

The State of Assyria

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Zinda January 29, 2007

Assyrians all over the world are currently discussing an "autonomous, self-administered region" in the Nineveh Plains of Northern Iraq. This discussion is dominating the Assyrian airwaves, internet forums, coffee shops, and pal-talk sessions, but to date, the Assyrian people do not know WHOM this autonomous, self-administrative region is for, or by WHAT name this region shall be known. Nevertheless, Assyrians are consumed by this discussion without knowing any of the details, or how this region will be implemented, and the way in which it might change the demographics of the Nineveh Plains..

Those Assyrians that are avid forum participants, will remember that back in September 2006, I requested that ALL Assyrian individuals and political organizations claiming to be diligently working on the creation of an "Assyrian province", or an "autonomous, self-administered Assyrian region," to prove to us that they have "formally" requested this from the Iraqi government, or even the Kurdish Regional Government. I asked them to provide such proof by posting the formal request on the forum of their choice, so that Assyrians can see that this formal request has been accepted and is officially being reviewed, and the wording used in the proposal.

NOT ONE Assyrian individual or political organization came forward to prove their claim. Of course, ADM supporters like Johnny Michael posted a quote from the long-dissolved TAL, by pointing to some long dead article, trying to PROVE that ADM was working on such a "request." When I pointed out that the TAL had dissolved without ANY Assyrians taking advantage of article 53C, Johnny Michael dropped the issue.

Since I posed that question, many months have passed, and many Assyrian individuals and political organizations are now claiming that they have since, "formally" requested it. I now receive numerous e-mails from the Reverend Ken Joseph, who runs, "The Good News Agency," stating "they" have "formally" requested an "Assyrian Province," and writes, "Whereas on September 19, 2006 the Formal Request For An "Assyrian Province" was officially presented to the Iraqi Government, to the Foreign Minister and President, at their request, signed for and currently being processed in the Iraqi Government. Whereas, article 121 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 promises an Assyrian Region as the "political" and "administrative" right of the Assyrian Nation." To date, we have not seen the "proof".nor do we know who the "THEY" are that Ken Joseph keeps referring to. Assyrians would love to know who are "THEY" that "formally" requested an Assyrian Province?

Then last week, in Zinda's January 13, 2007 issue, Ninos Bithyou declared that, "ADM has put together a formal proposal for the Nineveh Plains Administrative Unit, legally, with the

help of legal professionals in Iraq, we have created a proposal. Also, we have already spoken with all political parties in the Iraqi Parliament (Sunni, Shia, etc.) and they are aware of our proposal.” To date, we have not seen “proof” of such a proposal or the “legal” documents Mr. Bithyou is referring to, nor do we know in whose name is ADM asking for this autonomous, self-administered region, much less WHAT this region shall be named!

We now even have Pascale Warda, former Iraqi Minister of Displacement and Migration, and former ADM representative, who is asking for “a separate federal state for non-Muslim minorities in the Nineveh plain.” To date, we have NOT seen Pascale Warda’s “formal” request, nor do we know who the “Non-Muslim minorities” that she is referring to, ARE, much less WHO she is asking this region from!.

So far as we can tell, and this has not yet been validated, the only person who has “formally” requested an autonomous self-administered region for the “Christians,” NOT the Assyrians, in northern Iraq, was Sargis Aghajan, who claims he had formally requested it from the Kurdish Regional Government. To date, we have not seen these documents, nor do we know the wording of such documents! Mr. Aghajan, don’t you think the Assyrian people deserve to see these documents, so that you can prove to us you have done what you say, and how you have worded this request?

The following are excerpts from Zinda’s January 13th issue, where Peter Lamprecht writes, “Sarkis Aghajan is one man who may have the biggest say in the future of the Christian community. As Iraqi Kurdistan’s Minister of Finance and Economy and a Christian member of the governing Kurdistan Democratic Party, Aghajan has financially supported thousands of Christian refugees from the south while calling for a Christian region attached to Iraqi Kurdistan.”

“I demanded the right of autonomy for our [Christian] people – Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian – to be fixed in the Kurdistan Region Constitution,” Aghajan told Compass by e-mail. Aghajan publicly backed a statement last month by five Christian political parties calling on drafters of Kurdistan’s Regional Constitution to guarantee an autonomous Christian area in the Nineveh plain, Iraqi Christianity’s ancestral homeland north of Mosul” writes Mr. Lamprecht.

He further quotes Sargis Aghajan by writing, “Since the Nineveh plain falls within the expanded boundaries [of the Kurdish region], we propose to include in the constitution a clear text of our people’s right to autonomy within the said plain,” the November 10 document stated.”

