

Myth #1: The Armenian Genocide is a subject of historical debate.

Fact: The Armenian Genocide is a fact, settled history thoroughly documented in multiple national archives and comprehensively researched by leading genocide scholars.

The Turkish government seeks to create artificial controversy and confusion regarding this established WWI-era historical event, in very much the same way that Holocaust deniers attempt to create doubts about the genocide the Nazi committed against Jews and others during World War II.

The facts are clear:

-- The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), the leading group of experts on the Holocaust and genocide studies, unanimously adopted a resolution during their 1997 conference in Montreal, Canada affirming that:

-- “[T]he mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 is a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.”

-- The IAGS “condemns the denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish government and its official and unofficial agents and supporters.”

-- In a March 7, 2007 letter urging Members of the House and Senate to support the adoption of the Armenian Genocide Resolution, the IAGS asserted that: “The historical record on the Armenian Genocide is unambiguous and documented by overwhelming evidence.”

Myth #2: The Armenian massacres don't meet the international legal definition of genocide.

Fact: The Armenian Genocide clearly meets the definition set by the U.N. Genocide Convention.

The evidence is overwhelming:

-- Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin, father of the Genocide Convention, when he coined the term genocide in 1944, cited the Turkish extermination of the Armenians and the Nazi extermination of the Jews as defining examples of what he meant by genocide.

-- In 1997 the International Association of Genocide Scholars, an organization of the world's top genocide experts, unanimously passed its first resolution affirming the Armenian Genocide.

-- 126 leading scholars of the Holocaust including Elie Wiesel and Yehuda Bauer placed a statement in the New York Times in June 2000 declaring the "incontestable fact of the Armenian Genocide."

-- The Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Institute for the Study of Genocide, and Encyclopedia of Genocide (edited by Israel Charny) affirm the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide.

-- Leading texts on international genocide law, such as William Schabas's Genocide in International Law (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000) cite the Armenian Genocide as a precursor to the Holocaust and as a precedent for the law on crimes against humanity.

-- A study by the International Center for Transitional Justice in 2003 concluded that the Armenian Genocide clearly meets the definition of genocide established by the United Nations.

Myth #3: Congress doesn't debate historical issues.

Fact: The U.S. Congress has a long and proud tradition of reaffirming America's moral stand against genocides and other mass atrocities, past and present, often over the objections of foreign governments.

Here are relevant legislative examples:

- The U.S. House has adopted a number of resolutions on the Holocaust. Among these was H.Res.30, adopted on January 25, 2005, which urged educators to teach the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future genocides.
- On November 19, 2003, the House passed H.Con.Res.83 commemorating the Cambodian Genocide.
- Among many pieces of legislation passed regarding the Darfur Genocide was H.Res.333, adopted on July 11, 2005, condemning the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.
- On November 16, 2005, over the objection of Russia, the House adopted H.R.562, on the Ukrainian Famine Genocide.
- On June 27, 2005, the House adopted H.Res.199, recognizing the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- On July 30, 2007, over the objections of Japan, the House passed H.Res.121, condemning the widespread practice by the Japanese military during World War II of forcing women into sexual slavery.
- In 2016, the House and Senate adopted resolutions designating ISIS atrocities against religious minorities as genocide.

Myth #4: Passing the Armenian Genocide Resolution will damage U.S. interests.

Fact: The U.S. national interest – as defined by the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (Public Law 115-441)– requires a strong, principled, and sustained stand against genocide, atrocities, and crimes against humanity.

U.S. interests and American values are advanced by rejecting foreign gag-rules and speaking honestly about atrocities.

Preventing genocide represents a core moral value of the American people. Condemning all instances of genocide reinforces America’s moral leadership and strengthens our standing as the international leader in protecting human rights.

Leading by example, passage of this resolution would encourage Turkey to abandon its denials, a constructive move that would advance a number of U.S. interests in this part of the world – including the reduction of regional tensions and promotion of economic integration.

The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act sets atrocities prevention as a U.S. national interest, affirming that we will pursue a Government-wide strategy to identify, prevent, and respond to the risk of atrocities by “strengthening diplomatic response and the effective use of foreign assistance to support appropriate transitional justice measures, including criminal accountability, for past atrocities.”

The real threat to U.S. interests on this score is from Turkey. Every day we enforce Ankara’s foreign gag-rule, we lose hard-earned international respect and standing as the world’s beacon of peace and freedom.

Myth #5: We shouldn't upset a reliable ally.

Fact: Turkey is neither reliable nor an ally.

Turkey is steadily distancing itself from its Cold War-era role as reliable regional partner and actively undermining U.S. interests and allies – including Israel, Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia.

No nation – particularly one as hostile as Turkey – deserves a veto over America's principled opposition to all instances of genocide.

Examples of Turkey's anti-American actions include the following:

- In May of 2017, Turkish President Erdogan's bodyguards brutally attacked peaceful U.S. protesters outside the Sheridan Circle residence of Turkey's ambassador.
- In 2019, Turkey completed a multi-billion dollar purchase of Russian anti-aircraft missiles – against NATO's objections.
- Turkey blockades Armenia, occupies Cyprus, and regularly invades Greek airspace (NATO ally).
- The Turkish government continues to escalate its hateful rhetoric and harmful actions against Israel. One of the best-selling books in Turkey is Hitler's hateful "Mein Kampf."
- As far back as 2003, Turkey blocked a northern Coalition front against Iraq. As recently as this year, Turkey has acted against U.S. interests and allies in Syria.
- Turkish President Erdogan has publicly voiced his aspirations to develop an arsenal of nuclear weapons.

