He orchestrated the Ankawa Conference of March 12-13, 2007. The Ankawa Conference was backed and financed by the KDP. Later, a People's Committee and a leadership from that committee were selected/elected.

Many argue that the Ankawa Conference had three main objectives:

1. To undermine and marginalize the ADM and the 2003 Baghdad Conference and then isolate it and to establish a new leadership that is blindly pro-Barazani.
2. To position the Assyrians in order to welcome and accept the annexation of the Nineveh Plains to the Kurdish region of northern Iraq (Assyria), which is currently part of Ninawa (Nineveh) Governorate. This is in line with other reports, which indicate that the Kurds are working currently to usurp oil-rich Kirkuk, Mosul and other regions to the KRG.
3. Improve the oppressive KDP image and present it as the savior of the Assyrian people. The KDP needed to counter many Diaspora Assyrian activists and independent media groups, such as AINA and Zinda, that have been very vocal against the unfair policies and actions of the KDP towards the Assyrians since the creation of the no flying zone in northern Iraq (historic Assyria) in 1992. The KDP has been accused, and rightfully so, of marginalizing the true representatives of the Assyrian people, oppressing those who do not approve of its unfair policies, ethnic persecution and cleansing, undermining and denying the legitimate rights of the indigenous Assyrians in northern Iraq, interfering in the Assyrians' internal affairs and denying Assyrians basic rights unless they show complete obedience and submission to the Barazanis and KDP.

An important point here is that the participants of the Ankawa Conference agreed to adopt the compound title "Chaldean Syriac Assyrian" in order to unify the various Syriac-speaking Christian communities in Iraq. This was to counter the "ChaldoAssyrian" term introduced by the ADM in Baghdad's Conference in 2003.

Honoring Aghajan

The U.S. Government allocated billions of dollars of aid for reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Over \$30 millions were assigned for the Syriac-speaking Christian Assyrians. The U.S. aid monies allocated to the Christians were handed to the KRG to manage since it is a governmental entity in northern Iraq. The KRG

and perhaps other decision makers selected Aghajan to be in charge of the distribution and use of this U.S. aid package. The construction of churches and homes went under way. The two questions here are: Why were more extravagant churches being built for this Christian denomination and less striking for that and why not built Assyrian schools and cultural centers? On the one hand, it is in the best interest of the Kurds to ensure that religion continues to dominate Assyrian society. This would contribute to keeping the Assyrians divided across their religious denominations and maintain that confrontational and envy environment between the various Assyrian religious denominations. On the other hand, traditionally, schools and cultural centers play a vital role in raising national and patriotic awareness. Thus, it is not in the best interest of the KDP to promote that. Still, there are many questions regarding who owns the grant deeds of those homes and who is entitled to them. Reports indicate that certain grant deeds are at times linked to other institutions and that only KDP supporters are being rewarded with homes. At any rate, patriarchs began to praise Aghajan and presented him with Medals of Honor. Aghajan became a hero virtually overnight as patriarchs showered him with praise in their speeches, special letters and/or in their medal-awarding ceremonies. The medals honoring process was a surprise to many Assyrians since they have not witnessed before such honoring system being applied by their churches. The medals seem to have been designed and created especially for Aghajan to glorify him. The making of Aghajan continued with the support of certain Assyrians that are KDP associates, such as Fawzi Hariri, and few other smaller and weaker organizations, including the Assyrian Patriotic Party (APP), Bet Nahrain Democratic Party (BNDP), Chaldean Cultural Center of Ankawa that are supported by the KRG and Barazani. The leaders of these institutions and those KDP associates were awarded ministerial cabinet positions in the KRG and the Central Government. Furthermore, the suspended Fr. Emmanuel Baito Youkhanna was reinstated in the Assyrian Church of the East (ACOE). Of course, Fr. Youkhanna is the brother of Nimrod Baito Youkhanna, the Secretary General of the APP. Fr. Youkhanna began his extensive attacks against the ADM with his Arabic articles that were posted on www.ankawa.com. Following in the footsteps of the ACOE, Mr. Sargon Dadesho's media outlets of Ceres/Modesto began to praise Aghajan as well.