We, the educated and intelligent Assyrian people gather that Mr. Aghajan is asking for an autonomous, self-administered “Christian” region, but what we do not know is who are the “five Christian political parties” that are backing his formal request? Doesn’t he think the Assyrian people deserve to know WHO the five “Christian” political parties are? Or is it a TOP secret? Is there not a single literate person in Aghajan’s organization or in the five political “Christian” parties backing him, that can put these demands of his on paper, and have one of the many “computer geniuses” post it on the forum of his choice?

It isn’t enough that all these Assyrians are requesting an autonomous, self-administrative “Christian” region, and one “Assyrian Province,” (by reverend Ken Joseph)

we now have Anna Esho, an Assyrian-American Congress woman from California, offering to propose a “non-binding” resolution” to be passed by the American government to back the “proposed” for a Chaldo/Assyrian/Syriac province in Northern Iraq. Ms. Esho, if this resolution of yours is NOT binding, why are you wasting our time?

Who are you people fooling? You have ALL requested an autonomous, self-administered region, but we have no proof from any of you, nor do we know any of the details! You people could be asking and saying ANYTHING in our name, without our approval!

We now even have the Kurds saying they want an autonomous, self-administered region for us, as declared by Nechirvan Barazani in the same Zinda article by Peter Lamprecht, “It is “their” right to have “their rights” recognized and fixed in the Kurdistan Regional Constitution, including “their right” to autonomy in Nineveh plain,” Iraqi Kurdistan Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said in a December 6 press conference. “This is our permanent policy.” To date, Assyrians do not know WHO Nechirvan Barazani is referring to when he says “THEIR RIGHTS” over and over again, nor do we know WHAT this region will be called! Mr. Barazani, WE have a name! It is called ASSYRIAN!!! You know the people who’s lands you have stolen, and upon which you are now building a Kurdistan?

As you can see, we have all sorts of Assyrian and Kurdish individuals and organizations asking for an autonomous, self-administered region but what we do not know is for WHOM and WHAT this province shall be called, nor do we know who will decide these things.

According to the same Zinda article of January 13, 2007, “disagreement exists over whether to cooperate with Kurdish leadership to form an autonomous area within Iraq’s Kurdish federal state, or to go it alone and create a new federal state solely for minorities. One Chaldean archbishop has said that either plan would only make things worse by creating a “Christian ghetto,”” but in the same January 13, 2007 issue of Zinda, ADM’s Ninos Pithyou was quoted saying, “ Our desire is to have all of the “external” Assyrian organizations speak with “one voice” about the Nineveh Plains, so that we all have one goal, and they all support this effort [for the Nineveh Plains Administrative Unit]...for the nation to have “one voice.””

HOW can Mr. Bithyou, or any Assyrian, expect that Assyria speak “with one voice” or have “one goal” regarding the Nineveh Plains autonomous region, when we now have the Syriani Orthodox leadership, the “Syriac” Orthodox Patriarch Mor Ighnacios Zakka Qadmoyo recently saying “We are Arabs, descendants of Bani-Taghleb, (an Arab tribe).” and the Chaldean Archbishop saying, “We do not want a “Christian Ghetto”? Who then is the ADM proposing this region for? That only leaves the Assyrians who want an autonomous, self-administered region!

It seems to me that the Chaldeans and the Syrianis have already sabotaged ADM’s efforts, so what is left for Ninos Bithyou and the ADM to talk about?

Another question that comes to my mind to ask Mr. Bithyou, is: Who are these “external” Assyrian organizations, other than his religious cohorts, the Chaldeans and the Syrianis, who do not even stand with him and his proposals? Yet, he keeps hounding us about “unity,” “one voice” and “one goal”! By the way, WHY do we need the ADM to now ask for the Nineveh Plains when Sargis Aghajan has already done it, and WHY NOW, when ADM had since 2003 to do it?

Is Mr. Bithyou just trying to patronize us?

No wonder we are ALL confused!!! The Assyrian people have at the very least, 10 different individuals/parties ASKING for autonomy, (the five political parties backing Aghajan, Aghajan himself, ADM, Pascale Warda, Reverend Ken Joseph, and Anna Esho) and still we do not know WHO it is for, and WHAT it shall be called, and the Syrianis and the Chaldeans do not support these requests?

If ONLY the Assyrians want this autonomous, self-administered region, then WHY are Sargis Aghajan, ADM, Pascale Warda, and Anna Esho asking for a “Christian,” autonomous, and self-administrative region for the Chaldo/Assyrian/Syriacs? Does it make sense to ask for this in the name of three “different” groups, if ONLY Assyrians want this? Are they just trying to confuse us even more? Or are THEY, themselves, confused?

