

U.S. Policy towards the Armenian Genocide
By Matthew Craffey

Beginning in 1894 with the Hamidian Massacre, and culminating into what is widely known as the Armenian genocide from 1915-1920, over 1.5 million Armenians were killed at the hands of the former Ottoman Empire, now known as Turkey. To this day, the government of Turkey has never recognized this atrocity as a “genocide”, and has never apologized to the Armenian community for it. While 21 countries and 41 U.S. States have issued declarations acknowledging the Armenian genocide, and Turkey’s culpability for perpetrating it, the United States has never issued an official declaration acknowledging the Armenian genocide. To many, this policy appears inconsistent with America’s values, and its silence on this issue has, and will continue to make it more difficult to hold other nations accountable for committing similar atrocities. Perhaps nearly as important is the struggle of the Armenian community in the U.S., the largest concentration of Armenians in the world, to bring this issue to the forefront. For most, acknowledgement from both the U.S. (the country where most of them live), and from Turkey (the country that committed the genocide) would be sufficient for them to finally be at peace with this tragedy and be able to move on. On the other hand, Turkey is a vital ally of the U.S. in the War on Terror, and one of the few Muslim countries in the world that the U.S. has good relations with. Forcing Turkey’s hand on this issue could have negative repercussions for both issues, and could even destabilize Turkey’s secular government. So which is more important, our relationship with Turkey, or recognition of the Armenian genocide, and does it have to be one or the other?

The Armenian people have been around since 100 A.D. and at one time the territory of Armenia encompassed modern Armenia as well as much of Turkey (Cohan, 2005 p.333). They are the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion, and Armenians have their own language, with its own letters and grammar that are different from other Indo-European languages. During the time of the Ottoman Empire, Armenians were a unique, Christian people living among Muslim dominated, and controlled

lands. This dynamic, and the many differences between these cultures, has lent itself to periodic violence and discrimination against the Armenians. For much of their history, Armenians were treated as second-class citizens by the Ottoman Turks. But things would soon get much worse.

Between 1894-1896, Sultan Abdul-Hamid II of the Ottoman Empire, ordered a series of massacres that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Armenians. In 1895 alone, it is estimated that between 100K and 300K Armenians were killed ("Social Education", 1991). In addition, Armenian businesses were destroyed and thousands of Armenians were left homeless. The purpose of the massacres was to quell the nationalist sentiment that was spreading throughout Europe. Because Armenians were Christians living among a mostly Muslim populace, the sultan saw the Armenian's growing political influence in the Ottoman Empire as a recipe for autonomy. Armenians felt emboldened since the 1856 Treaty of Paris which gave Britain, France, and Russia the power to intervene in the Ottoman Empire if it's Christian minority populace is attacked. Since the Ottoman Empire's desire was for expansion, the thought of parceling out any portion of it to the Armenians didn't make sense to the sultan, or other leaders of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, these massacres were meant to be a deterrent against any sort of Armenian uprising or fight for independence.

Hamid was removed from Power in 1908, and the Young Turk Movement officially took over the government. The Young Turks mostly wanted democracy, and a modern, European style reform of their empire. Armenians supported the Young Turks, and their promises of equal rights for the minorities of Turkey. Unfortunately, the government proved to be ineffective, and military and Islamic groups staged a coup in 1909, returning the sultan to power. As punishment for their support of the Young Turks, the Adana Massacre was ordered, killing between 15K-30K Armenians ("Social Education", 1991).

In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered WWI. One of its first battles against Russia at Sarikamis, turned into a huge defeat for the Ottoman Empire. The Minister of War blamed the loss on Armenian support for Russian troops. While the claim was unfounded, it appeared plausible to much of

the Turkish population, since it was well known that Armenians living in Russia had for many years tried to improve the conditions of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. As punishment for this perceived treachery, all Armenian males, ages 20 to 45 were sent to the front lines of the war, most of them unarmed to die a brutal death. On April 24th, 1915, 250 Armenian intellectuals are arrested in Constantinople and subsequently murdered. From then on, the goal of the Ottoman Empire and its military was the murder of the Armenian people and the destruction of its culture. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were marched into the desert, with an estimated 75% of them being killed (The Forgotten, 2007). Armenian churches are converted to mosques, all other religious and cultural artifacts destroyed, and women, men, and children were brutally murdered. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey at the time of the genocide, Henry Morgenthau wrote that "When the Turkish authorities gave the order for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular appeal to conceal this fact...I am confident that the whole story of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915" (Armenian National Committee of America, 2008, p.1). In 1918, former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt wrote that the U.S. should go to war with Turkey because the Armenian massacre "was the greatest crime of the war, and failure to act against Turkey is to condone it; because the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of ensuring the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense; and because when we refuse to go to war with Turkey, we show that our announcement that we meant 'to make the world safe for democracy' was insincere claptrap" (Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, 1918). All told, it is estimated that around 1.5 million Armenians, more than half the Armenian population, were murdered by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1921 (The Forgotten, 2007).

