



By Peter Tase

Can Edi Rama's Government Overthrow Radical Islam?

In the realm of International Relations, over the last three years we have seen the apex of Albania's strategic cooperation with the Republic of Turkey. Such a thriving partnership between Ankara and Tirana is not a mere coincidence; in fact it is due to a series of contributing factors: a mutually shaped history for over five centuries; both nations hold democratic elections and have democratic governments; and the effective public diplomacy embraced by the outgoing Albanian Ambassador in Ankara, Ambassador Genci Muçaj.

It is admirable to see that a representative of one of the smallest nations of Europe, with very limited resources, was able to arrange many official visits to Ankara and make his home country become a strategic partner to the Government of Turkey, regardless of their very different territorial size and somewhat geographical but not geopolitical distances. Over the years, both nations have shared each other's history and culture; in the same vein, Turkey is home to one of the largest Albanian Diasporas in the world.

The Turkish - Albanian community, although it is completely abandoned and ignored by the Albanian government has emerged as a natural entity of modern Turkey; members of this community have invested their lives in order to protect and build this great country under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk!

Albanians in Turkey are even more proud to be part of Turkey because of their Albanian roots. They are an indispensable factor of statehood and have contributed for the establishment of a strong, united and a democratic Turkey; it is no stranger that as Ankara becomes stronger and safer, it brings a great level of safety and security to Europe as a whole.

Over the last three years, Turkey became the fourth largest trading partner of Albania, reaching a total of US\$ 400 million/year; hope remains high so that the upcoming Albanian Ambassador would genuinely contribute to maintain this dynamic trade cooperation between both countries.

The establishment of the Albanian Cultural Center founded under the leadership of Ambassador Genci Muçaj and other Albanian Ambassador of the Republic of Kosova is testimony to a great partnership that exists amid both countries.

The Albanian Cultural Center in Ankara was established two year ago thanks to a close partnership between the Albanian Embassy and the Embassy of Kosovo in Turkey. Both Ambassadors believed that culture is related to nation not states!

Moreover, Ambassador Muçaj has coordinated the signing of many bilateral agreements; worked closely with Ankara in order to increase and mature the direct aid and investment assistance that has reached a cumulative amount of US\$ 1.5 billion (during the last twenty years).

During Ambassador Muçaj's tenure (2013-2016), have taken place ten high level official visits including: three official visits of Albanian President, Mr. Bujar Nishani to Turkey; three official visits of Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama to Ankara; various official visits of Albanian Minister of Defense and Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources; and the official visit of Turkish President to Tirana on May 14, 2015.

Only recently was published a three thousand pages dictionary with words of Turkish – Albanian –Turkish and the Department of Albanian Language will be inaugurated at the University of Ankara 2016-2017 academic year, equipped with a substantial library that has over twenty thousand rare books.

It is well known that Ambassador Muçaj has always echoed the famous saying: "the Religion of Albanians is being Albanian" which has sparked furious reactions among religious radicals! Additionally, Ambassador Muçaj has given a rare impetus to Albania's partnership with other countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kirgizstan. However, Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, run by Mr. Ditmir Bushati, the son of a communist politburo member in the 1970s (Mr. Sul Bushati), over the last two years has constantly practiced class struggle against Albania's Foreign Policy cadre and embraced a tougher punishment for his institution's hardest working diplomats. Unfortunately, the case of Ambassador Muçaj, goes beyond such a punishment, the latter has received constant life threatening calls and messages by leaders of Islamic Extremist Groups, however the Rama-Bushati duet are sitting in their offices and drinking Raki, in the meantime one of their government's former Ambassador has been

“thrown” in the streets of Tirana without any dignity, let alone ensuring his family’s physical protection.

In conclusion, it must be noted that Albania and Turkey stand side by side in the war against corruption, fight against terrorism and organized crime. Both countries and governments are very keen to further strengthen their bilateral ties. However the abrupt and unjustifiable changes in Albania’s diplomatic post in Ankara will certainly be felt especially in the vibrant communication that was established during the diplomatic tenure of Muçaj. Turkey and Albania, have reached the apex of partnership, however Tirana’s foreign policy remains shortsighted, imprudent and ungrateful to its hard working diplomats.

Let’s hope that under the remaining tenure of Prime Minister Edi Rama we will observe in fact the expulsion from Albania’s territory of Fethullah Gulen, an Islamic preacher and leader of a terrorist organization, a constantly ignored request made by the Turkish government to the current Albanian Government run by Edi Rama and his surrogates.

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