Any intelligent and educated person looking at all this MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, regarding this autonomous, self-administered region, would ask the following:

- 1) How can ANY one expect “unity” from a nationality who has torn itself into three different pieces, (i.e. Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Arabs.)
- 2) How can Pascale Warda ask for an autonomous, self-administered region for the “non-Muslim minority,” when the Syrianis are now part of the Bani-Taghleab, (an Arab tribe) and are part of Arab majority in Iraq? In other words, WHY would the Bani-Taghleab, an Arab tribe, need a province of their own, separate from OTHER Arabs?
- 3) If the Arab Bani Taghleab tribe, do not need an autonomous, self-administered region of their own, separate from other Arabs, then Sargis Aghajan, ADM, Pascale Warda, Anna Esho CANNOT include them in their “requests” for such a region!
- 4) If the Chaldeans do not want a “Christian ghetto” then Sargis Aghajan, ADM, Pascale Warda, Anna Esho, are wasting their time asking for a “Christian” province for the Chaldeans, and their name should be removed from such a request!
- 5) If ONLY the Assyrians remain in this equation, and they are not Arabs, nor do they mind a “Christian ghetto,” then why does Sargis Aghajan not just ask for an autonomous, self-administered region for the Assyrians, and call it Assyria?

What purpose would a “Christian” province serve? Assyrians do not want to be known by their religious name, but by their ethnic name, like all legitimate ethnic people around the world! And when this “Assyrian Province” is created, would the Syrianis move back to Syria? Would the Chaldeans move back to Babylon? After all, this very region where all three groups are living, was and still is historically known as Assyria! NOT Syria, and NOT Babylon, or Chaldea, but ASSYRIA!

If the Assyrian nation can bring all its “lost” tribes together, like the Chaldeans, the Syrianis, the Maronites, the Copts, etc., to agree they are ALL Assyrians, we would be in the millions, and we would indeed NOT need a “Christian ghetto” but a REAL nation, known to the world

by its legitimate and legal name, ASSYRIA! We have plenty of these Christian ghettos in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, turkey, and even in Western countries. But since we cannot force anyone to call themselves Assyrian, we need to move forward and demand that our representative in the Kurdish Regional Government, Mr. Sargis Aghajan ask the Kurds to enter our LEGAL name in the Kurdish constitution, which is ASSYRIAN, and ask the Kurds to help us legally establish ASSYRIA. After all, the Kurds owe us that much! They have built a Kurdistan on top of OUR homeland, and have used us to fight the Iraqi government for years now. The Kurds have called their struggle the Assyro-kurdish struggle for more than half a century now, with none of the rights attached to it. If the Kurds do not help us with this process, NOW, then Nichervan Barazani's words mean NOTHING, and the Kurds cannot be trusted! They will go on killing us, ravaging our villages, and attempting to eradicate our identity.

As for the ADM's Ninos Bithyou, asking all the "external" Assyrian organizations to speak with one voice about the Nineveh Plains, so that we all have "one goal", and they all support this effort [for the Nineveh Plains Administrative Unit]...for the nation to have "one voice", I would like to ask Mr. Bithyou the following:

- 1) WHERE is the "PROOF" that he has even asked for the Nineveh Plains?
- 2) In WHOSE name are you is he asking for such a region?
- 3) Since he hasn't yet heard that he has "lost" one third of his tribe to the Bani-Taghleab, and the other one third, (the Chaldeans) do NOT want a "Christian Ghetto," that only leaves the Assyrians, and the ASSYRIANS do NOT want him and the ADM as their representatives. So WHY is he WASTING his time and ours by discussing "unity," "one voice," and "one goal"?

Seems to me that Mr. Bithyou ought to stop his nonsensical rhetoric and enjoy the remaining 6 months he has left, before the REAL Zowaa takes over his job! The Assyrian people would respect him much more if he remains the LAME DUCK he has been for so long and disappear into the sunset, so we can get on with the business of building an ASSYRIA! It is TOO LATE for him to talk about "external" Assyrian organizations when he made a conscious decision to ignore them from day one!

He and his lost tribes, (the Chaldeans, and the Syrianis) are the ONLY thing standing in the way of Assyrians progressing and moving forward. He has created such monumental confusion that even the tower of BABEL would pale in comparison!

As for Mr. Aghajan, we the Assyrians ask him to first write a formal proposal so that we can clearly see what it is he is asking the Kurds on OUR behalf, so that it can be put to vote by the Assyrian people, NOT the numerous clergy whom have decimated us. This is the way to build consensus.

In the age of information and enlightenment, educated Assyrians want to deal with FACTS, based on scientific and empirical evidence, not here say! We thank Mr. Aghajan for all that he has done for our people, but we need to proceed cautiously and do things the right way from here on, because there is a whole nation at stake.