



Please deliver
to: Foreign
Affairs LA

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs LA
From: Aram Hamparian, Executive Director
Date: September 7, 2005

Re: U.S.-Turkey Relations reach “Tipping Point”

Attached please find a *Wall Street Journal* policy editorial sharply criticizing the Turkish government for prosecuting a noted writer for the “crime” of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

As you may know, the *Journal* has traditionally been a staunch supporter of successive Turkish governments, often serving as the leading U.S. apologist for Ankara’s violations of human rights at home and aggression abroad.

This WSJ editorial represents the latest evidence that we have reached a “tipping point” in U.S.-Turkish relations: marking the end of an era in which Ankara held the balance of power in dictating the terms of our bilateral relationship.

Please keep this article in mind during the consideration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution. Feel free to contact the ANCA for more information on this legislation at (202) 775-1918 or anca@anca.org.

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REVIEW & OUTLOOK - September 2, 2005

My Name Is Orhan

Supporters of **Turkey's** efforts to get closer to Europe - count us among them - cringed at the news that the country's **best-known novelist faces prison time for speaking his mind.**

By now, most Turks are familiar with Orhan Pamuk's February interview with the Swiss daily, Tages-Anzeiger. "Thirty thousand Kurds and one million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it," said the 53-year-old author of "My Name Is Red," which made his name abroad. He was referring to the two-decade struggle against Kurdish separatism and, more controversially, the 1915 slaughter of Armenians at Ottoman hands.

Mr. Pamuk's fiction touches on sensitive issues; his most recent novel, "Snow," explores the clash between radical Islam and secularism. But his controversial foray into nonfiction suggests that the other tension in Turkish life today is between conservative nationalism and Western-style democratization. **The massacre of Armenians is a major flashpoint. That history isn't openly discussed in Turkey which, perhaps not coincidentally, maintains that genocide didn't take place.**

Turgay Evsen, a prosecutor, on Wednesday charged that the novelist broke a law against "public denigrating of Turkish identity." Mr. Pamuk faces three years in prison, if convicted.

Privately, diplomats point out that the indictment was a politically motivated attempt to hurt Turkey's chances at the EU. While most Turks back the reforms required by the EU, a powerful minority — from within the traditionalist military to the extremist Islamists — would love to torpedo their country's progress toward the Western world. The government was furious at the timing of the indictment, which came a day before EU foreign ministers met to discuss whether accession talks can begin, as planned, October 3.

It would be bitterly ironic if the Pamuk case turned the EU more off Turkey. The author has repeatedly argued that continued European engagement is the best guarantor of Turkish democracy. "Just the belief of membership has changed many things," Mr. Pamuk said in July. Of course, his current predicament also serves to remind that Turkey has a way to go, which is no surprise.

Turkish officials are on shaky ground in defending section 301/1 of the penal code — adopted in June at EU urging - that ensnared Mr. Pamuk. The European Commission yesterday expressed "serious concerns" that the law doesn't sufficiently protect freedom of expression. Well, as long as zealous prosecutors can use the laws to infringe basic freedoms, Turkey can't really call itself a proper democracy.