The Pro-Kurdish Propaganda of Aghajan

Aghajan has been working very hard to make sure that whenever a special referendum is to take place in northern Iraq (Assyria), our people would vote in favor of linking the Nineveh Plains to the Kurdish region and the KRG. Aghajan of course has his resources, whether media (www.ankawa.com web site and Ishtar Satellite TV) or individuals and institutions that do most of the dirty work for him and for the KDP. For example, Mr. Jibrael Marko, member of the preparatory committee of the Ankawa Conference and Mrs. Linda Gabriel (European Syriac Union) are touring Europe and presenting seminars about the concept of our people's self rule, its geographic borders and its administrative status within Iraq, as the announcement on www.ankawa.com puts it. However, the announcement did not refer to the Kurdish attempts to annex the Nineveh plains to the Kurdish region and thus swallowing the last stronghold of the Assyrians in Iraq. One such seminar should take place in Vienna on August 12, 2007. On July 28, 2007, the two individuals had a similar seminar in London, England. According to Mr. Albert Michael of London, who attended the seminar, Mr. Marko flagrantly misrepresented the truth and promoted the KDP agenda as propagated by Aghajan. If we really listen to what Mr. Marko had stated we would find that his speech is baseless, because article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution allows only for the establishment of an administrative area. Any other form of autonomy, self-rule, etc., has no legal basis. To attain autonomy, which few of our groups are claiming to be working on, one must first amend the current Iraqi Constitution. When Mr. Marko and Ms. Gabriel were asked how they would overcome this major obstacle, they said that they would amend the Iraq Constitution. When Mr. Michael asked whether they had a member of Iraq's constitutional committee actively working on this specific amendment, Ms. Gabriel said yes. A little later on, when Mr. Michael asked her to name that person, she retracted her earlier answer and confessed that there wasn't anyone. If so, how are they going to accomplish what they are claiming?

According to Mr. Michael, the followings were few of the deceptive and false statements made by Marko during his opening remarks. Of course, these false statements are repeated by every Aghajan associate:

1. That it was Aghajan who first introduced the Nineveh Plains initiative for our Chaldean Syriac Assyrian people.
2. That it would be prudent to attach the said region to the northern Iraq Kurdish region.

3. That the Kurds would speak on our behalf and defend our rights.
4. That the Kurdish constitution is favorable towards Assyrians.
5. That Mr. Younadam Kanna, Member of Iraqi Parliament and Secretary General of the ADM, is against an autonomous or administrative region.

These claims by Marko and Aghajan associates are absolutely false. Allow me to clarify that:

1. Whatever Aghajan is proposing today was originally proposed in the ADM's 2003 Baghdad Conference. In fact, the ADM's proposals were enshrined in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL).
2. The KDP does not have the Assyrians' best interest on their agenda since the Kurds are establishing Kurdi/stan over Assyria. The KDP has demonstrated acts of racism and ethnic cleansing towards the Assyrians while ruling with brutality and injustice over other Assyrian regions such as those in Dohuk Governorate for example.
3. The KDP have repeatedly demonstrated that it is a non-democratic party. It has consistently undermined and marginalized the Assyrians as the indigenous people of the region and their true representatives.
4. The Kurdish constitution is not to the Assyrians' favor since it presents Assyrians as a minor group after the two major Arabs and Kurdish ethnic groups and then separates Assyrians into Assyrians and Chaldeans. Marko cannot deceive the public while, for example, articles 2 and 3 of the current Kurdish constitution are phrased the way they are or Assyrians and their history are almost completely left out from the preamble.
5. Younadam Kanna is not against an administrative area; in fact, the ADM initiated it in 2003 Baghdad Conference. He and the ADM are working within what the Iraqi Constitution allows. Meaning, there is no use of demanding something that would be seen as an action against the Iraqi state and its constitution. Autonomy at this junction is not feasible; however, administrative region linked to the Central Government is possible and instituted in the Iraqi Constitution.
6. The KDP is indeed showing favorable gestures towards the Christians in northern Iraq. However, what is the point when the KDP categorizes everyone in northern Iraq as Kurdistanis and their politicians and self-made historians deem Assyrians as Christian Kurds?

