



Attention:
Foreign Affairs
Legislative Aide

Armenian National Committee of America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide
From: Aram Hamparian, Executive Director
Date: September 12, 2006

Re: **Sen. Menendez places hold on Hoagland nomination**

Attached please find a statement by Senator Robert Menendez regarding the hold he placed today on the confirmation of Richard Hoagland as the next U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. He stresses, in his remarks, that:

“ . . . the United States, Armenia, and all who are committed to human rights should support an Ambassador to Armenia who recognizes the genocide that took place there more than 90 years ago.”

Over the course of the past eight months, more than half of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and over 60 U.S. Representatives have raised serious reservations regarding the Hoagland nomination, the unexplained firing of the past Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, and the role that the Turkish government has played in this controversy.

Armenian Americans welcome Senator Menendez's principled stand against the Administration's complicity in Turkey's shameful campaign of genocide denial.

If you have any questions, please contact the ANCA at (202) 775-1918 or anca@anca.org.

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MENENDEZ BLOCKS BUSH NOMINEE
FOR AMBASSADOR TO ARMENIA

Tuesday, September 12, 2006

It is well known that more than 90 years ago, the Ottoman Empire brutally tortured and killed 1.5 million Armenians. Between 1915 and 1923, innocent men, women, and children were murdered or forced to flee their country and live in exile. Though the horrors suffered by the Armenian people have haunted them for the past century, many — including our very own President — have refused to label the atrocities for what they are: genocide.

In my view, all Americans must recognize that the atrocities committed from 1915 to 1923 constitute genocide. We do not use that word lightly. But the word itself makes a powerful statement about the horrors suffered by the Armenian people. As Samantha Power, the leading expert on Genocide said in a letter to the editor of the New York Times, “The extermination of Armenians is recognized as genocide by the consensus of scholars of genocide and Holocaust worldwide. The failure to acknowledge this trivializes a human rights crime of enormous magnitude.”

Recent developments have caused many to wonder about the administration’s actions regarding the Armenian genocide. Over the past few months, there has been great controversy surrounding the departure of John M. Evans, the Ambassador to Armenia. Ambassador Evans, a highly respected diplomat with a record of service, is leaving his three year assignment one year early. Under normal circumstances, this would not be cause for great alarm. However, we know that the Ambassador’s departure comes after he went against the Bush Administration’s stance and acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. The fact that he is being replaced after vocalizing that “the Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the twentieth century,” is cause for great concern among all who advocate for human rights.

The Senate is planning to vote on the nomination of the next U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, Richard E. Hoagland. Unlike his predecessor, Mr. Hoagland has declined to acknowledge the mass killings of the Armenians as genocide, and has said that if confirmed, he would work to represent the President’s policy. I have great concerns that Mr. Hoagland’s confirmation would be a step backward. Considering Mr. Hoagland’s refusal to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide as anything more than horrifying events, I do not feel that his nomination is in the best interest of Armenia and her Diaspora.

I simply cannot support the confirmation of a new Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia until all of questions over Ambassador Evans’ replacement have been answered. I believe that the United States, Armenia, and all who are committed to human rights should support an Ambassador to Armenia who recognizes the genocide that took place there more than 90 years ago.