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First President Levon Ter-Petrosian Calls For The Creation Of Armenian National Congress

YEREVAN -- The pan-national movement led by the first president of Armenia Levon Ter-Petrosian held a congress in a closely packed conference hall in the Government Building last Friday. More than a thousand people had gathered outside in Melik-Adamyant Street while inside it was even difficult to find a place for standing.

The Congress, which was called by the organizers "Movement Herald-ing National Awakening", began its workings by observing a minute's silence to pay tribute to the memory of at least ten people who died in post-election violence on March 1.

Speeches threaded out and held together with appeals to continue the movement and not lose heart every now and then were interrupted by passionate exclamations "Levon!" and "Struggle Till the End!", and former foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanyan's wife Melissa Brown, speaking on behalf of the wives of jailed oppositionists, said that they had been deprived of their husbands, however they "weren't poor but were lucky to have hero husbands".

President Levon Ter-Petrosian delivered his first public speech since March 1 and typically it was long, divided into several parts -- "Clash or Slaughter", "Western attitude towards Armenian elections and the March 1 events", "Split or Unification of Soci-



Levon Ter-Petrosian waving to his supporters during the pan-national movement congress

ety" and "Immediate Tasks of the Nationwide Movement".

Ter-Petrosian qualified as a "slaughter" what was committed on March 1 and fingered the then "regime leader", Robert Kocharian as the main person who "orchestrated" it.

"Robert Kocharian was the only official who could give an order to use force against and shoot at peaceful demonstrators," said Ter-Petrosian. "Although he is formally unconnected

with the issuance of the order, Serzh Sarkisian, was obliged, as the de facto president-elect, to prevent Robert Kocharian from taking that extreme step.

"In any case, the extent of his responsibility depends on the position that he will take in ensuring an impartial investigation into the March 1 crime. Sarkisian can not have a more conve-

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EU Insists On End To Armenian Crackdown Police Continue Detention Of Opposition Activists



EU special representative Peter Semneby

YEREVAN -- Peter Semneby, the EU's special representative to the South Caucasus, insisted on the European Union's calls for the Armenian government to end its crackdown on the opposition and restore civil liberties as he began yet another fact-finding trip to Yerevan on Wednesday.

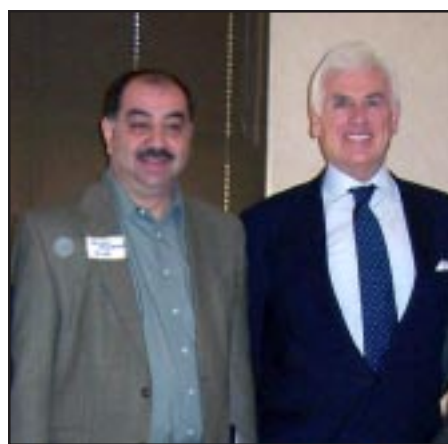
Semneby told parliament speaker Tigran Torosian that the release of political prisoners, the launch of an independent investigation into the deadly post-election violence in Yerevan and the restoration of freedom of assembly is essential for easing political tensions in Armenia. That would also facilitate a dialogue between the country's leadership and its opponents led by former President

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Ambassador John Danilovich CEO Of Millennium Challenge Corporation Meets With The Community

LOS ANGELES -- On Thursday May 1st, 2008, Armenian Council America's Board Chairman Vasken Khodanian and Executive Director Peter Darakjian attended a briefing by Ambassador John J. Danilovich, CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The event was organized by Armenian Caucus Member, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), and included approximately 30 Armenian American community leaders. Danilovich offered a first-hand account of the MCC's work in Armenia for the past several years, and a frank discussion about the current political crisis in Armenia, in light of the unrest after Armenia's Presidential elections.

Ambassador Danilovich on March 11, 2008 had issued a letter to Robert Kocharian, officially warning the Armenian authorities that the five-year, \$235.65 million contract signed with the Armenian government in 2005, to improve irrigation systems and rehabilitate roads, was facing serious risk of being annulled. In the letter Ambassador Danilovich stresses "As a friend and major proponent of long-term economic growth, stability, and democracy in Armenia, MCC has an obligation to ensure that our programs operate in a demo-



ACA Chairman Vasken Khodanian with MCC CEO John Danilovich

cratic environment... MCC has the right to suspend or terminate a Compact when serious policy reversals occur and this letter constitutes an official warning that recent events could have negative effects on Armenia's eligibility for MCC funding."

MCC is a U.S. government agency that was established in 2004 with the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces good governance, economic freedom and investments in people. MCC's mission is to reduce global poverty and advance economic growth in developing countries like Armenia.

Armenian Council Of America Congratulates Congresswoman Speier, Looks Toward Future



ACA delegation with Representative Jackie Speier at her Capitol Hill office

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Armenian Council of America on April 23 congratulated former California State Senator Jackie Speier (D-CA) on winning a special election to fill the House seat for the late Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA). With her much deserved victory, Speier now joins fellow California lawmaker Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), as the second American of Armenian descent to serve in the 110th Congress.

During a meeting with the Congresswoman, Armenian Council of

America Vice Chairman Jack Ajemian noted the pride the organization has in having a second Armenian-American representative in Congress who will be a strong voice for her constituency and Armenian-American related issues. Speier's has a long track record for serving the Armenian-American community through her staunch advocacy in the California Legislature.

Working on issues of concern to

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