Assyrian National Congress (ANC) Conference (Ceres/Modesto, California) of Mr. Sargon Dadesho and The Surprising Letter

Mr. Odisho Malko is a well-known Iraqi Assyrian writer and historian. He ran in the January 2005 Iraqi national elections under Slate 139 and his name was positioned on top of all candidates on that slate. Slate 139 ran under the "Assyrian" only name and was strongly supported by Mr. Sargon Dadesho and his media outlets of Ceres, California. However, slate 139 failed to make any impact in the Iraqi elections. That is history. Where Malko stood after the 2005 elections, what he supported or attended are not the purpose of this article.

Recently, Malko posted an article on ANA-Ashur web site in which he presented his own thoughts about the various Assyrian conferences that we are addressing. In his article, Malko reported about a letter that most of us were unaware about. That letter interested this writer and it should be of interest to every Assyrian. Malko stated that at the conclusion of the congress/conference of the ANC of Dadesho, which took place March 24-25, 2007 in Ceres, the ANC sent an official letter to the leadership of the Ankawa Conference asking for a meeting between the two groups to address the general situation and unify the goals and demands of the various Assyrian groups. By planning his ANC conference following immediately that of Ankawa, Dadesho tried to add to the popularity of Aghajan and attempted to farther isolate the ADM in the Diaspora while Aghajan was doing that inside Iraq. An ACOE bishop and several priests attended the opening ceremonies of Dadesho's conference. Of course, this church presence in national or political conferences is ceremonial in many occasions.

Lies, Bias and Double Standards

For years, Dadesho, who is linked directly to the ANC, BNDP, Bet Nahrain Inc. and its media organs AssyriaSat, Assyria Times and Bet Nahrain Forum, has been claiming to be the defender and protector of the "Assyrian" name and that he would never compromise with the Assyrian name or accept any compounded name as a political compromise. Dadesho has been attacking the ADM since the 2003 Baghdad Conference in which the ADM introduced the compound title "ChaldoAssyrians" in order to unify the Chaldeans, Nestorians, Jacobites, Suryanis etc. On his AssyriaSat and Bet Nahrain Forum, Dadesho and his volunteers/supporters have been calling the ADM, its leaders, and all ADM supporters as traitors, nation-sellers, etc. for using that compound name. To be such a patriot is admirable, but one wonders: why such strong principles and stands are suddenly compromised? If Dadesho was such a patriot who promised never to compromise with the Assyrian name, why did he send that friendly letter to the Ankawa Conference leadership, which adopted the compound name "Chaldean Syriac Assyrian"? If the ACOE has honored Aghajan with a medal knowing that he created a compound name, why has Dadesho become the mouthpiece of the ACOE and its PR firm? As a politician, Dadesho couldn't accomplish anything or muster serious support from the Assyrian people; therefore, he turned to church to get that support. I would like to go farther and ask if the ACOE was against the 2003 Baghdad Conference of the ADM because it adopted a compound name, why accept the compound name of Aghajan and then reward the Kurdish official with a medal? Is the compound name of Aghajan made of gold while that of the ADM made of tin? This question I have asked repeatedly for almost a year. I am still waiting for an answer.

Barazani Defends the Kurdish Cause. Who are the BNDP and ANC Defending?

No Assyrian in his/her right mind would suggest that the KDP and Barazani are good for Assyrians, as an ethnic group (not as Christian millet) with historic rights in northern Iraq (Assyria). Barazani and the KDP have been working hard for the establishment of the illusive Kurdi/stan over Assyrians' historic homelands (Assyria). They have marginalized the Assyrian true leadership, the Assyrians' historic rights and history. If that is the case, why is it that media outlets of BNDP and ANC in Ceres, i.e., AssyriaSat, Assyria Times and Bet Nahrain Forum, have not criticized and attacked Barazani and the KDP? One visit to the Bet Nahrain Forum for example one could see that the general discussion is predominantly religious in nature and about the greatness of the ACOE and its leadership, the court case of ACOE vs. Mar Bawai Soro, or how to boycott the Assyrian National Convention or how to jeopardize certain rallies that are being organized around the world to bring awareness to the unfair treatment of Assyrian Christians and their tragic fate since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Those that post on Bet Nahrain Forum avoid discussing Barazani's undemocratic actions in northern Iraq (Assyria); however, they attack fellow Assyrian writers, organizations, etc. Not even the Late Julius Shabbas who gave so much of his life for Assyrian cultural issues escaped the grime, filth, and tackiness of AssyriaSat.

