



Attention:
Foreign Affairs
Legislative Aide

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide
From: Aram Hamparian, Executive Director
Date: March 7, 2007

Re: **Turkey blocks YouTube**

I wanted to share with you news (below) about the Turkish government blocking **YouTube** over opinions expressed in videos about the Republic's founder, Kemal Ataturk. Under Article 301 and other provisions of Turkish law, it is a criminal offense to insult Ataturk or "Turkishness" in any way.

Also, attached please find a point-by-point response to a recent **Wall Street Journal** Op/Ed against the Armenian Genocide Resolution. The arguments outlined in this opinion piece, written by former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Mark Parris, fall apart under even the most basic scrutiny.

AP Associated Press

Turkish court orders YouTube blocked

Posted videos allegedly insulted country's founder Ataturk
March 7, 2007

ISTANBUL, Turkey - A Turkish court ordered access to YouTube's Web site blocked on Wednesday, after a prosecutor recommended the ban because of videos allegedly insulting the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

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Setting the Record Straight

In a March 3rd Wall Street Journal Op/Ed, former Ambassador to Turkey Mark Parris, outlined seven reasons he opposes Congressional passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution. His arguments don't stand up to even the most basic scrutiny:

- 1) **“The result will be a train wreck with an important, long standing American ally: Turkey.”**

Opponents of the Armenian Genocide Resolution are crying wolf again.

“Train wrecks” were loudly but falsely predicted before President Reagan’s 1981 public affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, the 1984 designation by the U.S. House of April 24th as a day for its remembrance, as well as before the amendments passed by the House in 1996 and 2004 restricting U.S. aid to Turkey based on its denial of this crime against humanity.

Despite threats of retribution, Turkey has taken only token steps against the European Parliament, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Argentina, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, and other states and international bodies that have recognized the Armenian Genocide. In fact, despite all its threats in 2001 against France’s recognition of the Armenian Genocide, trade between France and Turkey grew 22% the following year, and has grown by 131% over the past five years.

- 2) **“It may never be the right time for one nation to pass legislation on another’s history or morality, but there could be no worse time than now.”**

Today is exactly the right time.

The recent brutal assassination in Istanbul of noted journalist Hrant Dink, who was killed for simply speaking about the Armenian Genocide, underscores the urgent need for the U.S. to take a principled stand against the escalation of Turkey’s campaign of official denial and intolerance.

- 3) **“As we struggle to find our footing in Iraq, for example, Turkey can either help or make our task much harder.”**

A veiled but dangerous threat.

In delivering this diplomatically worded warning, Ambassador Parris is passing along a chilling threat by the Turkish government to interfere in U.S. operations in Iraq should the Congress recognize the Armenian Genocide.

4) **“This year will highlight the country’s pivotal geography and relevance to U.S. strategic goals.”**

Ambassador Parris is contradicting himself. In remarks before Congress in October of 2003, he argued that Turkey’s value is overstated:

— “Containment of the Soviet Union, of course, was the core of U.S. foreign policy for 4 decades. Containment of Saddam Hussein was a top priority for U.S. foreign policy for a decade more. Turkey was essential to both objectives. And that enabled Turkey from 1949 really until this spring consistently to box above its weight here in Washington in terms of the quality and level of the official attention it commanded.”

— “It is difficult to envision circumstances today in which Turkey’s contribution will be ‘essential’ in the same sense that it was in containing the U.S.S.R. and Saddam. That cannot help, in my view, but make a difference in the way that Washington looks at Turkey in the future.”

5) **“Our forces in Iraq rely heavily on Turkey’s Incirlik air base for resupply.”**

General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, stated on February 21, 2007, said: “I wouldn’t say that we have to [use] Incirlik to conduct operations in Iraq.”

6) **“In the past, U.S. congressional leaders have repeatedly bowed to the findings of administrations of both parties that a genocide resolution would adversely affect vital American security interests.”**

As we saw in Rwanda and are witnessing today in Darfur, preventing genocide represents a core American value and a vital U.S. security interest.

Morally: Clearly condemning every instance of genocide reinforces America’s moral leadership and international standing in opposing all genocides.

Strategically: Recognizing the Armenian Genocide will help Turkey to come to terms with its past, promote democratization, move closer to Europe, lower regional tensions, and open the door to improved relations with Armenia - all U.S. foreign policy priorities.

7) **“The U.S. has a lot of hard work to do in Turkey’s neighborhood. In some cases, American lives will literally be at stake.”**

It has been Turkey that is costing the lives of U.S. servicemen.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld attributed the scope of the current insurgency and ongoing violence in Iraq directly to Turkey’s decision in 2003 to block Coalition forces from opening a northern front.