

## “UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL”

By Johnny Michael

During this critical juncture in our nations history, I am extremely disheartened by the attitude of so many of our people and their objection to the unity of our nation by the only means possible, which was to formulate a compound name that would be acceptable to all the various religious segments of our nation. I am even more saddened by the position of our so-called politicians, and here I am referring to those who allege to work for the benefit of our nation, who utilise their valuable mass-media tools to spread their vindictive misrepresentations against our own people and their representatives in our ancestral homeland. These so-called political leaders continue to operate outside of their ancestral homeland, even though the evil Baath regime that they so vociferously opposed for decades was toppled over a year ago.

Ever since the liberation of our homeland by the coalition (at this point I should pause to thank specifically the USA and UK, for without their intervention Saddam's evil legacy would have ruled over Iraq for many more decades), these so-called Assyrian leaders have transformed their policy and have now set their sights on a new target. Amazingly, that new target is the largest, most powerful, most organised and most influential Assyrian political party that we have ever had. I would even go as far as to say that the target of these few so-called Assyrian politicians is the single last remaining hope that our nation has.

It is absolutely critical that our nations diaspora community ask themselves a few fundamental questions, such as why are these so-called politicians attacking our people back home, whilst they enjoy their lavish and extremely comfortable life-styles with palatial surroundings in peaceful States such as California? All the while those who represent our ever-dwindling nation in our homeland risk their lives and the lives of their loved ones serving our nation. In many cases these heroes have paid the ultimate price performing their nationalistic duties. One such example, in an ever-growing list of never to be forgotten Assyrian heroes, is Mr. Sargon Nano Murado, Assyrian Democratic Movement representative of Basra, who was mercilessly assassinated by unknown assailants on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003 in Basra.



Sahda (martyr) Sargon's Children with his brother



Sahda (Martyr) Sargon Nano Murado ADM representative of Basra killed on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003

I accept that there are those Assyrian politicians who disagree with the stance and policies adopted by the Assyrian Democratic Movement, in which case is it not their patriotic duty to return to our ancestral homeland and initiate their differing policies and agenda? I see three options available for these so-called Assyrian political leaders who so vehemently oppose the policies of the ADM, they are as follows:

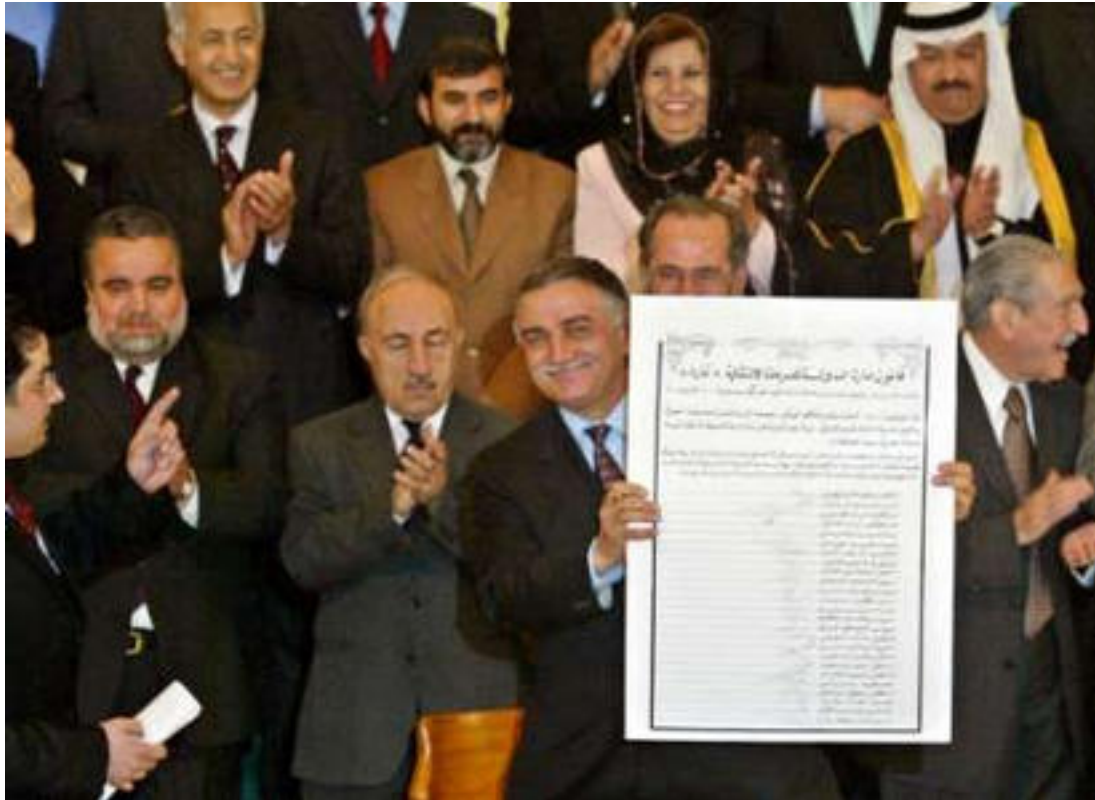
- 1) Return to our homeland and instigate their policies and agenda that they claim is the only way to proceed to bring about prosperity for our nation, which is apparently different to the path chosen by the ADM.
- 2) Remain in the peaceful, free and prosperous west and support our people and their representatives who are struggling to attain all our rights in our ancestral homeland.
- 3) Remain in the west and neither support nor criticise our people and their representatives in our homeland.