Myth #6: This resolution will lead to a Turkish backlash.

Fact: Turkey talks big, but backs down.

For more than 40 years, Turkey has been crying wolf - making loud but ultimately hollow threats to disrupt bilateral economic, military, and political ties with countries that recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Despite high-profile threats of harsh retribution, Turkey took only token steps against the many countries that have already recognized the Armenian Genocide – among them Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Argentina, Russia, and other states that have recognized the Genocide. At worst, Ankara has temporarily withdrawn its ambassador.

The facts are clear:

-- Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation statistics show that Turkey's bilateral trade increased significantly with each and every country following their respective recognitions of the Armenian Genocide.

-- In the quarter century following President Reagan's 1981 proclamation recognizing the Armenian Genocide, U.S.- Turkey trade grew by 957%.

-- Even as Turkey threatens to stop buying U.S. weapons if Washington properly commemorates the Armenian Genocide, Ankara concluded a multi-billion dollar arms sale from Russia – which recognizes the Armenian Genocide.

Myth #7: It's "not the right time" to pass this resolution.

Fact: It's always the right time to stand against genocide.

More than a century after the Armenian Genocide – amid renewed Turkish aggression across the region- there are still those who say its “not the right time” to speak honestly about this crime against humanity.

This flawed argument has been used for far too long to block a broad, bipartisan Congressional majority from voting on this long-overdue human rights measure.

When opponents of this resolution, citing any of a variety of recent developments, argue: “Now is not the right time,” what they are really saying is: “It’s never the right time to recognize the Armenian Genocide.”

Year after year, in session after session of Congress, appeals for delays in the consideration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution have resulted in countless defeats of this human rights legislation.

With the tragic loss of the last of the Armenian Genocide survivors, now is the time to pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

-- It's always the right time for America to take a principled stand against genocide.

-- It's never the right time to compromise our nation's morality by outsourcing our policy on genocide.

-- The time has come to end Turkey's gag-order and for America's leaders to speak freely about this Genocide.

Myth #8: Turkey is showing new flexibility on Armenian issues.

Fact: Turkey is becoming less flexible, doubling down on denial, persecuting citizens who recognize the Armenian Genocide, and pressuring other nations to remain silent.

Among the most troubling examples are the following:

- Erdogan: Turkey's President stated in October of 2019 that Turkey has never carried out any civilian massacres.
- Article 301: The Turkish criminal code establishes serious prison terms for mentioning the Armenian Genocide.
- Hrant Dink: The prosecution, intimidation, and murder of journalist Hrant Dink, in 2007, for seeking an honest Turkish reckoning with the Armenian Genocide.
- Orhan Pamuk: The prosecution of Orhan Pamuk, a Nobel Prize-winner, shows Turkey is willing to silence even prominent figures who mention the Armenian Genocide.
- Education Ministry: Turkey's Ministry of Education, as a formal state policy, requires that Turkey's schoolchildren are taught to deny the Armenian Genocide.
- Armenian Community: The surviving Armenians in Turkey are intimidated to remain silent on the Armenian Genocide – constantly facing violent threats and harsh restrictions.

U.S. recognition can help reverse this trend, by supporting the growing number of Turkish scholars and civil society leaders who are calling on Turkey to reckon honestly with the Armenian Genocide.

Myth #9: Let's wait until the joint Turkish-Armenian historical commission releases its findings.

Fact: There is no joint Turkish-Armenian historical commission. Never was.

Turkey's cynical offer to "study" Armenian-Turkish relations – a euphemism for the Armenian Genocide, is a self-serving attempt to sow confusion about a known case of genocide.

Rather than honestly confronting its past, Ankara uses this tactic to attempt to derail the rising international tide of Genocide recognition.

Turkey's offer is akin to the Iranian government's cynical use of fake Holocaust denial conferences - thinly veiled and deeply offensive efforts to advance a destructive political agenda by seeking to open for "debate" long-established historical facts.

For its part, the Armenian government has responded to Turkey's offers by publicly stating it rejects any and all attempts to cast doubt on the Armenian Genocide, but remains willing to discuss all outstanding issues, including the Armenian Genocide, within the context of normalized relations between the two nations.

Myth #10: It doesn't serve any purpose to pass this resolution.

Fact: Amid Turkey's renewed regional aggression and atrocities, this resolution is more necessary than ever.

It will break Ankara's grip on U.S. policy, establishing that foreign powers cannot silence America on human rights.

We cannot expect Erdogan to take the U.S. seriously if we are still enforcing his Armenian Genocide gag-rule.

The U.S. is on record recognizing the Armenian Genocide, through:

-- United States Government's 1951 written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

-- Pres. Ronald Reagan Proclamation No. 4838 (1981)

-- H.J.Res.148 (1975) & H.J.Res. 247 (1984).

Successive Administrations have caved in to Turkey, resulting in four decades of offensive euphemisms and evasive language.

H.Res.296 and S.Res.150 will set the record straight, ensuring:

-- Permanent recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

-- Official rejection of Armenian Genocide denial.

These resolutions cite the genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians.