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The Armenian Genocide

A History and its Implications on United States Foreign Policy

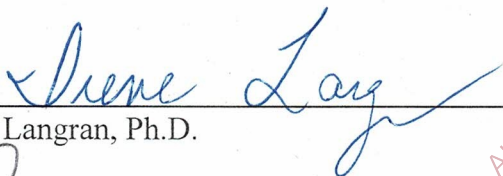
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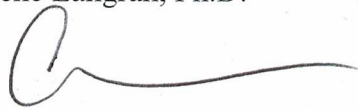
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Introduction

Throughout the years there have been countless events that have shaped the course of history. Although they might appear to be isolated occurrences, they often transcend boundaries. Sometimes something so horrific happens that it cannot be cast aside, though some might try. Unfortunately, if these tragedies are not given proper acknowledgment the world is at risk of repeating similar mistakes. From 1915 to 1917, the ethnic Armenian population was all but erased from the Ottoman Empire. About one million men, women, and children faced starvation, deportation, and death. They were targeted simply for their ethnicity in a clear case of genocide. Though there were witnesses and documentation, many in Turkey continue to deny the nature of the massacres. This refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide has led to complex political relationships with other states. While the relationship between Armenia and Turkey is almost nonexistent at this time, Turkey maintains a strong alliance with the United States. Although there were American witnesses to the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide, the United States has yet to acknowledge what happened. It is possible that recognition of the Armenian Genocide that took place within the Ottoman Empire could be detrimental to the political relationship between the United States and Turkey. However, the United States has a responsibility to the world to acknowledge past injustices in order to protect future generations from potentially succumbing to a similar fate.

A Brief Explanation of the Crime of Genocide

Before analyzing the Armenian Genocide, it is important to understand the very meaning of the term "genocide." At the time of the Armenian Genocide, which began in 1915 ("A Forgotten Genocide," 1140), there was no word in existence with which to label this atrocity. It was not until Raphael Lemkin's 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, that the word "genocide" appeared ("Coining a Word"). Although this crime existed without a name for some time, there was no way to label it, and therefore no way to put those at fault on trial.

Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer, was born in 1900 in Poland (“Coining a Word”). Living in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe, Lemkin became accustomed to the prevailing antisemitic sentiments and violence. He began working for the legal safety of minority groups, and wrote a book about the crimes committed by the Nazi regime during the Second World War. He was also involved in the preparations for the Nuremberg Trials, which were held to convict those in the Nazi regime who either committed or encouraged the unspeakable crimes of the Holocaust (“Coining a Word”). According to Winston Churchill, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, during World War II, the people of the world were “in the presence of a crime without a name” (Lemkin, 227). Lemkin would be the one to later apply a name to these unspeakable act, a word that would then be applied to past, present, and future crimes.

In response to the Holocaust, Lemkin coined the term “genocide”. His definition, found in his *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, is as follows:

By ‘genocide’ we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing).... Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group (80).

Although his book was released in 1944, the United Nations did not adopt the concept of genocide until 1948 (Verdeja, 308). Even after its incorporation into international law, the crime of genocide's definition was modified from its original. Article II of the treaty drafted by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide states:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
 - (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
 - (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group
- ("Convention").

The crime of genocide therefore did not exist until 1948. This was decades after the Armenian Genocide began in 1915. But that does not mean that the events that took place during World War I in the Ottoman Empire did not qualify as genocide. It might not be legal in international law to try the perpetrators *post facto*, but there should be some accountability or else similar events could slip through the cracks. There are many today who deny the

violence against the Armenian people. Others, though they might not deny it outright, do not acknowledge the fact that the massacres of over one million ethnic Armenians was a case of genocide. For a number of reasons, the United States has not officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. These include, but are not limited, to questions of geopolitics, interest groups, and a lack of cooperation within Congress. The U.S. has yet to acknowledge the fact that this Genocide occurred, even though the evidence is overwhelming.

The Armenian Genocide

In the early Twentieth Century, the state religion of the Ottoman Empire was Islam, and the majority of its citizens were Turkish (Akcam, 20). There were of course other religious and ethnic minorities – including Christian Armenians – living under Ottoman rule at that time. Many of them “lived for centuries with a certain degree of religious communal autonomy” (Akcam, 20). But over time, the status of these groups diminished, and many faced severe persecution. Many of these “non-Muslim communities were involved in a tireless struggle for basic rights and freedoms” (Akcam, 27). These struggles often led to bloodshed, and countless people lost their lives in the fight for equality.

Several factors contributed to the volatile climate of the Ottoman Empire. The state had stretched itself too thin, and it was beginning to collapse in on itself. In order to combat this disintegration, the Ottoman rulers implemented the Tanzimat period of reform in 1839. Under the Tanzimat period, the Ottoman Empire began to Westernize and encourage equality among Muslims and Christians, and to unite everyone as 'Ottomans' (Akcam, 28). By doing so, they could ensure that territories that were predominately Christian would remain under their control. Armenians, as Christians, began to enjoy slightly more security. But “as their economic and social power increased, Armenians became the targets of resentment and attacks by Muslim Turks and other minorities” (Cooper and Akcam, 82). This resentment led to outbreaks of violence and massacres of Armenian-Ottomans in the late Nineteenth Century

(Akcamlar, 35). Approximately 200,000 Armenians were murdered during these massacres encouraged by Sultan Abdul Hamid (Cooper and Akcam, 82). Only a few short years later, the death toll would increase drastically.

At this time, feelings of Turkish nationalism began to arise. There were those who believed that as ethnic Turks, they should be considered the elite, and so formed the organization known as the Young Ottomans (Akcamlar, 48). Part of the Committee of Union and Progress movement, the Young Ottomans were the immediate predecessors of the Young Turks, a coalition of protest groups that worked to bring down the regime of Abdul Hamid (Cleveland and Bunton, 135). Shortly after their government takeover in 1909, the Young Turks had to decide on the future of the Ottoman Empire. They soon began to push for a nation where Turks were the elite. Turkism became the center of the Ottoman world, and all others were not regarded as equals (Cleveland and Bunton, 139). As a leader of this movement, the CUP instituted a number of policies and programs that ostracized the Armenian community (Cleveland and Bunton, 151). This new concept of a Turkish nation was a key factor that led to the Armenian Genocide.

On August 2, 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered into an alliance with Germany. A few months later, the Ottomans began fighting in World War I on the side of the Central Powers (Cleveland and Bunton, 149). As an ally of Germany, the Ottoman Empire fought against Russia, and eventually the United States. The Ottomans had long been at odds with Russia, and a small group of ethnic Armenians used this conflict as an opportunity to create an independent Armenia (Cleveland and Bunton, 151). Again, this was a small portion of the Armenian population, and their actions are understandable considering they were viewed as second-class citizens. But this brought about even greater tensions between the Ottoman government and the Armenians. It was widely believed in the state that the Armenians were conspiring with the Russians. As a result, "Armenians in areas bordering Russia were targeted

for violent repression and massacre” (Cooper and Akcam, 82). The continuation of WWI only led to a greater number of violent attacks on Armenians. Taner Akcam writes that “war creates a favorable climate for genocide” (Akcam, 111). The war certainly did not cause the Armenian Genocide, but it did supply an environment that turned the world's attention to other matters.

April 24, 1915, is the date that serves as the symbolic start of the Armenian Genocide (Akcam, 129). It is difficult to give a definitive date, considering the massacres that consistently occurred before this date. But on this day, 235 influential members of the Armenian community of Istanbul were arrested (Akcam, 130). Intellectuals within the community were targeted first, but shortly after all ethnic Armenians were at risk.

Gangs were formed with the intention to raid and attack Armenian villages. Important leaders were rounded up and many of the women were raped (Akcam, 137). The Ottoman government made the decision to have the Armenian population of Anatolia deported to the deserts of Iraq and Syria, believing that it was “an opportunity to eliminate the Armenian population through organized killings and death by privation” (Cooper and Akcam, 82). So while there were those who were not killed outright, many were forced to march without food and starved to death (Akcam, 174). These deportations and massacres were done in a brutal and systematic fashion. The goal of the Ottomans was to reduce the population of ethnic Armenians in any given region of the Empire to about five to ten percent of the total population (Akcam, 178). Although there were plans of “resettlement,” a vast amount were killed. According to Taner Akcam's research:

The total number of people killed as a result of the deportations is not certain. The prewar Armenian population within Ottoman territory was 2.1 million, according to the Armenian Church, although Turkish sources

put the number at 1.3 million....Some sources put the number of survivors at 600,000, of whom 150,000 to 200,000 lived through the deportations....

The estimates of those killed swing between 600,000 and 1.5 million

(Akcam, 183).

Regardless of the exact number of victims, it is clear that the Ottoman Empire murdered a significant portion of its Armenian population. Through the extensive documentation and eyewitness accounts it is also evident that this was an act of genocide, and not simply a byproduct of the First World War.

Turkey after the Genocide

After the Genocide, there were few Armenian survivors left in Turkey. Those that remained, and even the survivors who had fled, were unable to document their experiences until years later. Many of the survivors were illiterate and therefore did not have the ability to share their testimonies through writing (Ungor, 347). Another possible explanation is the absolute trauma that they faced. They might have been psychologically unable to give their own account of events. The lack of first-hand accounts at the time opened the door for the perpetrators to modify the evidence in order to hide their guilt.

Some survivors and witnesses of the massacres did publish memoirs and accounts of what they saw during those terrible years. But these texts were often banned from entering the state of Turkey (Ungor, 348). The ultimate reason for the lack of information on the Armenian Genocide in Turkey is because the “Young Turk dictatorship feared these narratives would enter local history and memory, of which...they claimed a strict monopoly” (Ungor, 349). Muftuzade Seref Ulug, the mayor of the Turkish city Diyarbakir, worked tirelessly to destroy any lasting Armenian landmarks in the city and its surrounding area (Ungor, 347). In fact, the Turkish government worked in earnest to erase any evidence that an Armenian minority ever

called Turkey home.

When the Ottoman Empire ultimately lost the war, it fell under the control of the Allies. However, a few Ottoman commanders decided to rebel and create the ideal Turkish state (Cleveland and Bunton, 176). They tried to continue down the path forged by the Young Turks and the CUP. One of these commanders was Mustafa Kemal, who became the president of the newly proclaimed Turkish state in 1920 (Cleveland and Bunton, 177). A few months later, both Turkey and the Soviet Union invaded the territory that was given to the Armenian people by the Treaty of Sevres, each taking half the territory for themselves. The two then “established cordial relations,” completely opposite of what existed prior to the war (Cleveland and Bunton, 177). This also became the foundation of the state of Turkey that exists today.

Mustafa Kemal and his government proclaimed that, as far as they were concerned, the year 1923 was the beginning of a new age (Ungor, 352). Although all of them might not have taken part in the roundups and massacres of Armenians, the Young Turks made it as if there were never any Armenians in Turkey. All Armenian cemeteries, churches, and other various buildings were destroyed (Ungor, 346). This also meant that they “banned all texts that were either non-Turkish or 'non-Turkifiable’” (Ungor, 355). The Young Turks had spent a number of years promoting Turkish nationalism, and did not want anything to combat their vision of an ideal Turkey.

One of the results of this new, nationalistic Turkey, was the culture of denial that developed. There were many ethnic Turks who had witnessed the atrocities. But “the genocide was often followed by a general apathy and indifference among the bystander communities” (Ungor, 350). There was no need for these communities to speak up, because their livelihoods were not at stake. A new Turkish nation was taking shape, and the people did not want to tarnish this new age with the memories of a brutal past. And so the majority chose

to forget the past, and took part in the “destruction of memory” (Ungor, 356). The path of denial that Turkey began to embark on only led other states to question whether or not the Armenian Genocide ever took place.

In the Twenty-first Century, Turkey Continues to deny that an act of genocide took place in the Ottoman Empire. What began in 1915 was simply a “relocation” of ethnic Armenians in an attempt to keep them away from the dangerous Russian border (Cooper and Akcam, 84). Of course, the process of relocation does not have to include the astounding amount of lives lost during the Armenian Genocide. But Turkey has again found an explanation for the tragedy that befell these victims, claiming that both Armenian and Turkish lives were lost in a “civil-war” (Cooper and Akcam, 84). In their eyes, genocide never occurred, and the Armenian deaths were simply a casualty of war. The Turkish population living today is not responsible for the violence that occurred over a century ago, but many are still at fault for perpetuating the belief in Turkey that what happened all those years ago was not genocide. There needs to come a time when the people of today acknowledge the horrors of their past, and attempt to right a portion of these past wrongs. However, the atmosphere in Turkey does not allow for anything of this nature to occur.

If the people of Turkey were to admit that any of the state's founders were involved in genocide, it “could threaten the legitimacy of the state” (Cooper and Akcam, 85). Children are inducted into this culture of denial through school, which only prepares them for life in an environment that criminalizes the admittance that the Armenian Genocide did take place (Cooper and Akcam, 86). The discussion of the Armenian Genocide was of course discouraged, but Article 305 of the Turkish criminal code made its mention punishable by law (Cooper and Akcam, 86). Article 305 addressed the offense of “engaging in activities against fundamental national interests” (Haraszti, 5). In other words, anyone who speaks out against the state of Turkey, or brings to light anything that could tarnish the image of Turkey, would

face legal repercussions. Paragraph seven of Article 305's justification explicitly criminalizes the "making propaganda on the Armenian Genocide after the First World War contrary to historical facts" (Haraszti, 5). Of course, the European Union, of which Turkey hopes to become a member, has criticized this criminal code.

The European Union promotes human rights, and the criminalization of the discussion of the Armenian Genocide does not bode well for Turkey's inclusion. As of now, approximately twenty countries recognize what happened to the Armenian population in the early Twentieth Century as a case of genocide (Lynch). This has created a significant amount of tension between these states and Turkey. But the United States, one of Turkey's allies, does not acknowledge the genocide. There are numerous reasons for the U.S.'s indifference, which could include the fact that the United States has taken part in various questionable acts. Ranging from its treatment of its own citizens, to violent crimes against others in the name of war, the U.S. could in turn face scrutiny and similar accusations. However, none of these examples make the indifference of the United States excusable.

Involvement of the United States

The United States has long been involved with the affairs of other nations. In September of 1831, the U.S. government opened diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire, now the modern state of Turkey ("A Guide: Turkey"). Unfortunately, these relations did not last. When World War I began in 1914, Turkey aligned itself with Germany. Three years later, on April 4, 1917, the United States entered the war and fought against Germany. This led to the deterioration and, on April 20, the end of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire ("A Guide: Turkey"). This is of course two years after the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. American diplomats and ambassadors were therefore in the Ottoman Empire at the time, which raises the question of why the United States did not label the massacres of the Armenians as genocide.

At the onset of World War I, the U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire was Henry Morgenthau (Baghdoyan, 9). He was there to witness the horrors that took place. Morgenthau, in a report to President Woodrow Wilson, claimed that the massacres amounted to “the murder of a nation” and claimed that he was “...firmly convinced that this is the greatest crime of the ages...” (Baghdoyan, 9). His report gives a small insight into the severity of the conditions for ethnic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. This testimony is also significant because it sheds light on the fact that there were Americans who were aware of the genocide. Awareness should have led to acknowledgment, but this was not the case.

After the United States entered the war, President Wilson sent Morgenthau back into Ottoman territory on June 21, 1917 (Brecher, 357). The purpose of this mission was to enter into separate peace talks with the Ottomans in order to pull them out of the war. Their second goal was to ascertain the condition of Palestinian Jews (Brecher, 357). Information from this mission eventually leaked to the Ottomans who feared that the United States would try to assist the Palestinian Jews in an attempt to win independence. This only worsened the already tense relationship between the two states (Brecher, 358). It seems as if this concern about eliminating the Ottoman Empire from the war overshadowed the U.S. government's knowledge that a genocide was occurring.

When the Ottoman Empire fell, the Turkish Republic formed in 1927. The U.S. then established political ties with the new state (“U.S. Relations with Turkey”). Twenty years later, on July 12, 1947, the Economic and Technical Cooperation agreement was signed. This arrangement “implemented the Truman Doctrine and its policy 'to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures'” (“U.S. Relations with Turkey”). At first glance this clause appears to protect the government from rebel or terrorist organizations. But it also means that minority groups cannot go against the government in order to protect their own basic rights. The entire population of ethnic

Armenians all but disappeared from Turkey, and this section of the Truman Doctrine does not protect a crime of this scale from happening again.

In 1952, Turkey became an ally of NATO, of which the U.S. is also a member ("U.S. Relations with Turkey"). Turkey's location also played a key role in the strengthening of their relationship. As a part of the Middle East, Turkey "is a key partner for U.S. policy in the surrounding region" ("U.S. Relations with Turkey"). The U.S. Government views Turkey as an invaluable ally, both politically and militarily. However, this strong alliance detracts from the United States' relationship with Armenia.

After centuries of occupation, Armenia became an independent state from 1918 until 1920 ("A Guide: Armenia"). Before this time, Armenia was under the control of both the Ottoman Empire as well as the Russian Empire. In 1920, the United States first recognized the Armenian Republic, but the relationship was short lived, considering it was invaded by Soviet forces. Armenia then became part of the Trans-Caucasian Soviet Socialist Republic ("A Guide: Armenia"). After World War II, the United States became involved in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, therefore relations with Armenia were halted for several decades. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Armenia became an independent country once again. So, on December 25, 1991, President George H. W. Bush reopened diplomatic relations with Armenia. One year later, the U.S. Embassy opened in Yerevan, Armenia ("A Guide: Armenia").

Diplomatic ties remain between these two countries today. According to the State Department, "the United States values its relationship with Armenia, which is rooted in mutual respect and shared interests. U.S. policy seeks to further Armenia's development of democratic institutions which respect human rights and the rule of law" ("U.S. Relations with Armenia") The U.S. also claims that it wants to assist in the reopening of the border with Turkey ("U.S. Relations with Armenia"). Of course, there are several issues with these

statements, which all relate back to the United States' recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

If the U.S. truly valued its relationship with Armenia, or even stood against the violation of human rights, it would acknowledge that a genocide did occur in the Ottoman Empire against ethnic Armenians. This inaction makes it appear that the United States values its alliance with Turkey more than Armenia. Of course, an alliance with Turkey has numerous benefits, ranging from economic, national security, and other foreign interests. But by avoiding the topic of the Armenian Genocide, politicians are not respecting the victims of the genocide, and almost denying the sanctity of human life. By acknowledging genocide, there is the chance that the border between Armenia and Turkey will not open, and their relationships will decline sharply. However, the U.S. owes it to Armenia and the world to acknowledge the wrongs committed by the Ottoman Empire.

Relations between Armenia and Turkey

The relationship between Armenia and Turkey has long been strained and difficult. Their borders were closed to one another and there was little to no cooperation between the two. These tensions worsened when Armenia began forging a bond with Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt). With their recent attempts to join the European Union, both have realized that it might be time to improve their relationship. This will not be an easy road. There are some steps that have been taken towards a better future. Turkey was the second state to officially recognize the independent Republic of Armenia (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt). There has also been progress in both nations among their citizens. More Armenians have made an attempt to visit Turkey, and there are some Turks who have been willing to acknowledge the dark history of the Ottoman Empire. Even President Erdogan has commented on the tragedy that befell the Armenian people, though he did not refer to it as a genocide (Hill, Kirisci, and Moffatt). While it could still take time for Turkey to officially

label the events from 1915 to 1917 as a genocide, its people are still making strides to forge a positive relationship with Armenia. This is something that the government of the United States could learn from. The U.S. Government has not acknowledged the Armenian Genocide out of fear of the harm it could do to its relationship with Turkey. But if there are those in Turkey who are beginning to speak more openly about the incident and making an attempt to work with Armenians, then the U.S. should be able to do the same.

Current Position of the United States and Proposed Resolutions

Over the course of the century several resolutions concerning the genocide were proposed in the United States' Congress. Generally, the purpose of these resolutions is to make the U.S. acknowledge the massacres and forced deportations of ethnic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as a case of genocide. As mentioned previously, approximately twenty states recognize the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunately, the United States remains absent from this growing list. Rather than setting an example for other countries to follow in regards to human rights, the U.S. has refused time and time again to fault those responsible for the attempted annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

In 2000, the Republican Representative James E. Rogan from California made an effort to introduce a resolution to the House ("Defeat of House Resolution," 396). House Resolution 596 was a "nonbinding" resolution that would classify the tragic events that took place in the Ottoman Empire as genocide. It would also force the U.S. president to commemorate the genocide every April ("Defeat of House Resolution," 396). A sizable portion of his constituents belonged to one of the largest pockets of Armenian-Americans in the country. This was not a guarantee that this resolution would pass, considering the U.S. government had its own set of incentives for not furthering the resolution.

Once it received word of the proposal, the Turkish government warned the U.S. that if

it were to pass, Turkey would “withdraw certain defense contracts with U.S. firms, reopen ties with the government of Iraq, and withdraw its consent to U.S. use of Turkey's Incirlik air base (“Defeat of House Resolution,” 396-397). After these threats, President Bill Clinton requested that the House retract the resolution in order to protect the interests of the United States as a whole (“Defeat of House Resolution,” 397). It is understandable that the President would question the move by Congress in the interest of national security, but he failed to protect the international community by not holding those responsible for the genocide accountable.

As Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi also attempted to introduce House Resolution 106, a similar nonbinding resolution. This “Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution” also came under fire from both the American and Turkish governments (“Congressional Initiative,” 186). It was passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2007. After its approval, the State Department warned Congress that it could “do grave harm to U.S.-Turkish relations and to U.S. interests in Europe and the Middle East. Nor will it improve Turkish-Armenian relations or advance reconciliation among Turks and Armenians over the terrible events of 1915” (“Congressional Initiative,” 187). Even General David Petraeus discouraged the resolution, fearing that military operations in Iraq could be compromised (“Congressional Initiative,” 187). It is difficult to determine whether or not these concerns were valid. There is always the chance that the United States could lose support and cooperation from Turkey, but by prolonging the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide, the U.S. is putting its relationship with Armenia and members of the Armenian Diaspora in jeopardy.

Around the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, another resolution was proposed in 2015 under the title of House Resolution 154 (United States. Cong.). This Resolution, like those previously mentioned, calls on the President and the government to recognize the Armenian Genocide. It also states that the President must work towards bettering the

relationship between Armenia and Turkey (United States. Cong.). Proposed Resolution 154 brings attention to the fact that the United States should uphold its devotion to the defense of human rights. Although this resolution presents these requests in a compelling manner, it was not passed. After the proposal and denial of these resolutions, it is clear that the United States Government is still not fully prepared to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

As it stands today, American politicians are divided on whether or not the U.S. should officially recognize the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunately, as politicians their stances on the matter changes in order to gain support and to remain in office. President Barack Obama is no different from the others. In 2008 during his initial campaign for the presidency, Senator Obama “vowed to label the tragedy 'genocide'” (Hewrami). This action would gain the support of the Armenian diaspora in the United States, Armenian lobbyists, and the state of Armenia. However, as previously mentioned there are a number of people who would oppose this attempt. In the interest of those who would put him in the White House, President Obama has yet to acknowledge the Genocide (Hewrami). Though he has not outwardly denied its occurrence, the President's inaction has angered many in the Armenian community. It also encourages complacency in the American political sphere. If the President of the United States will not publicly acknowledge the Armenian genocide, others will not feel inclined to address this serious crime. By not giving proper attention to the Armenian Genocide, President is preserving the U.S.'s ties with Turkey. At the same time he is jeopardizing the country's relationship with Armenia, and potentially preventing the improvement of the relationship between Turkey and Armenia.