However, these few individuals have chosen to remain in the west and constantly attack our representatives in our homeland, which directly and indirectly has an adverse effect on all our people in our homeland. I fail to see how such a campaign benefits our nation; surely it only serves to benefit those groups who have been attempting for many centuries, and in the most part successfully, to marginalise our claim to our national rights in our homeland.

Apparently, the main grievance that these few so-called politicians have, has been and continues to be the adoption of the new compound name, which is used to identify our nation in our homeland; this name was adopted at a National conference that convened in Baghdad during 22-24 October 2003. The conference was teaming with dignitaries representing all the religious segments of our nation who had come together from the four corners of the world. In order not to fall prey in the hands of those whose aims are to absorb all our national rights by dividing our nation into three separate insignificant ethnicities, i.e. Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac, the conference concluded to adopt a new name to refer to our nation in our homeland which served to reunite our nation thus affording us the best possible opportunity to reclaim our national rights. The name that the conference chose and adopted is ChaldoAssyrian (ChaldoAshureen in Arabic) and our language is to be referred to as Syriac. The adoption of the name ChaldoAssyrian was a major blow for those who are working diligently to confiscate our ancestral lands, insomuch as had we divided ourselves into three separate nations, we would most certainly have been viewed as tiny and insignificant minorities not worthy of a mention in the Iraqi constitution, except as "other minorities", let alone any chance of a self-administered Federal region in our ancient capital of Nineveh which is what our people are working towards (that is should Iraq adopt a Federal system in the future which is looking increasingly more likely).

The Transitional Administrative Law, which was ratified by the Iraqi Governing Council on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004, guarantees our national rights in any future Iraqi political system. The Iraqi Governing Council, as we all know, consisted of one Assyrian (the only Christian), that person was Mr. Yonadam Kanna, Secretary General of the Assyrian Democratic Movement. What Mr. Kanna managed to accomplish out of a group of 25 members was truly phenomenal, this achievement will be looked upon by our future generations as one of the main turning points in our nations modern-day history. I will quote one of the paragraphs from the Transitional Administrative Law:

**Article 53 (D) – *"This law shall guarantee the administrative, cultural and political rights of the Turcomans, ChaldoAssyrians, and all other citizens."***



Mr. Yonadam Kanna, Secretary General of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (Zowaa) holds up the signed Transitional Administrative Law – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004

The Assyrian Democratic Movement, since its inception on April 12<sup>th</sup> 1979, have demonstrated by their amazing progress that they are serving our nation in our homeland, one only needs to see the long list of achievements in order to appreciate this fact. I will accept and respect those who criticise the ADM if they are serving our nation from within our homeland, however I cannot accept nor respect those who do little else but criticise and attack from the outside via extremely destructive means such as Satellite TV broadcasts, magazines, internet sites etc. What benefits are they offering our nation by employing such vicious, slanderous and fallacious tactics except for alienating a few within our Diaspora communities who have no other means of receiving news from our homeland except these malign media sources?

As I have stated earlier, the ADM has achieved, in a few short decades, what our brave and proud ancestors tried to achieve, in vein, for centuries, however the road ahead is long, arduous and fraught with obstacles. Let us focus our energy on what is important and support those who have decided to sacrifice their lives for the sake of our nations prosperity, those who remain in our homeland, let us not allow our enemies to succeed by diverting our attention and all our energy on less important issues based entirely on hearsay and speculation. Time is running out, we cannot afford to miss this final window of opportunity.

As far as the new compound name of “ChaldoAssyrian” is concerned, we must understand and appreciate that it was a decision that had to be taken at a critical point in time and it was apparent that it was the only way to reunite our nation following a religious schism that occurred approximately 450 years ago. It is unfortunate that the issue of reunification was not addressed and realised many years ago, whereby we could have been prepared for such an eventuality. Additionally, those so-called politicians who agree that Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syriacs are all people belonging to one nation but who oppose the compound name should have suggested an alternative solution to reunite our nation, one that would

have been acceptable to us all. Surely it is completely nonsensical to refuse to accept the only viable and acceptable solution to reunite our nation in the absence of an alternative and viable solution.

I am certain that at a future point in time, a conference will convene consisting of historians, academia's and intellects from our nations various religious segments to address this very specific national identity issue, at which point we can adopt the correct name for our nation which I am sure will be acceptable to us all.

We must start thinking with our minds and not our hearts; we must start planning for the long-term and not the short-term; and we must start supporting our people and their representatives in our homeland with all that we have, else we only have ourselves to blame should we once again end up with nothing!

Remember, ***“United we stand – divided we fall.”***