I have no problem with buttressing the ACOE or any other church for that matter, but these days external forces that are much powerful are challenging the Assyrian national movement. Therefore, it is vital that Assyrian nationalists, activists and political groups do the right thing and: First, work genuinely with one another towards the Assyrian common goals. Second, step aside and allow churches to handle their own internal disputes. The court of law will decide if one is guilty or not. Emotional outbursts, empty accusations and bias personal incrimination on Internet forums are worthless and do not stand in a court of law. We must end bringing personal convictions related to faith and its complications into national matters and into politics and vice versa.

I am appalled how millions of desperately needed dollars are being wasted on court expenses when this money could have helped thousands of desperate Assyrians in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and other distressed places.

The Tehran's Assyrian Universal Conference (Iran) of Mr. Younadam Bet Kolia

Having gone over certain aspects of the Ankawa and ANC conferences, I would like to touch on the July 24-26, 2007 Tehran's Assyrian Universal Conference as well, because it adds another dimension. Mr. Younadam Bet Kolia, Assyrian Universal Alliance's (AUA) Secretary of Asia and the Member of Iranian Parliament, organized the Tehran Conference. The AUA was split in regards to the Tehran conference, but high-ranking officials, including Mr. Fraidon Darmo, acting Secretary General, Mr. Carlo Ganjeh (Secretary of the Americas), Mr. Youra Tarverdi (Executive Board Member) and others attended. We know that AUA's Darmo came to Washington with the KDP associate Fawzi Hariri and expressed their

opposition to Congresswoman Anna Esho's planned proposition in U.S. Congress for a Nineveh Plain self-administrated region linked to the Central Government since this was against the KDP plans. Subsequently, the proposition was withdrawn. The AUA's cooperation with Aghajan and the Ankawa Conference is puzzling and most importantly contradictory to its official declarations since the Ankawa Conference adopted a compound name "Chaldean Syriac Assyrian" while the AUA, for example, in its 24th World Congress in London, July 7-9, 2005 stated clearly that: "We reaffirm that there will no longer be a variety of names to divide the Assyrian people, but all will be referred to as Assyrians."

Furthermore, according to www.brasheet.com, Reverend Father Yousef Rashidi of the ACOE St. George's Cathedral in Tehran was present and he read a letter of support from Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. Mar Ramzi Garmo, Bishop of the Chaldean Catholic Church is the only residing bishop from a Syriac-speaking church in Iran. He was present as well. Many Assyrians in Iran are Catholics and are members of the Chaldean Catholic Church. The last physically residing bishop from the ACOE in Iran was Mar Dinkha. He left Tehran after his consecration as patriarch in London in 1976. Even though Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV has been residing in Chicago, he personally continues to oversee the affairs of the ACOE diocese in Iran. Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV has special warm connection to Iran since he lived in Tehran while serving his church as a priest and as a bishop for two decades.

Of course, Bet Kolia made sure to invite Dadesho and other members of ANC and BNDP to the conference. Interestingly, Habib Afram of the Lebanese Syriac League was invited to the Tehran conference. He was at the Ankawa Conference as well.

The Bigger Picture of Bet Kolia's Actions

We have to look at the bigger picture and try to analyze what is taking place. Bet Kolia visited northern Iraq (Assyria) and attended the Ankawa Conference of Aghajan. Next, he visited the United States and was invited by Dadesho to attend the ANC conference in Ceres/Modesto, California. In San Jose earlier, he had a presentation at the Assyrian American Association (AAA) of San Jose, which this writer attended. In his presentation, Bet Kolia went out of his way to praise the ACOE and its patriarch. He praised the Iranian government and its policies repeatedly. This is not new of course. In an interview with Pawand's Iran News on June 6, 2006, he stated "Assyrians of Iran are not persecuted and that they are treated equal with Muslims." He returned on July 25, 2007 to state for MNA Iranian News that "Iran is a typical example of peaceful coexistence between members of different religions" and that "We [Christians] are having equal rights with Muslims." However, Bet Kolia did not explain why during his representation of the Assyrian community in the Iranian Parliament as the "Representative of the Assyrians and Chaldeans" most of the 100,000 Assyrians that lived in Iran before the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution have fled Iran. He did not explain why is it that today there are only between 10,000 and 15,000 Assyrians left in Iran, as he confirmed during that presentation. Furthermore, in his presentation, Bet Kolia repeatedly attacked the ADM. It appeared that he was there to incite the public against the ADM more than anything else and he did not forget to brag about his accomplishment for the Assyrians in Iran. That just amazed me looking at where Assyrians were in Iran during the rule of the Shah (before 1979) and where they are today under the Islamic Ayatollahs.