Another important figure in American politics that has changed their stance on the issue of the Armenian Genocide is Samantha Power. She is a member of President's Cabinet as well as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations (“Ambassador Samantha Power”). Power is also an accomplished professor and writer. In 2002 she released her book

entitled *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*, which brings attention to some of the most horrific cases of crimes against humanity in recent history. In it, she clearly states that the atrocities committed in the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians was a case of genocide (Power, xix). Power also includes one of the proclamations made by one Ottoman village that clearly dictated how the Armenians should be removed from their homes and deported (Power, 2). She gives a decent account of what really happened to the ethnic Armenians just over a century ago. Her book also includes a glimpse at just how much the United States Government knew, as well as just how little those in power did about the genocide.

According to Samantha Power, the governments of Germany, Britain, and the United States knew what was occurring within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Most of what was revealed came from missionaries, and of course the United States' Henry Morgenthau (Power, 5). Due to its alliance with the Ottomans, Germany did not intervene. Considering Britain was at war with both of these states, the government condemned the killings of the Armenians. On the other hand, in 1915, the United States had not yet entered World War I, and wanted to maintain its neutrality (Power, 5). No matter how much information was revealed to the U.S., officials did not want to get involved with the affairs of the outside world. President Woodrow Wilson only wanted to get involved with international matters if they directly concerned the fate of the United States (Power, 6). Morgenthau remained in Ottoman territory, but only to advance American interests, and not to speak out for those one million people who senselessly lost their lives, and the countless others facing extreme persecution.

At the time, Britain believed that if the United States would just break its silence and end its neutrality, the genocide could be stopped. But still the U.S. refused to intervene because it did not benefit American interests (Power, 10). Samantha Power is clearly critical of the United States' inaction during this time. She also offers a greater look at how little the

United States has learned from its refusal to protect the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire:

America's nonresponse to the Turkish horrors established patterns that would be repeated. Time and again the U.S. government would be reluctant to cast aside its neutrality and formally denounce a fellow state for its atrocities. Time and again though U.S. officials would learn that huge numbers of civilians were being slaughtered, the impact of this knowledge would be blunted by their uncertainty about the facts and their rationalization that a firmer U.S. stand would make little difference....The United States would offer humanitarian aid to the survivors of "race murder" but would leave those committing it alone (Power, 13-14).

This statement makes it clear that Power believes that the United States could have and should have taken action. She also argues that the United States continues to sit by as a passive observer rather than taking a stand against human rights violations. Although it is now too late to protect those who perished during the Armenian Genocide, it is not too late to protect their memory and stand up for those currently facing a similar fate.

The United Nations is an organization whose purpose is to promote peace and human rights throughout the world. It also aims to seek justice for those who have fallen victim to crimes of persecution and genocide. Those who work for and in conjunction with the U.N. should therefore uphold the same standards. Samantha Power obviously values human rights. However, since her involvement with the Obama Administration, she has changed her public stance on the Armenian Genocide. Even though "*A Problem from Hell*" labels the massacres of one million Armenians as a genocide, Power has recently refrained from referring to it as such (Wofford). As mentioned previously, President Obama went back on his promise to formally acknowledge the Armenian Genocide in order to preserve the United States'

relationship with Turkey. Ambassador Power is doing the same thing that her book criticized, and is putting the interests of the American government before those of human rights.

Yet another U.S. politician that has drastically shifted their views on the nature of the Armenian massacres by the Ottomans is Hillary Clinton. Just as Obama did, Clinton claimed she was committed to recognizing the events as a genocide during her presidential campaign in 2008 (Wofford). She claimed that she had long been a supporter of any resolution proposed by Congress to recognize the Armenian Genocide in the United States. Although she did not win the presidential race, she remained in the Senate and maintained her stance on the genocide.

When Clinton became President Obama's Secretary of State her public views changed. She no longer referred to the events of 1915 as a 'genocide' (Wofford). During a 2010 visit to Armenia, Secretary Clinton visited the genocide memorial in Yerevan. But she, as well as the state, made sure to recognize the events of the early Twentieth Century as a terrible tragedy, and not a case of genocide (Wofford). This was just another tactical move to protect the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey. To add insult to injury, when asked about the Armenian Genocide Clinton urged against the use of the term 'genocide'. She claimed that doing so “opens a door that is a very dangerous one to go through” (Wofford). This is not the first time that Hillary Clinton has altered her views on controversial international issues. In the 1990s, she was a strong supporter of Palestinian rights. But when she became a senator she shifted her allegiance to the Israeli cause (“Hillary Clinton on Foreign Policy”). Hillary Clinton is not alone in her inability to commit to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. This has been a constant theme in American political life. These politicians are acting in a matter that protects American foreign interests, which is understandable. At the same time they are insulting entire groups of people and ignoring issues of justice and human rights.

This is in no way meant to be an attack on these politicians. However, it is important

to understand why they have changed their stance on such an important issue. If they are not willing to bring awareness to such a tragic event that occurred over a century ago and hold the perpetrators accountable, then it seems unlikely that they would do the same to protect those facing the same fate in the present and future. It is necessary for the United States Government to bring awareness to the Armenian Genocide.

It is also important to consider just how much exposure the Armenian Genocide receives publicly in American museums. These terrible events that occurred are a part of human history, and the testimonies of witnesses are invaluable resources. By educating the American public, and the world in general, it might reduce the chances of such a tragedy like this from happening in the future. The survivors, witnesses, and victims who could not escape their tragic fate deserve to have their stories told and their memories preserved.

Turkey is an ally of the United States, but it is also an ally of Israel (Reynolds). Triangular political relations can be extremely difficult to navigate, as the case of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide proves. The U.S. is deeply involved in the Middle East, and to this day remains Israel's strongest ally. In turn, Turkey is Israel's greatest defense in the region. Under Ottoman rule, the Jewish population was relatively free from persecution. Considering the terrible fate that claimed the lives of so many of Europe's Jewish population, Israel – created as a Jewish state – perhaps remains a bit wary of doing anything to anger such a large state. By remaining silent in the discussion of Turkey's past wrongs, Israel continues to benefit from this alliance. And therefore, as a steadfast ally of Israel, the United States continues to follow a similar path and is protecting Turkey from any possible repercussions. Jewish Americans and Israeli lobbyists in the United States are major financial contributors to Israel, and are adamant about protecting Israel through American legislation (Reynolds). If the U.S. were to condemn Turkey, it could put Israel and its own interests in the Middle East at risk.

In 1993, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance opened to

“commemorate the Holocaust and to explore prejudice and persecution worldwide” (Reynolds). The Holocaust is perhaps the most widely-known example of genocide in the Twentieth Century, and even the entirety of human history. There are several museums that commemorate those who fell victim to the horrors of the Nazi regime. It is also recognized by the United States Government. The question remains how could the U.S. become so selective in its representation of genocide.

The Museum of Tolerance, like other Holocaust museums, fails to incorporate the story of the Armenian Genocide. It was only briefly explored in temporary exhibits. According to John K. Roth, a philosophy professor at Claremont McKenna College, “There's a struggle that is going on in the United States today about how to appropriately recognize the Armenian Genocide, and it's all tied up in politics with Turkey and NATO and the Middle East” (Reynolds). This absence is also most likely a result of the pressure exerted by the Israeli Government and Jewish lobbyists (Reynolds).