As part of its defeat during WWI, the Ottoman Empire was carved up, and Armenia won its independence. Unfortunately, this independence was short lived as the Soviet Union invaded in 1920, and made it a state. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia declared its independence and would soon become, as it is today, a democratic republic (Cohan, 2005, p.333).

Raphael Lemkin would use the case study of the Armenian massacre as his basis for creating the term “genocide”. Following the Jewish Holocaust in 1946, the United Nations passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Since then, many countries in the world have issued official statements recognizing the Armenian genocide. In France and Switzerland, it is illegal to deny that the Armenian Genocide happened, just as it’s also illegal to deny the Holocaust. On the opposite extreme, is Turkey, where under Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, it is illegal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. While some might think this law is a remnant of a bygone era, and that Turkey’s position on the genocide would be more moderate 90 years later, this law was actually enacted in 2005.

Firmly in the ambiguous policy category is the United States. While every U.S. President since Woodrow Wilson, and Teddy Roosevelt have acknowledged on some level, the massacre of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, not one has fought for or helped pass a resolution through Congress that officially recognizes the Armenian genocide. Since 1975, every year on April 24th (the date in 1915 that was the start of the genocide) the sitting president gives a statement acknowledging the genocide. Every President since Reagan, has pledged to support and pass a resolution acknowledging the Armenian genocide, and the former government of Turkey’s culpability in carrying it out, and yet once they are elected their position towards supporting such a resolution changes. Barack Obama is the latest in a long line of Presidents who have pledged to get this passed. We will soon find out whether or not history will repeat itself.

In the face of overwhelming evidence, much of which is housed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, a federally run agency, as well as within the U.S. State Department, it is curious to many that the U.S. would not and continues not to lead the mission to properly recognize the Armenian genocide, nor work to convince Turkey to do the same. It seems that the official U.S. policy has been to find a middle ground on the issue of recognizing the genocide, by issuing statements every year on the anniversary that both recognizes the Armenian genocide, and the former government of Turkey's culpability in carrying it out. This action gives some moral credibility to the U.S. President's role of ensuring a genocide is regarded as such, and shows solidarity to Armenian Americans, while at the same time doesn't go so far as a congressional resolution, which Turkey has long maintained would be a deal breaker for U.S.-Turkey relations.

The U.S. is unwilling to lose its relationship with Turkey, for the sake of more properly recognizing something that happened almost 100 years ago. Incirlik Air Base in Turkey is strategically located for U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well any possible operations against Iran. Turkey uses this as a bargaining chip for continued ambivalence towards the Armenian genocide. In 1989 when the U.S. State Department released eyewitness accounts that supported the notion that thousands of Armenian women and children were butchered by the Ottoman Empire, Turkey put a ban on all U.S. training operations in Turkey, and instituted a blockade of all U.S. Navy ships in Turkish waters (Holthouse, 2008, p.4). When a resolution recognizing the genocide came before congress in September of 2007, Turkey again threatened dire consequences to the relationship of the two countries. It threatened to launch a military campaign into Northern Iraq, to fight Kurdish rebels unless the U.S. reconsidered voting on the resolution. As a result the vote never happened, but the temporary invasion and bombing of Kurdish rebels in Northern Iraq went forward anyway. Perhaps just as important as its bases and location, is the fact that Turkey is a secular Muslim democracy, a friend of Israel and ally in the War on Terror. The U.S. is not very popular in the region, and counts Turkey among its only friends.

Turkey also remains a shining example to rest of the region, and the world, that Muslim countries can be secular, can be stable, and can be democracies.

However, since the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Muslim extremists in Turkey have grown in size and power, and are now testing the stability and secularism of Turkey's democracy. If the U.S. were to officially recognize Turkey's actions against the Armenians during WWI, something which is incredibly sensitive and unpopular to most Turks, it could be the straw that breaks the current governments back. In the eyes of the U.S., this is not an option.

