



Attention:
Foreign Affairs
Legislative Aide

Armenian National Committee of America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide
From: Aram Hamparian, Executive Director
Date: February 28, 2007

Re: **Expanding dialogue with Nagorno Karabagh**

I wanted to share with you some thoughts about the benefits of encouraging a more open dialogue between U.S. officials and the democratically elected government of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

Unfortunately - due to outdated rules - this dialogue has been severely limited, hindering our ability to understand the region, gather accurate information, promote democracy, support the peace process, prevent public health crises, and cooperate on a broad range of our priorities in the region.

We look to the Congress to study this matter and to encourage the Administration to carefully consider the many practical benefits of opening up direct lines of communication with the people and government of Nagorno Karabagh.

Attached find a one-pager on this subject. If you have any questions, please call us at (202) 775-1918 or write to anca@anca.org.

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Expanding Dialogue with Nagorno Karabagh

Communication and cooperation: The keys to lasting peace

The U.S. should lift its self-imposed restrictions on the free exchange of ideas between U.S. officials and the democratically elected leadership of Nagorno Karabagh.

Today, an array of arcane restrictions - first put in place by the State Department more than a decade ago - stands in the way of this badly needed dialogue.

These unfair and outdated restrictions prevent bilateral meetings, prohibit educational and cultural exchange programs, and bar cooperation on counter-proliferation, anti-narcotics, public health, democracy development, market reforms, and other regional issues. They even place obstacles before U.S. officials who need to travel to Nagorno Karabagh to directly monitor U.S. aid programs. The only narrow channel of communication left open is through the U.S. Special Negotiator, who, as part of the OSCE Minsk Group, deals only with the ongoing peace process.

These restrictions place artificial limits on our understanding of the region, prevent the Administration from providing full and accurate reports to Congress, hold back our diplomatic efforts to reach a durable peace, and hinder our support for the growth of democracy and free markets in this strategically important area of the world.

Opening up direct lines of communication with Nagorno Karabagh will:

- 1) Foster a direct dialogue toward peace**
- 2) Promote the growth of democracy and facilitate market reforms**
- 3) Ensure hands-on, unrestricted monitoring of U.S. aid programs**
- 4) Enable cooperation on U.S. regional priorities**