What Would Recognition by the United States Mean?

There are several reasons that have kept the United States Government from acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. Perhaps most obviously is the issue of geopolitics. The U.S. remains heavily involved in the Middle East. Today, along with Israel, Turkey is one of the United States' greatest allies in the region. If it were to address the genocide and attempt to hold Turkey accountable in some way, it is possible that the U.S. could lose Turkey as an ally. However, this relationship is mutually beneficial, and it seems unlikely that the alliance would collapse. Tensions might arise, but the U.S. has had interesting relationships with its other allies in the past. Although Armenia might not be a strategic partner like Turkey, it is still important for the U.S. to honor its relationship with the Republic of Armenia.

By recognizing the Armenian genocide, the relationship between Armenia and Turkey

might improve as well. As previously stated both states are making an effort to build a bond and promote peace between them. The United States claims to be such an influential power, so it should have the power to mediate talks between the Armenian and Turkish governments.

Israel is also invested in this matter. Israel is the United States' greatest ally in the Middle East. The state of Israel was founded as a Jewish homeland in 1948. While they were facing outright persecution elsewhere, Jews found relative acceptance in Turkey. For this reason Israel maintains a strong alliance with Turkey. If the U.S. were to anger Turkey in any way, and if Israel were to go along with the United States' decision to recognize the Armenian Genocide, it could potentially lose the support of its neighbor, Turkey. For this reason Israel, Israel lobbyists in the U.S., as well as Jewish lobbyists have tried to curtail the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide by the U.S. This is clearly a concern, but it is not necessarily the only possible outcome. There is a strong chance that these states could work out some arrangement to promote human rights and continue their mutually beneficial relationships.

Should the United States Recognize the Armenian Genocide?

Genocide denial is not a new concept, especially not the denial of the Armenian Genocide. To this day, the United States government refuses to acknowledge that the Armenian Genocide has ever occurred. Though the government does not deny the events outright, its lack of recognition allows others to fuel this denial amongst others. This denial was evident during a March 2015 conference at Harvard University on the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. The fact that so many can sit by and ignore these atrocities demonstrates the corruption within the American and Turkish governments and makes a case for increased discussion of the Armenian Genocide.

In his article, Alexandros K. Kyrou wrote about a conference at Harvard in March of 2015, entitled "Armenia 1915- Auschwitz 1945: Small Nations and Great Powers" (Kyrou,

22). The premise of this conference was to raise awareness of what actually happened during the Holocaust as well as the Armenian Genocide. A panel of three individuals who specialized in topics regarding the genocide gave a presentation on how the Holocaust relates to the Armenian Genocide (Kyrou, 22). These individuals included Simon Payslian, Marc A. Mamigonian, and James R. Russell. Most of their discussion centered around remembrance and what actions Turkey and the United States should take in order to promote education, acceptance, and acknowledgment (Kyrou, 22). Their presentation and discussions took a different turn when a group of protesters began “an outburst of genocide denial” (Kyrou, 22).

Students and activists of Turkish and Azeri descent presented posters that attacked the memory of the Armenian Genocide and claimed “that Turks, not Armenians, were the victims of genocide during the First World War” (Kyrou, 22). As the panel attempted to raise awareness for what had occurred in the past these students began shouting out “derogatory statements” and claimed that the Armenian Genocide never occurred (Kyrou, 23). Much of these sentiments were caused by the altered memory of the Turkish people as well as the politics of Turkey and the United States.

The Turkish students at this conference believed that the injustices committed against the people of Turkey have yet to be acknowledged (Kyrou, 23). There is a strong sense of Turkish nationalism and there are still anti-Armenian sentiments that exist to this day among Turkish people. These feelings can really only be changed by providing further education on the subject and altering how politicians approach the matter. In Turkey it is a crime to even acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, much less speak out against it. Admitting that the massacre of ethnic Armenians did occur “can lead to imprisonment under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, the infamous law against 'insulting Turkishness'” (Kyrou, 23). Of course, there are some who are prepared to face these consequences and address the wrongs that were committed by the Turks under the Ottoman Empire. There is still a long way to go. The

Turkish government and people need to admit that the Armenian Genocide did occur, and need to work on making amends with families of the survivors and the nation of Armenia. This also holds true for the United States. The U.S. has yet to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, due to its political ties with Turkey. This will not change overnight, but the United States needs to take a stand against acts of genocide, and possibly mediate talks between Turkey and Armenia.

By protesting the conference on the Armenian Genocide, these students were ignoring historical facts and denying an entire people a voice. According to Alexandros Kyrrou, “systematic genocide denial is, in fact, the final stage of genocide – its goal being the total annihilation of a people by erasing their history and the sheer memory of their existence” (Kyrrou, 23). It is important to address the horrors of the past in order to ensure that genocide will not occur in the future.

The government of the United States should, without a doubt, officially acknowledge the Armenian Genocide that began in 1915. There are, as with all other resolutions and government actions, potential risks. It is possible that the United States could lose the support of Turkey. It is also possible that it could further weaken its ties with other nations like Israel. Relations between Armenia and Turkey might never improve. But the United States owes it to the victims of the Armenian Genocide – as well as their families, those who have been affected by any other genocide or crimes against humanity, and future generations – to acknowledge this terrible segment of human history. The benefits far outweigh the risks. It is purely for their own benefit that U.S. government officials refuse to pass any resolution that addresses this issue. The United States cannot allow political aspirations and gains to cloud its judgment. The U.S. has an obligation to address these issues and move forward in a manner that benefits the world's least-heard voices.

Conclusion

The organized mass killings of ethnic Armenians in the Ottoman Empire might have officially ended in 1917, but its effects have lasted into the present day. Although Turkey has made certain strides in the recent past, it is still common practice to deny that an Armenian Genocide ever occurred. The United States in turn has decided to not publicly acknowledge what happened over a century ago. This is due to the issue of geopolitics and the government's desire to preserve its strong relationship with Turkey. Although complications could arise if the U.S. decides to recognize the Armenian Genocide, it is more important to remember the victims and promote the value of human rights. The United States should change its current outlook and officially confront the memory of the Armenian Genocide.

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House Calendar No. 296

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 596

[Report No. 106-933]

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2000

Mr. RADANOVICH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

OCTOBER 4, 2000

Additional sponsor: Mr. BONIOR

OCTOBER 4, 2000

Reported with an amendment, referred to the House Calendar, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced resolution, see copy of resolution as introduced on September 27, 2000]

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United

States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 *This resolution may be cited as the “Affirmation of*
 4 *the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Reso-*
 5 *lution”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 *The House of Representatives finds the following:*

8 (1) *The Armenian Genocide was conceived and*
 9 *carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to*
 10 *1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000*
 11 *Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and*
 12 *children were killed, 500,000 survivors were expelled*
 13 *from their homes, and which succeeded in the elimi-*
 14 *nation of the over 2,500-year presence of Armenians*
 15 *in their historic homeland.*

16 (2) *On May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers, Eng-*
 17 *land, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement*
 18 *explicitly charging for the first time ever another gov-*
 19 *ernment of committing “a crime against humanity”.*

20 (3) *This joint statement stated “[i]n view of*
 21 *these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and*
 22 *civilization, the Allied Governments announce pub-*
 23 *licly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold person-*
 24 *ally responsible for these crimes all members of the*

1 *Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents*
2 *who are implicated in such massacres”.*

3 (4) *The post-World War I Turkish Government*
4 *indicted the top leaders involved in the “organization*
5 *and execution” of the Armenian Genocide and in the*
6 *“massacre and destruction of the Armenians”.*