As is with any country trade and financial ties are very important. According to the U.S. Embassy website, the U.S. and Turkey built and currently maintain the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, that pumps over 1 million barrels of oil per day. Since the U.S. is highly dependent on foreign oil, the development of this pipeline will prove very important for the U.S. The U.S. State Department and Turkish Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade, have recently implemented the "Year of America" campaign, which seeks to increase trade between Turkey and 6 U.S. states. Total trade between Turkey and the United States in 2005 was \$9.5 billion (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2006).

For many in the U.S. State Department, and indeed the U.S. Congress, this continued strategy of limited recognition of the Armenian genocide, without going so far as to damage our relationship with Turkey is America's way to have its cake and eat it too. But this policy fair and more importantly, is it truly effective at recognizing the suffering of the Armenian people, and condemning the actions of an unrepentant government? What is the message this middle-ground policy message sends to Turkey, and what are the consequences for genocide prevention in the rest of the world?

There is a compelling case that can be made for maintaining the current U.S. policy. Foreign policy is often a balancing act, and sometimes you have to give each country a little something to maintain an overall peace and stability. One of the most disastrous things that could happen would be for Turkey's government to fall into the hands of Muslim extremists, and become a theocracy similar to

Iran. Recent elections in Turkey have shown an increase in anti-U.S., anti-western, candidates and public sentiment. Meetings between the Presidents of Turkey and Iran have taken place recently, fueling speculation that the two countries are looking to build a strategic partnership. If an hard-line, Muslim extremist government were to come into power in Turkey, not only would it be devastating to U.S. trade, military operations, and the War on Terror, but almost certainly not improve relations between Turkey and a Christian country such as Armenia. If getting Turkey's current government to acknowledge the Armenian genocide has proven very difficult, getting a government that is even more extreme and hostile towards other religions to acknowledge it, would likely prove impossible. So who benefits from this scenario? Definitely not the United States, Armenia, or Armenian Americans. And since Turkey's Muslim population is mostly Sunni, a degradation of relations with Turkey could adversely affect our shaky alliances with other Sunni Muslim majority countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. If Turkey's democracy were to crumble, hopes for stable, secular, democratic governments in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, would likely crumble with it. Israel would also likely lose its only Muslim ally in the region, an ally that could more effectively be used to mediate for better relations between Israel and its neighbors.

While it's likely the U.S. could survive losing \$9.5 billion in yearly trade with Turkey if relations were to go sour, in this worldwide economic downturn, any major trade embargo could prove harmful to both countries. Also, it's not in the interest of many U.S. Politicians, and those in academia to lose the funding and lobbying efforts of the Turkish government. The government of Turkey has very successfully convinced some of the most powerful politicians in the U.S. Congress that the case of the Armenian Genocide is not as clear cut as they may have once thought. Many of these politicians such as former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, and Congressman Bob Livingston, once supported formal congressional recognition of the Armenian genocide, but through funding, and propaganda written by U.S. university professors at the behest of the Turkish government, they now believe such action is

unnecessary, counterproductive, and indeed, unfair. Gephardt and Livingston currently work as lobbyists for the Turkish government and continue to convince other members of congress, either through funding or through talking points from the Turkish government, that recognition of the Armenian genocide is wrong (Holthouse, 2008, p.5). Many of the United States' top Universities have Turkish Studies departments, funded by the government of Turkey, that give their version of the events that transpired during WWI. This muddying of the facts, and the argument for recognizing the Armenian genocide in both congress, and on college campuses, makes it increasingly difficult for any U.S. President to sell a clear moral case for recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Through yearly Presidential statements on April 24th, Turkey is made aware of America's overall position on the Armenian genocide, without risking the loss of our relationship them, or risking the use of the president's political capital on such a volatile issue.

At Glendale Presbyterian Church on November 22, 2008, I spoke with a 22 year old Armenian male named Mapre Khachian. When asked about whether he believes the U.S. will recognize the genocide or not, he said "the U.S. will not recognize it because we have too much invested in our relationship with Turkey." When I asked him of what he thought Turkey should do to make amends for this tragedy, he told me that his Christian faith calls him to forgive, and suggests that Armenians need to try and forgive and move on, with or without an apology or recognition by Turkey. He also feels that forcing Turkey to recognize the genocide at this point is almost futile, and understands why the people of Turkey don't support it. After all, the people alive today in Turkey, and indeed the government that runs Turkey today, weren't the ones that carried out the genocide. Those people are long since dead, and feels that humiliating the Turks does no one any real good. The best thing Armenians can do is to forgive and move on. While Mapre was in the minority of the Armenians I spoke to, he said the reason for this is the generational divide within the Armenian community. Older Armenians are much more militant in their belief that Turkey needs to be punished in some sort of way for what they've done and

that sacred lands currently in Turkey should be returned to Armenia, whereas younger Armenians support some sort of recognition, but their life's happiness doesn't rely upon that ever happening.

