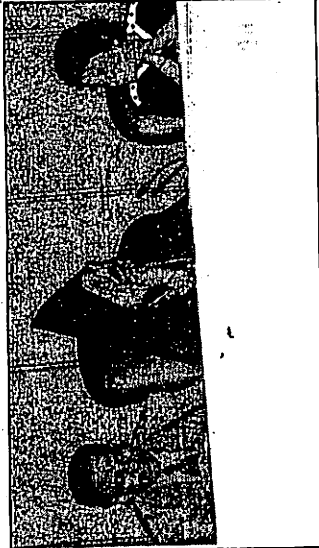


INTERNATIONAL & ARMENIA NEWS - INTERNAT

A First in Athens

ATHENS, Greece - On May 12 and 13, Archbishop Voskan Kalpakian accomplished a first for the Armenian community here. The Archbishop, in cooperation with Ms. Liana Kanelli, publisher of the highly regarded monthly magazine Nemesis, which boasts having 50,000 subscribers, sponsored a symposium "Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan: Conflict and Prospects for Resolution."



(L to R) Dr. Moorad Mooradian, Archbishop Voskan Kalpakian, Ms. Liana Kanelli.

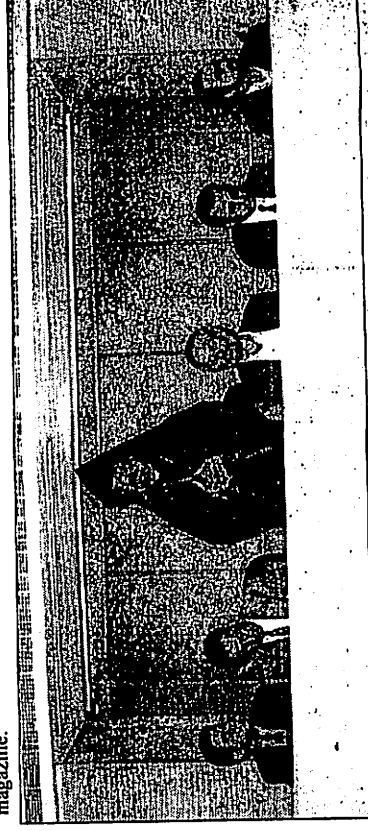
The well-attended symposium included representatives from the Greek Parliament; the Armenian Embassy; Kurdish, Cypriot, Greek and Armenian organizations; the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Catholic Churches; and officials and members of the Athens business community.

Liana Kanelli also hosts the popular TV program in Greece similar to "Good Morning America." Filmed interviews of the speakers aired on Wednesday, May 14. Ms. Kanelli intends to cover the event in the July issue of her magazine.

On the first evening Archbishop Voskan welcomed the audience and informed them that the purpose of the symposium was to help achieve universal recognition of the Armenian Genocide and to focus some attention on the stalled Karabagh conflict. His Eminence believes that the conflicts between the Caucasian neighbors are solvable. Archbishop Voskan concluded that the time and expense involved in putting the symposium together would be well worth it if only one new person is influenced enough to join in the effort to find a just peace. With the vast audience that watches the TV program and the 50,000 magazine subscribers, there is no telling what could be stimulated.

A dynamic personality with a keen interest in international relations, the Archbishop believes that working for peace times.

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(L to R) Hrach Tchilingirian, Dr. Moorad Mooradian, Archbishop Voskan Kalpakian, Mr. Alekas Alavanos, Dr. Rouben Adalian, Razmik Panossian.

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is everyone's responsibility. He posits that peace is too important to be strictly left to be politicians. As a member of the European World Council of Churches steering committee, he would like to see the religious bodies become more active in making peace. His philosophy is that man and not God generates conflict, and that man is presented with the challenge of finding the solutions. The Archbishop does not dismiss prayer -- he strongly advocates communication with God. However, with a wink, he is known to have stated that, on occasion, even God can use assistance.

The symposium moderator for the first evening, Mr. Alekas Alavanos, is a member of the European Parliament. He introduced Rouben Adalian who presented a paper on "The Armenian Genocide." Dr. Adalian stirred the audience with commentary on the loss of Armenian lives at the hands of the Ottomans. Dr. Adalian highlighted the fact that the current Turkish government has joined a line of successive Turkish governments since Kemal Ataturk that have denied the Genocide, in a calculated and well-financed campaign of rewriting history to make victimizers out of the victims.

Hrach Tchilingirian, a Ph.D. candidate in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science, discussed "The Nagorno-Karabagh Impasse: An Overview of Five Years of Negotiations and Three Years of Cease-Fire." Mr. Tchilingirian, who had spent several months researching the conflict in Karabagh, traced the course of the peace negotiations and discussed some aspects of the negotiations since the unofficial cease-fire that came into being in May 1994.

Liana Kanelli aptly filled the moderator duties during the second evening. She challenged all people to stand up for justice regardless of the obstacles placed in their paths by the deniers. There was no question that she and most of the native Greeks in the audience advocate a "stand tough" policy in dealings with the Turkish government. Ms. Kanelli did not mince words, stating that Greece was not doing enough to help the Armenians to gain universal recognition of the 1915 Genocide.

Ms. Kanelli introduced Razmik Panossian, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science. He presented a paper on "The Political Scene After the Presidential Elections: The Prospects of Stability." Mr. Panossian maintained that it is doubtful that one would ever discover whether President Der Bedrosian actually won the presidential elections on the first ballot in September 1996. Panossian stated that the votes against Der Bedrosian were not a pro-opposition outcry. He concluded that the people voted against the state's internal affairs. Mr. Panossian did state that most people in Armenia felt that the President had performed well in foreign policy.

Ms. Kanelli next introduced Dr. Moorad Mooradian who talked about "A Brief Analysis of Key Issues Causing Conflicts Between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey." Dr. Mooradian cited the 1915 Genocide denial by successive Turkish governments as the most powerful and perhaps only issue on which the full spectra of the Armenian nation agree. He maintained that denials by the Turks will continue to place a huge barrier to cordial relations between the Armenian and Turkish communities, but that real mutual communications have to replace propaganda to resolve the issue.

According to Dr. Mooradian, there were six flawed, major mediation efforts into the Karabagh conflict. But the Armenians did not help their own cause. When the Armenian side decided to involve only official diplomats as third-party interveners, they played and are continuing to play into the strong suit of Azerbaijan. While conceptually a legal issue, self-determination on the international scene is looked upon as a human-rights cause; it involves morality, a concept that is alien to the realpolitik and official diplomatic world in which the Armenians confined themselves. Mooradian posited that an Oslo-like process was and may still be helpful to break the current impasse.

His Eminence Archbishop Voskan intends to publish the four papers in pamphlet form and to distribute them to key officials. He was so pleased with the outcome of the symposium that he is seriously considering making it an annual affair.