7 (5) *In a series of courts-martial, officials of the*
8 *Young Turk Regime were tried and convicted, as*
9 *charged, for organizing and executing massacres*
10 *against the Armenian people.*

11 (6) *The chief organizers of the Armenian Geno-*
12 *cide, Minister of War Enver, Minister of the Interior*
13 *Talaat, and Minister of the Navy Jemal were all con-*
14 *demned to death for their crimes, however, the ver-*
15 *dicts of the courts were not enforced.*

16 (7) *The Armenian Genocide and these domestic*
17 *judicial failures are documented with overwhelming*
18 *evidence in the national archives of Austria, France,*
19 *Germany, Great Britain, Russia, the United States,*
20 *the Vatican and many other countries, and this vast*
21 *body of evidence attests to the same facts, the same*
22 *events, and the same consequences.*

23 (8) *The United States National Archives and*
24 *Record Administration holds extensive and thorough*
25 *documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially*

1 *in its holdings under Record Group 59 of the United*
2 *States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40,*
3 *which are open and widely available to the public*
4 *and interested institutions.*

5 *(9) The national archives of Turkey should also*
6 *include all of the records pertaining to the indict-*
7 *ment, trial, and conviction of the Ottoman authorities*
8 *responsible for the Armenian Genocide.*

9 *(10) The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United*
10 *States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913*
11 *to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of*
12 *many countries, among them the allies of the Otto-*
13 *man Empire, against the Armenian Genocide.*

14 *(11) Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described*
15 *to the United States Department of State the policy*
16 *of the Government of the Ottoman Empire as “a cam-*
17 *paign of race extermination”, and was instructed on*
18 *July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State*
19 *Robert Lansing that the “Department approves your*
20 *procedure . . . to stop Armenian persecution”.*

21 *(12) Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 of Feb-*
22 *ruary 9, 1916, resolved that “the President of the*
23 *United States be respectfully asked to designate a day*
24 *on which the citizens of this country may give expres-*
25 *sion to their sympathy by contributing funds now*

1 *being raised for the relief of the Armenians”, who at*
2 *the time were enduring “starvation, disease, and un-*
3 *told suffering”.*

4 *(13) President Wilson concurred and also en-*
5 *couraged the formation of the organization known as*
6 *Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress,*
7 *which contributed some \$116,000,000 from 1915 to*
8 *1930 to aid the Armenian Genocide survivors, includ-*
9 *ing 132,000 orphans who became foster children of the*
10 *American people.*

11 *(14) Senate Resolution 359, dated May 11, 1920,*
12 *stated in part, “the testimony adduced at the hear-*
13 *ings conducted by the sub-committee of the Senate*
14 *Committee on Foreign Relations have clearly estab-*
15 *lished the truth of the reported massacres and other*
16 *atrocities from which the Armenian people have suf-*
17 *fered”.*

18 *(15) The resolution followed the April 13, 1920,*
19 *report to the Senate of the American Military Mission*
20 *to Armenia led by General James Harbord, that stat-*
21 *ed “[m]utilation, violation, torture, and death have*
22 *left their haunting memories in a hundred beautiful*
23 *Armenian valleys, and the traveler in that region is*
24 *seldom free from the evidence of this most colossal*
25 *crime of all the ages”.*

1 (16) *Setting the stage for the Holocaust, Adolf*
 2 *Hitler, on ordering his military commanders to at-*
 3 *tack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed*
 4 *objections by saying “[w]ho, after all, speaks today of*
 5 *the annihilation of the Armenians?”.*

6 (17) *Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term*
 7 *“genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest pro-*
 8 *ponent of the Genocide Convention, invoked the Arme-*
 9 *nian case as a definitive example of genocide in the*
 10 *20th century.*

11 (18) *Raphael Lemkin described the crime as “the*
 12 *systematic destruction of whole national, racial or re-*
 13 *ligious groups. The sort of thing Hitler did to the*
 14 *Jews and the Turks did to the Armenians”.*

15 (19) *The first resolution on genocide adopted by*
 16 *the United Nations at Lemkin’s urging, the December*
 17 *11, 1946, United Nations General Assembly Resolu-*
 18 *tion 96(1) and the United Nations Genocide Conven-*
 19 *tion itself recognized the Armenian Genocide as the*
 20 *type of crime the United Nations intended to prevent*
 21 *by codifying existing standards.*

22 (20) *In 1948 the United Nations War Crimes*
 23 *Commission invoked the Armenian Genocide “pre-*
 24 *cisely . . . one of the types of acts which the modern*

1 *term ‘crimes against humanity’ is intended to cover”*
 2 *as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals.*

3 (21) *The Commission stated that “[t]he provi-*
 4 *sions of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sévres were*
 5 *obviously intended to cover, in conformity with the*
 6 *Allied note of 1915 . . . , offenses which had been com-*
 7 *mitted on Turkish territory against persons of Turk-*
 8 *ish citizenship, though of Armenian or Greek race.*
 9 *This article constitutes therefore a precedent for Arti-*
 10 *cle 6c and 5c of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters,*
 11 *and offers an example of one of the categories of*
 12 *‘crimes against humanity’ as understood by these en-*
 13 *actments”.*

14 (22) *The United Nations Commission on Human*
 15 *Rights adopted in 1985 a report entitled “Study of*
 16 *the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the*
 17 *Crime of Genocide”, which stated “[t]he Nazi aberr-*
 18 *ation has unfortunately not been the only case of geno-*
 19 *cide in the twentieth century. Among other examples*
 20 *which can be cited as qualifying are . . . the Ottoman*
 21 *massacre of Armenians in 1915-1916”.*

22 (23) *This report also explained that “[a]t least*
 23 *1 million, and possibly well over half of the Armenian*
 24 *population, are reliably estimated to have been killed*
 25 *or death marched by independent authorities and eye-*

1 *witnesses. This is corroborated by reports in United*
 2 *States, German and British archives and of contem-*
 3 *porary diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, including*
 4 *those of its ally Germany”.*

5 *(24) The tragedy of the Armenian Genocide has*
 6 *been acknowledged by countries and international*
 7 *bodies such as Argentina, Belgium, Canada, the*
 8 *Council of Europe, Cyprus, the European Par-*
 9 *liament, France, Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon,*
 10 *Russia, the United Nations, the United States, and*
 11 *Uruguay.*

12 *(25) The United States Holocaust Memorial*
 13 *Council, an independent Federal agency, unani-*
 14 *mously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United*
 15 *States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include*
 16 *the Armenian Genocide in the Museum and has since*
 17 *done so.*

18 *(26) President Reagan in proclamation number*
 19 *4838, dated April 22, 1981, stated in part “like the*
 20 *genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide*
 21 *of the Cambodians, which followed it—and like too*
 22 *many other persecutions of too many other people—*
 23 *the lessons of the holocaust must never be forgotten”.*

24 *(27) President Bush, in 1988, speaking of the*
 25 *Armenian Genocide, stated “we must consciously and*

1 *conscientiously recognize the genocides of the past—*
2 *the enormous tragedies that have darkened this cen-*
3 *tury and that haunt us still. We must not only com-*
4 *memorate the courage of the victims and of their sur-*
5 *vivors, but we must also remind ourselves that civili-*
6 *zation cannot be taken for granted. . . . We must all*
7 *be vigilant against this most heinous crime against*
8 *humanity”.*

9 (28) *President Bush, in 1988, stated further*
10 *“[t]he United States must acknowledge the attempted*
11 *genocide of the Armenian people in the last years of*
12 *the Ottoman Empire, based on the testimony of sur-*
13 *vivors, scholars, and indeed our own representatives*
14 *at the time, if we are to insure that such horrors are*
15 *not repeated”.*

16 (29) *President Clinton, on August 13, 1992, stat-*
17 *ed “[t]he Genocide of 1915, years of communist dicta-*
18 *torship, and the devastating earthquake of 1988 have*
19 *caused great suffering in Armenia during this cen-*
20 *tury”.*

21 (30) *Reviewing an aberrant 1982 expression*
22 *(later retracted) by the United States Department of*
23 *State asserting that the facts of the Armenian Geno-*
24 *cide may be ambiguous, the United States Court of*
25 *Appeals for the District of Columbia in 1993, after a*

1 review of documents pertaining to the policy record of
2 the United States, noted that the assertion on ambi-
3 guity in the United States record about the Armenian
4 Genocide “contradicted longstanding United States
5 policy and was eventually retracted”.