On the other hand, the current U.S. policy towards the Armenian genocide doesn't appear to be healing the wounds of the Armenians, nor advancing the cause of genocide awareness in Turkey, or genocide prevention in the rest of the world. This middle-ground approach, which when it was conceived, probably appeared to be a good way to please everyone. In reality, it hasn't really helped anyone. Armenian American's still feel that the memories of their loved ones are being short-changed in the name of appeasing a un-deserving, conditional ally, while at the same time Turkey makes threats towards the United States at any attempt to acknowledge the genocide, and has only gotten more militant in its denial of it. America's moral credibility to condemn and call out other nations on their human rights abuses, is diminished by its continued failure to properly recognize the Armenian genocide, and that in turn increases the likelihood of future genocides.

Part of the grieving process requires recognition of what has happened before one can move on. With Turkey firmly denying any wrong doing on its part, and spending a lot of money to re-write history, and with the United States visibly afraid to challenge Turkey on this issue, Armenians, and particularly Armenian Americans feel compelled to continue fighting for recognition. America's reluctance to do the right thing regardless of the consequences has forced many Armenian Americans to re-evaluate how they view the U.S. Karapet Demirjyan, a 66 year old Armenian man who came to the U.S. 18 years ago from Jordan, once saw the U.S. as a moral compass for the world. Now, has had that view tempered by the reality of politics. When I asked him whether he thought the U.S. would finally recognize the Armenian genocide, he took a deep breath and said "Turkey has very good diplomats, a powerful media, money from oil, and U.S. air bases. Turkey is America's closest Muslim ally, and that's very important for the U.S. Meanwhile, Armenia is a very small country with no real strategic interests for the United States. I understand why the U.S. hasn't recognized the genocide, but I think it is bad for the U.S. and

the world that they haven't." Karapet went on to tell me of what his grandparents and parents went through during the Armenian genocide. "My grandfather, Armanak Demirjyan was one of the ones taken to the desert to be killed. He survived only because the bodies of those that were lined up and shot fell on him, and shielded him from the bullets. My mom's brother was one year old as the genocide was being carried out. His parents had to hide in the attic of a house, similar to Ann Frank, and not make any sound for fear of Turkish soldiers hearing them. It was common for babies to be suffocated to death in the effort for them to not cry and thus be a death sentence for everyone in hiding. This was the fate of my uncle." Karapet was quick to point out that many Turkish neighbors assisted the Armenians in hiding with food, and protection. He says many Turks helped Armenians during the war, and that he would love to see the day that Armenians and Turks could once again be friends. Failure to recognize the genocide, the first step in moving beyond the genocide, is what stands in the way of that reconciliation.

Turkey, unfortunately, has shown no signs of softening on the recognition issue. As mentioned earlier, only 3 years ago, Turkey passed a law making it illegal to give credence or support to the Armenian Genocide. Obviously, our past and current policy towards Turkey is not moving them in the right direction on this issue. To make matters even worse, Turkey acts and the U.S. responds in a way that makes it appear that Turkey holds all the cards in the two country's relationship. The fact that every time the U.S. Congress even discusses putting a resolution on the genocide up for a vote, Turkey issues a threat to the United States, should show they are a conditional ally. The fact that often times, even though the resolution is pulled, they carry out the threatened action shows they can hardly be trusted. It also gives the appearance that the U.S. is weak and will cave on any issue of moral importance if its interests are at stake. The U.S. cannot operate this way. Its words are meaningless unless its actions are consistent, and its actions are meaningless if it allows one country to get away with genocide, while telling others not to. America should remember that it's not the only one that benefits from its relationship with Turkey. If Turkey were to truly end relations with the United States over formal

recognition of the genocide, it would most certainly be worse for Turkey than for the U.S. While the U.S. could likely withstand the loss of trade with Turkey without major economic collapse, the same might not be true for Turkey. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, in 2006 the U.S. was Turkey's second largest trading partner (the EU is first largest), and as such, an embargo of Turkish goods would be devastating to the Turkish economy (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2006, p.1). On the flip side, the U.S. could make the case to Turkey that if it were to finally acknowledge the Armenian genocide, it would not only likely open trade to businesses in the U.S. who have long boycotted Turkey over this issue, but it would also make them eligible for European Union membership, a move long sought by the Turkish government, and one that would surely benefit them economically. The European Union is Turkey's number one trading partner, and the removal of tariffs, and freer flow of goods would dramatically increase that trade.