On August 13, 2007, the AUA/Americas Chapter issued a statement in response to the editorial of Mr. Wilfred Bet Alkhas in the August 1, 2007 issue of Zinda magazine. In it, the AUA/Americas Chapter continued to praise the Iranian Islamic Government and its fair treatment of Assyrians. The statement went on to blame the Assyrian misfortunes in Iran basically on the thirty years of economic sanctions and the eight years of war (1980-1988) that Iraq initiated. It went further to state, quote: "The hardships faced by the Iranians could have been a legitimate reason for the Iranian government to disregard the Assyrians and the Assyrian issues altogether." End quote. I am speechless!

Worth mentioning that certain observers believe that the AUA as a whole is not part of what has been orchestrated lately. Certain AUA members disapprove of the latest questionable involvements of Bet Kolia in the Ankawa, Ceres and Tehran Conferences.

As far as Iran is concerned, it seems to me that it outsmarted the Tehran Conference organizers. Because no matter what the goals of Bet Kolia/Dadesho were, Iran's main purpose for agreeing to host that conference was to get back at the U.S. Administration for lashing against it in regards to minority rights violations. Iranian officials used the conference as propaganda against the U.S. Administration. The rationale for hosting Dadesho in Tehran is that Iran perhaps needed to offer good gesture towards him as he stopped

hosting television programs by the Azeri and Ahwazi Iranian secessionist groups that purchased airtime on his AssyriaSat. The U.S. connection in this, if any, needs to be investigated and analyzed further.

Aghajan, Dadesho and Bet Kolia: The Purpose is Clear

I believe that the triangle of submissiveness to the Kurds represented in the Ankawa (Aghajan), Ceres/Modesto (Dadesho) and Tehran (Bet Kolia) and how this web fit with the bigger plans of the KDP is clear enough. The KDP neutralized the ADM and it is about to annex the Nineveh Plain to the Kurdish region officially. Each player does his part for his own reasons, but they compliment one another at the end. Aghajan is in it because he is a member of the KDP and his loyalty is foremost to the Kurdish agenda. Aghajan could not have split royalties or reflect two fundamentally different agendas; Kurdish and Assyrian, especially when the two agendas are conflicting because of land disputes and other obvious historic issues. Dadesho would do anything just to hurt the ADM. For him it is a personal vendetta and ego satisfaction and working with Aghajan and the ACOE at this time serves him well. Dadesho changes his alliances as frequent as changing his suits, shirts and neckties that he purchased after winning his tainted lawsuit against the fallen Iraqi government. His satellite TV is his real power. Bet Kolia's connection is due to his strong relationship with the ACOE, which is cooperating with the KDP and Aghajan. Many argue that Bet Kolia should concentrate more on the problems and bleak future of the remaining 10,000 Assyrians in Islamic Iran. I believe that this reflection is not beneficial. It was only post WWI that modern Iraq and Syria were created and that modern Turkey and Iran acquired their present borders. This contributed to dividing Assyrians and historic Assyria across four separate countries, which was not the case prior to WWI. Before WWI, Assyrians lived predominantly in a region falling mainly within the Ottoman Empire and partly within the Persian state and there were hardly any specifically defined frontiers between the two power states. The Assyrians in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria are facing the same dark fate represented in rise of fundamental and militant Islam and the Kurdish illegal expansion. However, we must consider that the policies of different countries might limit the involvement of Assyrian representatives (in Iran, Iraq and Syria for example) from being part of a more global effort regarding the future of Assyrians.