6 (31) Despite the international recognition and
7 affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, the failure of
8 the domestic and international authorities to punish
9 those responsible for the Armenian Genocide is a rea-
10 son why similar genocides have recurred and may
11 recur in the future, and that a proper judicial and
12 firm response, holding the guilty accountable and re-
13 quiring the prompt enforcement of verdicts would
14 have spared humanity needless suffering.

15 (32) In a commendable letter on April 9, 1999,
16 Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, then Under Secretary
17 of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Af-
18 fairs, pledged that the administration would raise
19 with the Republic of Turkey the issue of the recovery
20 of Armenian assets from the genocide period held by
21 the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

22 (33) It is important that the President ensure
23 that the foreign policy of the United States reflects
24 appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning
25 issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and

1 *genocide documented in the United States record re-*
2 *lating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences*
3 *of the failure to enforce the judgments of the Turkish*
4 *courts against the responsible officials.*

5 **SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF POLICY.**

6 *The House of Representatives—*

7 *(1) calls upon the President to ensure that the*
8 *foreign policy of the United States reflects appro-*
9 *priate understanding and sensitivity concerning*
10 *issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and*
11 *genocide documented in the United States record re-*
12 *lating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences*
13 *of the failure to enforce the judgments of the Turkish*
14 *courts against the responsible officials;*

15 *(2) calls upon the President in the President's*
16 *annual message commemorating the Armenian Geno-*
17 *cide issued on or about April 24 to characterize the*
18 *systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000*
19 *Armenians as genocide and to recall the proud his-*
20 *tory of United States intervention in opposition to*
21 *the Armenian Genocide; and*

22 *(3) calls upon the President in the President's*
23 *annual message commemorating the Armenian Geno-*
24 *cide to state that the modern day Republic of Turkey*

- 1 *did not conduct the Armenian Genocide, which was*
- 2 *perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire.*

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House Calendar No. 296

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 596

[Report No. 106-933]

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

OCTOBER 4, 2000

Reported with an amendment, referred to the House
Calendar, and ordered to be printed

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 154

Calling on the President to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon the Republic of Turkey's full acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide, and a fair, just, and comprehensive international resolution of this crime against humanity.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 18, 2015

Mr. DOLD (for himself, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. CHU of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. COSTA, Mr. LAMALFA, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SHERMAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MENG, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. NUNES, Mr. DENHAM, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. BASS, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. GARRETT, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. TITUS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. TROTT, Ms. LEE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. PETERSON, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. CAPUANO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the President to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon the Republic of Turkey's full acknowledgment of the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide, and a fair, just, and comprehensive international resolution of this crime against humanity.

Whereas the Obama Administration has, since early 2009, sought to improve Armenian-Turkish relations through diplomatic efforts to lift the Republic of Turkey's blockade of Armenia and facilitate an end to Ankara's refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan;

Whereas at the start of this process, President Barack Obama had, on April 6, 2009, voiced the United States Government's expectation that Armenia-Turkey dialogue would "bear fruit very quickly", but that, since then, the Obama Administration has commended Armenia's participation in this dialogue while holding Turkey largely responsible for the lack of results from this process, with the Secretary of State noting, on June 4, 2012, that, on this matter, "the ball remains in Turkey's court.";

Whereas on April 24, 2013, President Barack Obama stated, "A full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts is in all of our interests. Nations grow stronger by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past, thereby building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future.";

Whereas the Republic of Turkey, rather than acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past, has escalated its international campaign of Armenian Genocide denial, maintained its blockade of Armenia, and increased its pressure on the small but growing Turkish civil society movement acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and seeking justice for this systematic campaign of destruction of millions of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Pontians, Syrians, and other Christians upon their biblical-era homelands;

Whereas the United States is on record as having officially recognized the Armenian Genocide, in the United States

Government's May 28, 1951, written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through President Ronald Reagan's April 22, 1981, Proclamation No. 4838, and by Congressional legislation, including House Joint Resolution 148 adopted on April 8, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247 adopted on September 10, 1984;

Whereas even prior to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States has a record of having sought to justly and constructively address the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's intentional destruction of the Armenian people, including through Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 adopted on February 9, 1916, Senate Resolution 359 adopted on May 11, 1920, and President Woodrow Wilson's Decision of the President of the United States of America Respecting the Frontier between Turkey and Armenia, Access for Armenia to the Sea, and the Demilitarization of Turkish Territory Adjacent to the Armenian Frontier, dated November 22, 1920;

Whereas President Barack Obama entered office having stated his "firmly held conviction that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence", affirmed his record of "calling for Turkey's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide", and pledged that "as President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide"; and

Whereas the United States national interests in the establishment of equitable, constructive, stable, and durable relations between Armenians and Turks cannot be meaning-

fully advanced by circumventing or otherwise seeking to avoid materially addressing the central political, legal, security, and moral issue between these two nations, Turkey's denial of truth and justice for the Armenian Genocide: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives calls on
- 2 the President to work toward equitable, constructive, sta-
- 3 ble, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon
- 4 the Republic of Turkey's full acknowledgment of the facts
- 5 and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide, and
- 6 a fair, just, and comprehensive international resolution of
- 7 this crime against humanity.



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110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 106

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 30, 2007

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. McCOTTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “Affirmation of
4 the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Reso-
5 lution”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The House of Representatives finds the following:

3 (1) The Armenian Genocide was conceived and
4 carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to
5 1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly
6 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men,
7 women, and children were killed, 500,000 survivors
8 were expelled from their homes, and which succeeded
9 in the elimination of the over 2,500-year presence of
10 Armenians in their historic homeland.

11 (2) On May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers, Eng-
12 land, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement
13 explicitly charging for the first time ever another
14 government of committing “a crime against human-
15 ity”.

16 (3) This joint statement stated “the Allied Gov-
17 ernments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte
18 that they will hold personally responsible for these
19 crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as
20 well as those of their agents who are implicated in
21 such massacres”.

22 (4) The post-World War I Turkish Government
23 indicted the top leaders involved in the “organization
24 and execution” of the Armenian Genocide and in the
25 “massacre and destruction of the Armenians”.

1 (5) In a series of courts-martial, officials of the
2 Young Turk Regime were tried and convicted, as
3 charged, for organizing and executing massacres
4 against the Armenian people.

5 (6) The chief organizers of the Armenian Geno-
6 cide, Minister of War Enver, Minister of the Interior
7 Talaat, and Minister of the Navy Jemal were all
8 condemned to death for their crimes, however, the
9 verdicts of the courts were not enforced.

10 (7) The Armenian Genocide and these domestic
11 judicial failures are documented with overwhelming
12 evidence in the national archives of Austria, France,
13 Germany, Great Britain, Russia, the United States,
14 the Vatican and many other countries, and this vast
15 body of evidence attests to the same facts, the same
16 events, and the same consequences.

17 (8) The United States National Archives and
18 Record Administration holds extensive and thorough
19 documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially
20 in its holdings under Record Group 59 of the United
21 States Department of State, files 867.00 and
22 867.40, which are open and widely available to the
23 public and interested institutions.

24 (9) The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United
25 States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from

1 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials
2 of many countries, among them the allies of the
3 Ottoman Empire, against the Armenian Genocide.

4 (10) Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly de-
5 scribed to the United States Department of State
6 the policy of the Government of the Ottoman Em-
7 pire as “a campaign of race extermination,” and was
8 instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Sec-
9 retary of State Robert Lansing that the “Depart-
10 ment approves your procedure . . . to stop Armenian
11 persecution”.

12 (11) Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 of Feb-
13 ruary 9, 1916, resolved that “the President of the
14 United States be respectfully asked to designate a
15 day on which the citizens of this country may give
16 expression to their sympathy by contributing funds
17 now being raised for the relief of the Armenians”,
18 who at the time were enduring “starvation, disease,
19 and untold suffering”.

20 (12) President Woodrow Wilson concurred and
21 also encouraged the formation of the organization
22 known as Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of
23 Congress, which contributed some \$116,000,000
24 from 1915 to 1930 to aid Armenian Genocide sur-

1 vivors, including 132,000 orphans who became foster
2 children of the American people.

3 (13) Senate Resolution 359, dated May 11,
4 1920, stated in part, “the testimony adduced at the
5 hearings conducted by the sub-committee of the Sen-
6 ate Committee on Foreign Relations have clearly es-
7 tablished the truth of the reported massacres and
8 other atrocities from which the Armenian people
9 have suffered”.

10 (14) The resolution followed the April 13, 1920,
11 report to the Senate of the American Military Mis-
12 sion to Armenia led by General James Harbord, that
13 stated “[m]utilation, violation, torture, and death
14 have left their haunting memories in a hundred
15 beautiful Armenian valleys, and the traveler in that
16 region is seldom free from the evidence of this most
17 colossal crime of all the ages”.

18 (15) As displayed in the United States Holo-
19 caust Memorial Museum, Adolf Hitler, on ordering
20 his military commanders to attack Poland without
21 provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by saying
22 “[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of
23 the Armenians?” and thus set the stage for the Hol-
24 ocaust.

1 (16) Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term
 2 “genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest pro-
 3 ponent of the United Nations Convention on the
 4 Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the
 5 Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in
 6 the 20th century.

7 (17) The first resolution on genocide adopted
 8 by the United Nations at Lemkin’s urging, the De-
 9 cember 11, 1946, United Nations General Assembly
 10 Resolution 96(1) and the United Nations Convention
 11 on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide itself
 12 recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of
 13 crime the United Nations intended to prevent and
 14 punish by codifying existing standards.

15 (18) In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes
 16 Commission invoked the Armenian Genocide “pre-
 17 cisely . . . one of the types of acts which the modern
 18 term ‘crimes against humanity’ is intended to cover”
 19 as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals.

20 (19) The Commission stated that “[t]he provi-
 21 sions of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sevres
 22 were obviously intended to cover, in conformity with
 23 the Allied note of 1915 . . . , offenses which had been
 24 committed on Turkish territory against persons of
 25 Turkish citizenship, though of Armenian or Greek

1 race. This article constitutes therefore a precedent
2 for Article 6c and 5c of the Nuremberg and Tokyo
3 Charters, and offers an example of one of the cat-
4 egories of ‘crimes against humanity’ as understood
5 by these enactments”.

6 (20) House Joint Resolution 148, adopted on
7 April 8, 1975, resolved: “[t]hat April 24, 1975, is
8 hereby designated as ‘National Day of Remembrance
9 of Man’s Inhumanity to Man’, and the President of
10 the United States is authorized and requested to
11 issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the
12 United States to observe such day as a day of re-
13 membrance for all the victims of genocide, especially
14 those of Armenian ancestry . . .”.

15 (21) President Ronald Reagan in proclamation
16 number 4838, dated April 22, 1981, stated in part
17 “like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and
18 the genocide of the Cambodians, which followed it—
19 and like too many other persecutions of too many
20 other people—the lessons of the Holocaust must
21 never be forgotten”.

22 (22) House Joint Resolution 247, adopted on
23 September 10, 1984, resolved: “[t]hat April 24,
24 1985, is hereby designated as ‘National Day of Re-
25 membrance of Man’s Inhumanity to Man’, and the

1 President of the United States is authorized and re-
2 requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the
3 people of the United States to observe such day as
4 a day of remembrance for all the victims of geno-
5 cide, especially the one and one-half million people of
6 Armenian ancestry . . .”.

7 (23) In August 1985, after extensive study and
8 deliberation, the United Nations SubCommission on
9 Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Mi-
10 norities voted 14 to 1 to accept a report entitled
11 “Study of the Question of the Prevention and Pun-
12 ishment of the Crime of Genocide,” which stated
13 “[t]he Nazi aberration has unfortunately not been
14 the only case of genocide in the 20th century.
15 Among other examples which can be cited as quali-
16 fying are . . . the Ottoman massacre of Armenians
17 in 1915–1916”.

18 (24) This report also explained that “[a]t least
19 1,000,000, and possibly well over half of the Arme-
20 nian population, are reliably estimated to have been
21 killed or death marched by independent authorities
22 and eye-witnesses. This is corroborated by reports in
23 United States, German and British archives and of
24 contemporary diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, in-
25 cluding those of its ally Germany.”.

1 (25) The United States Holocaust Memorial
2 Council, an independent Federal agency, unani-
3 mously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United
4 States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include
5 the Armenian Genocide in the Museum and has
6 since done so.

7 (26) Reviewing an aberrant 1982 expression
8 (later retracted) by the United States Department of
9 State asserting that the facts of the Armenian Geno-
10 cide may be ambiguous, the United States Court of
11 Appeals for the District of Columbia in 1993, after
12 a review of documents pertaining to the policy
13 record of the United States, noted that the assertion
14 on ambiguity in the United States record about the
15 Armenian Genocide “contradicted longstanding
16 United States policy and was eventually retracted”.

17 (27) On June 5, 1996, the House of Represent-
18 atives adopted an amendment to House Bill 3540
19 (the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Re-
20 lated Programs Appropriations Act, 1997) to reduce
21 aid to Turkey by \$3,000,000 (an estimate of its pay-
22 ment of lobbying fees in the United States) until the
23 Turkish Government acknowledged the Armenian
24 Genocide and took steps to honor the memory of its
25 victims.

1 (28) President William Jefferson Clinton, on
2 April 24, 1998, stated: “This year, as in the past,
3 we join with Armenian-Americans throughout the
4 nation in commemorating one of the saddest chap-
5 ters in the history of this century, the deportations
6 and massacres of a million and a half Armenians in
7 the Ottoman Empire in the years 1915–1923.”.

8 (29) President George W. Bush, on April 24,
9 2004, stated: “On this day, we pause in remem-
10 brance of one of the most horrible tragedies of the
11 20th century, the annihilation of as many as
12 1,500,000 Armenians through forced exile and mur-
13 der at the end of the Ottoman Empire.”.

14 (30) Despite the international recognition and
15 affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, the failure of
16 the domestic and international authorities to punish
17 those responsible for the Armenian Genocide is a
18 reason why similar genocides have recurred and may
19 recur in the future, and that a just resolution will
20 help prevent future genocides.

21 **SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF POLICY.**

22 The House of Representatives—

23 (1) calls upon the President to ensure that the
24 foreign policy of the United States reflects appro-
25 priate understanding and sensitivity concerning

1 issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and
2 genocide documented in the United States record re-
3 lating to the Armenian Genocide and the con-
4 sequences of the failure to realize a just resolution;
5 and

6 (2) calls upon the President in the President's
7 annual message commemorating the Armenian
8 Genocide issued on or about April 24, to accurately
9 characterize the systematic and deliberate annihila-
10 tion of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide and to re-
11 call the proud history of United States intervention
12 in opposition to the Armenian Genocide.

○

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