Simply letting Turkey get away with whatever it wants to do, and whatever it refuses to acknowledge, is not the best way to encourage positive change within the government of Turkey. If there are no consequences for bad behavior, where is the incentive for good? By allowing Turkey to continue to deny the Armenian genocide, they not only send a dangerous message of denial to the rest of the world, but allow the government of Turkey to continue giving a skewed version of history to the Turkish people. Currently, the majority of the Turkish people have the same view as the Turkish government on the Armenian genocide, because that has been what schools and universities have been ordered to teach by the government. As long as this is the case, this horrific genocide will continue to not be viewed as such in Turkey. By the U.S. being a close ally of Turkey, it sends a message to the rest of the world that it's acceptable to commit a genocide, and never acknowledge it. America's moral credibility has been badly damaged by this inconsistent message. America needs to remember that Turkey does not hold all the cards in their relationship, and needs to start treating Turkey accordingly, and in a way consistent with America's morals, and values.

The bottom line is, the current policy has not worked, and has not been fair to those that lost their lives in the genocide, family members alive today, and even the people of Turkey who continue to live in denial or ignorance of the facts. I spoke with a 15 year old Armenian teenager named Taron Ayrapetyan. Taron attends a private, Armenian high school and is fluent in English and Armenian. At 15, Taron was more familiar with the circumstances, and horror stories of the Armenian genocide, than probably most Armenian adults. He was very politically engaged, and involved in the issue, and feels that certain religious lands should be returned to Armenia, but recognizes that will likely never happen. In graphic detail, he told me that in May, 1915, Armenian intellectual Krikor Zohrab was murdered. Being an intellectual, soldiers thought it would be interesting to bash his head open so they could see how big his brain was. Just as graphic, he told of his school teacher, and how emotional she would get in telling him of stories such as Turkish soldiers cutting off the body parts of loved ones and then sending them to family members so that the family could know how much their loved one suffered. At 15, this ought-to-be hopeful young man, is already resigned to fact no U.S. President will change its policy towards the genocide because it's not in U.S.'s interest. It's simply unacceptable to me, that the best the United States can do is a policy that leaves 15 year olds with a cynical view of America, and a desire to continue a fight that's been going on for far too long. The question is, how does the U.S. change the current policy towards formal recognition, and yet still work with Turkey so as not to lose them as a strategic partner, while also hopefully changing their stance towards recognition of the genocide?

As stated before, Turkey has issued threats every time a bill recognizing the Armenian Genocide comes before Congress for a vote. The actions they threaten if the bill passes, have almost always been carried out anyway, even though Congress has never passed a bill on this topic. A loyal ally is not one that behaves this way, and its time U.S. officials start calling them out on this behavior. While the U.S. has an obligation to be consistent with its partners, its partners should be expected to be consistent as well. Rather than threaten, the U.S. should discuss with Turkey the benefits of a closer alliance that

could be obtained in the U.S., Europe, and other western countries, through the mutual recognition of crimes committed by its former government. The wording of any resolutions discussed between the U.S. and Turkey must be careful as to not blame the Turkish people, or even necessarily the current Turkish government. Keeping in mind what Mapre Khachian said to me, the people alive today in Turkey, and indeed the government that runs Turkey today, weren't the ones that carried out the genocide. Those people are long since dead, and humiliating the Turks does no one any real good. Therefore recognition must not be about blame, but simply recognition.

