

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 10, 2007

Madam Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol H232
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker,

Let us take this opportunity to express our very serious concerns regarding H.RES.106, the Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution. While we understand that this resolution is well-intentioned and in no way diminishes the atrocities toward Armenians that occurred during the Ottoman Empire, approving H.RES. 106 in the House of Representatives would be counterproductive to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East and could hinder America's ability to strategically redeploy U.S. military forces from Iraq.

As you are aware, the government of Turkey has voiced strong opposition to this resolution. In fact, Turkish diplomats, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, eight former Secretaries of State, and three former Secretaries of Defense have warned us that congressional recognition of genocide claims will lead to a review by Turkey of the entire U.S.-Turkish relationship.

Turkey sits at a strategic crossroads for our nation and serves as an important ally for U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Turkish government provides air and land space to the U.S. military at Incirlik Air Base, which provides a key site for personnel and equipment crossing the border in to Iraq. In fact, over half of the cargo flown into Iraq and Afghanistan comes through Incirlik Air Base. Additionally, the U.S. military's use of Incirlik Air Base will be an invaluable component to a successful and safe redeployment of our troops when the time comes. Jeopardizing utilization of Incirlik Air Base will not only compromise current U.S. operations in the region, but will come at the expense of U.S. Armed Forces personnel serving in the Central Command area of operations.

Furthermore, this legislation may potentially derail current efforts to normalize and reconcile Turkish-Armenian relations. Derailing this effort could delay the prospect for opening the Turkish border, resulting in long-term set backs on progress that is key for Turkey, Armenia and other countries in the region.

We will not support legislation that may potentially damage vital U.S.-Turkey relations, especially when it may come at the expense of U.S. Armed Forces personnel and could further destabilize the Middle East.

Page 2, 10/10/07

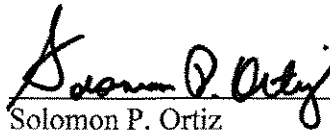
Speaker Pelosi, re: Armenian Resolution

Attached is an information paper received by Congressman Solomon Ortiz directly from officials at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey during an August CODEL visit. We hope you find this information useful, and look forward to discussing this matter with you further.

Sincerely,



Ike Skelton
Member of Congress



Solomon P. Ortiz
Member of Congress

Why an Armenian Genocide Resolution is Not a Good Idea

It will **cripple US-Turkish cooperation** on America's top strategic goals, including Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran at a time when we already face immense difficulties in the region.

- Jeopardize the use of Turkish airspace, military bases and border crossing into Iraq, adding to the risks and expenses of our operations there and Afghanistan.
- Compromise our collaboration on regional democracy and energy security in the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia.
- Put at risk Turkey's close relations with Israel.

It will **derail Turkish-Armenian normalization**, reconciliation and border reopening that are key to ending Armenia's regional isolation.

- Produce an extreme nationalist backlash and silence liberal voices speaking out for honesty about the past and reconciliation with Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, etc.
- Kill the Turkish-Armenian dialogue on establishing a joint commission to examine the events of 1915 and possibly other issues.
- Undermine prospects for an Azerbaijan-Armenia settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh by delaying prospects for opening the Turkish border.
- Damage will be long-lasting, setting back Turkey-Armenia normalization for decades.

It will **undermine democracy** in this stable, moderate Muslim country.

- Poison political debate on the eve of presidential and parliamentary elections in April and November.
- Discredit those calling for greater openness, modernization, liberal democratic values and closer ties with the US and Europe.
- Fuel xenophobic, anti-Western, anti-democratic and nationalist movements.
- Isolate Turkey's minorities, especially ethnic Armenians, most of whom, like Hrant Dink, strongly oppose foreign parliamentary judgments on genocide.

It will **fan anti-Americanism** in Turkey, potentially reverberating in negative ways throughout the Muslim world.

- Provoke hostile, possibly violent public reaction that could jeopardize the safety of US soldiers, diplomats, and government installations in Turkey.
- Threaten the US business presence, especially symbols of American culture, at a time when Turkey's economic success is attracting competitors from other countries.