Final Remarks

When insignificant Assyrian groups, including the APP, BNDP, ANC, etc. and individuals of split loyalties or questionable past become so active in organizing conferences, marginalizing the elected independent Assyrian group (ADM) and paving the road for the annexation of the Nineveh Plains to the Kurdish region, we must raise questions. When the weak APP, BNDP, etc. opened the Assyrian door for the KDP to infiltrate, undermine and then marginalize the democratically elected ADM, it became very hard for Assyrians to manage the Assyrian home freely. Let me assert that the best interest of the Assyrians is not to be under the Kurdish control. The Kurds have proven throughout the centuries and most recently in the last two decades that they have no interest in respecting Assyrians' historic rights as indigenous people or being democratic. In fact, the Kurds have done the greatest damage to Assyrians in the last 300 years in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, more than any other ethnic group. One simple and swift look at who illegally occupies most of Assyrian ancestral lands and villages in northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, southeastern Turkey and northeastern Syria proves that fact.

On the other hand, the U.S. must uphold the principles of democracy and must protect the rights of minorities and indigenous people across the board. First, Aghajan and Dadesho are not the Assyrians' representatives in Iraq; the former is a Kurdish party official and the latter is the head or part of insignificant Diaspora institutions. Neither one is elected by the Assyrians. However, the ADM is though through two Iraqi national elections. Thus, the U.S. Administration must deal with the ADM in principle. Secondly, the annexation of the Nineveh Plains to the Kurdish region is neither in the best interest of the Assyrians nor the United States. The Kurds have many problems with their neighbors, whether Sunni or Shi'aa or whether Arabs, Persians, or Turks. The present alliance between the Kurds and the Shi'aa in the Iraqi Government is superficial. The animosity between the Arabs and Kurds is much deeper for few politicians to patch, considering what the Kurds have done in the last four years in Iraq and what they are planning. Therefore, the Assyrians, Shabaks, and Yezidis should not be under Kurdish control, because any future conflict between the Kurds and Arabs or between Kurds and Persians or Turks would lead to a complete disaster for those vulnerable small groups. If such was the case, the Kurds would not be in

position to help these groups and a wholesale genocide could take place. The Nineveh Plains must be administered by independent Assyrians, Shabaks and Yezidis and under the direct control of the United States and the United Nations, now that the UN has voted to expand its role in Iraq. Furthermore, the Nineveh Plain region must be in good terms with the Iraqi Central Government.

There are certain writers who claim that participating in a conference does not mean that one necessarily agrees with the final statement and decisions of that conference. This is strange to state, especially when that person or group does not issue a special statement to make that clear. These writers go on to state that the AUA for example in its 24th Congress (2005) made it clear that it is for the Assyrian name only, therefore, it does not need to elaborate on what the Ankawa Conference declared, for example, regarding the name issue. These writers go on to state that the Assyrian groups should basically deal with the devil if necessary. I guess that this is in line with the AUA policy. The AUA/Americas Chapter in its August 13, 2007 statement stated, quote: "In order to make progress in the Assyrian Cause and to promote the Assyrian rights and interests, AUA has and will engage in diplomatic dialogue with all relevant nations, organizations and parties." End quote.

The question here is: How many congresses, conferences and meetings have Assyrian groups organized since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003? What did they accomplish? Conferences such as Ankawa, Ceres, and Tehran will remain dubious and suspicious to this writer, because we have seen too many of them by the same players before that ended with nothing but a worthless declaration. The purpose has been almost the same: Trying to impress the public or show objection to something that another has stated, done or is planning to do. I have yet to see a conference with a serious agenda, short-term and long-term plans, follow ups, actions and then results. This is expected because the BNDP, APP, etc. while sleeping with the KDP could not put one block on top of another if that was not in the interest of the Kurds. Thus, declarations and statements with emotional banners of Khaya Atour seem more of a façade for failure and defeat than a genuine concern for the fate of a nation. This writer's convictions today continue to be that many Assyrian institutions, political and religious, are not independent, are not endowed with free will, and are playing the tunes of the KDP, which is dangerous and non-beneficial to the Assyrian question and future.

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