

The Holland Conference

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The Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) invited many political organizations to a conference in order to address important issues facing our nation. The general conference met for two days in Hengelo, Holland, on April 1-2, 2006.

The Attendees and the Absentees

The following groups attended:

- a) Chaldean Democratic Forum
- b) Assyrian Democratic Organization (ADO)
- c) Assyrian Patriotic Party (APP)
- d) Assyrian National Organization
- e) Assyrian Democratic Party
- f) Assyrian General Assembly (slate 800 in the Iraqi elections)
- g) Assyria Liberation Party
- h) Bet Nahrain Democratic Party (BNDP)
- i) Syriac European Union
- j) Bet Nahrain Patriotic Union
- k) The Syriac Independent Gathering Movement
- l) Chaldo-Ashur Organization

Three organizations did not attend:

- a) The Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM)
- b) Chaldean Democratic Party Union
- c) Shuraya Party

The Final Declaration of April 2, 2006

Here are some of the issues, concerns, demands, and recommendations included in the final declaration that was posted on April 3, 2006 at the following link:

<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic,33986.0.html>.

The Arabic declaration signed by the 12 groups seems to be authentic since no group has questioned or objected to it since it has been made public five days ago.

- a) That we are one people (past, present, and future) and that should be the foundation for future communications.
- b) That the Iraqi Constitution with its current language is unfair to "our people" especially in the Preamble that ignored the role of our civilization and the tragedies that our people have faced.
- c) The role of Shari'aa, which would marginalize certain basic rights of the non-Muslims.
- d) A self-administrative area in regions where our people have existed historically and geographically.
- e) To establish a common national congress to represent "our people". The formation of such congress is to be studied thoroughly and be addressed in upcoming conference.
- f) Condemn terrorism that targets the Iraqi people and condemn the bombings of all places of worship. The conference condemned as well the ongoing efforts to paint certain areas as demographically being of certain sect or faith through forced deportation, and demographic change that "our people" are subjected to.
- g) Asked for a speedy establishment of a government that represents and includes all Iraqi groups.
- h) Rejected attempts by foreign parties to interfere in our people's internal decision making process and rejected any mandates over our people's institutions.

- i) Supported the ongoing efforts to bring democracy through peaceful manner in Syria. This process would ultimately lead to the recognition of our people's national rights as the indigenous people of Syria within the Syrian national framework and within a secular and pluralistic system.

The Puzzle

If we recall the final declaration of the October 22-23, 2003 ChaldoAssyrian Syriac National Conference held in Baghdad, organized by the ADM and the ChaldoAssyrian National Council, we would realize that the demands of the Holland Conference were basically nothing but a repetition of what the ADM has stated almost all along for three years. The puzzle here is that most of the groups that met in Holland have directly or indirectly attacked, ridiculed, and marginalized the ADM for using terms such as "Our People" or "ChaldoAssyrians" for the last three years. These groups and their supporters have either insisted that they were Assyrians or Chaldeans. Well, what happened in Holland? Why are we referred to as "Our People", not in one, not in two, but in ten different incidents in the final declaration? Where is, for example, the Assyrian name that these groups have been bragging about for three years?

Reading the Final Declaration

How are we to read the Holland Conference?

Brother Fil from Canada writes: "Now that is good too because we now see that these groups are either acknowledging the writing on wall or making overtures to tell ADM that we are evolving by recognizing that hard facts."

Brother Alfred from California writes: "This conference in fact reveals only one very important fact about confirming the correct policy of the ADM and the special class of its leadership and how far they are ahead of all these rookies who need a lot to learn about politics and the leadership of a nation, ..."

Brother Gaby from Australia writes: "What a waste of an Airline ticket, do these people believe that we are so gullible we will again fall for this façade that we have been subjected to for the past thirty years? This is not unity, only another struggle for power that will cause more damage and division. Why don't they say what is really on their minds? What are they afraid of? The declaration is an insult to anyone with half a brain. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE PEOPLE, THINK OF SOMETHING NEW!!!! PATHETIC."

In my opinion, the AUA and the other groups that use the title "Assyrian" as a representative of our people sought to compromise regarding the name issue since there were couple of groups in the conference that still do not agree with the use of the name Assyrian as inclusive title for our people. The question is, if these groups needed to compromise because of the presence of the Chaldean and Syriac political groups in the conference, why is it so hard to understand the compromise of the ADM that represents hundreds of thousands in Iraq, many of whom are still undecided about the name issue?

Furthermore, I need to stress that we must be pleased because every genuine unity effort must be blessed and supported. While everything related to the conference is not visible and known publicly, I personally will wait and see where the future conferences that were promised to take place are heading.