This is also an opportunity for President-Elect, Barack Obama to use his enormous popularity in the world to start getting other nations to live up to their potential. If Obama is fairly popular among the Turkish population, it will be easier for him and the Turkish government to start the process towards recognition. It will be a process too, not simply getting a resolution passed through congress. Pushing Turkey too hard, too fast risks strengthening Turkey's new found alliance with Iran. Moving too slow could allow the opportunity that exists today between a popular, new President of the United States with new ideas, to slip away. Direct talks between the U.S. President and the President of Turkey should begin immediately. At those talks, the U.S. President will lay out the plan I will discuss shortly. The U.S. President will allow 3 years for the objectives of the plan to be carried out. This time frame should allow adequate time to implement the plan and for it to improve the dialogue and atmosphere in Turkey so that at that three year point, both Turkey and the United States can formally recognize the Armenian genocide. The formal recognition will not take place until the benchmarks I lay out are met, or mostly met, after this 3 year time frame. The U.S. would work with Turkey on this, and keep them abreast of each development in the recognition process. The goal is to prevent upheaval within the Turkish government and/or the people of Turkey. That would be a scenario that is bad for both the U.S. and the current government of Turkey. This time frame would also give an adequate amount of time for the U.S. President to accomplish the goal of recognition, while still completing it within his presidential term.

The specifics of policy towards bringing about recognition of the genocide would not only focus on formal recognition by both the U.S. and Turkey, but should also focus on improving cultural, economic, and political relations between the two countries, as well as Armenia. As was conveyed to me over and over by Armenians have spoken to, they have a long history of being connected to their neighbors and also for all those I spoke to, they long for this wound to finally be healed and those relationships to flourish once again. They readily acknowledge that many Turks helped Armenians survive the genocide, in spite of the threat to their own lives for helping the enemy. Armenian culture, traditions, and religion are intertwined in the history and culture of Turkey. It would only make sense that as part of the recognition and reconciliation process there be an effort facilitated by the United States, focused on an intense campaign of cultural exchange and understanding between the two countries. Embassies in each other's country should be actively engaged in this process, and television commercials, magazine articles, and newspapers should include stories of each countries contributions to their culture and life. Intermingled in these stories, would be stories of the Armenian genocide. In Armenia, these stories would include Turks who helped Armenians survive and escape the genocide. In Turkey, the stories would be focused on the Armenians who fought for the Ottoman empire, only to face discrimination or death at the hands of the specific government officials. These commercials and articles should make clear that it's an indictment of the government at the time, not of today, and should also mention at the end of it the new beginning that is taking place between the two countries, and include stories of hope and working together between the two cultures.

An additional carrot given to Turkey to encourage their acknowledgement of the genocide, would be the use of U.S. clout to secure Turkey's EU membership. While some, would argue that EU membership means less to Turkey than it once did given the recent economic troubles of the West, I would argue that the current economic troubles are a short term discouragement, and that the prestige and image that comes with being an EU nation, will always outweigh most any other issue for Turkey.

Turkey already knows that the EU would require them to recognize the Armenian Genocide before allowing them to be part of the EU, but there has never been a guarantee that even if they did recognize the genocide, that they would be guaranteed EU membership. I propose that the U.S. work with the European Union to work out any other kinks that might exist in allowing Turkey to be part of the EU. Once those kinks are worked out, the U.S. and EU can give an assurance to Turkey that they will be part of the EU, provided they first recognize, in a comprehensive way, the Armenian Genocide. By comprehensive, they must admit to the best known information about the number of Armenians killed, and they must refer to the event as a “genocide”. Also, there needs to be a site of remembrance created in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, within 5 years, and recognition and education of the genocide taught in Turkey’s schools and universities. If this is the only hurdle the Turks will have to deal with to become an EU nation, I believe they are likely to do it.

To sweeten the deal, the U.S. could rally other western countries to create a more open freer trade pact with Turkey, in exchange for the above mentioned changes to their policy. If Turkey follows through on its obligation, I believe it would be appropriate to finally boost Turkey’s prominence within the U.N. and international community to help negotiate, and mediate on matters relative to the Middle-East, or Muslim dominated countries. A specific issue that Turkey could prove exceedingly helpful with is the peace process between Israel, The Palestinian Authority, and even Syria, and Lebanon. Turkey has long been concerned with its image, and that’s one reason why it’s been so reluctant to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. However, the prestige of being a power-player on the world stage would greatly overshadow the acknowledgment of crimes committed by a former government 90 years ago. Turkey can finally be a success story to the world, a moderate, Muslim democracy, with a thriving economy, good relations with its neighbors, and a solid human-rights record. There is of course a question of how genuine the recognition or any sort of an apology is if the country involved coerced into doing so in order to get something beneficial to them. Still, I contend the psychological impact of

admitting to these crimes would represent a huge step in the right direction, and one that Karapet Demirjyan, Taron Ayrapetyan, and Mapre Khachian all tell me would finally give them and millions of Armenians the ability to move on. This indeed would be a huge step in the right direction for them, for America, for Turkey, and for the world.

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