



Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

May 18, 2021

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Thank you for co-authoring a letter to the Department of State and Pentagon, dated February 19, 2021, along with over 100 members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, outlining constructive policy priorities regarding Armenia, Artsakh, and the Caucus region. Your leadership is deeply appreciated.

Unfortunately, as recently as this week, Azerbaijan launched an alarming new attack against Armenia, sending forces nearly two miles into sovereign Armenian territory.

I am, deeply troubled by the State Department's dismissive May 6, 2021 response to your letter, which ignores six of your clearly articulated policy priorities:

1) Prisoners of War: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter stressed that Azerbaijan has refused to free Armenian prisoners of war and apprehended civilians.

The State Department entirely **ignores** Congressional concern for the release of Armenian prisoners of war, failing, in this letter, to even cite their existence, despite sustained Congressional pressure.

2) Azerbaijani and Turkish Aggression: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter identified Azerbaijani and Turkish forces as having initiated the September 27, 2020 attack that killed an estimated 5,000 people and forced more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians to flee from Artsakh.

The State Department **fails** to identify Baku and Ankara as aggressors, choosing instead to speak generically of "last year's fighting."

3) U.S. Humanitarian Aid: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter called for "significant U.S. commitments" of urgently needed humanitarian aid for the people of Artsakh, to help them reconstruct their communities and rebuild their lives. (A subsequent Armenian Caucus letter called for at least \$100 million in U.S. aid.)

The State Department **dismisses** Congressional calls for a significant U.S. commitment, citing just \$5 million in humanitarian aid it has sent to support affected populations of both Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

4) Section 907: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter supported ending the waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, sanctioning Turkish and Azerbaijani leaders, and ceasing military aid to Azerbaijan through the Section 333 Building Partner Capacity program.

The State Department **neglects** to mention that the White House officially waived Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, and fails to respond to Congressional concerns about withholding U.S. aid to Baku.

5) Turkish Drones and Prohibited Munitions: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter cited Azerbaijan's use of Turkish Bayraktar drones utilizing American components and technology, and also Baku's illegal use of cluster and white phosphorus munitions.

The State Department **disregards** Congressional concern over Azerbaijan's illegal use of cluster and white phosphorus munitions, and fails to address Baku's deployment of Turkish Bayraktar drones utilizing American components and technology.

6) Foreign Mercenaries: The bipartisan Armenian Caucus letter cited Azerbaijan's deployment of Turkish-backed foreign mercenaries, many with ties to internationally recognized terrorist groups.

The State Department **refuses** to address Congressional concerns about the foreign mercenaries recruited by Turkey to fight alongside Azerbaijani forces.

The United States should be putting the brakes on Baku's belligerence, not emboldening Azerbaijan's aggression. Providing U.S. military aid to the oil-rich Aliyev regime - directly threatening Armenians upon their indigenous homeland - runs counter to President Biden's campaign statements and his recent recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Recognition of a genocide comes with serious responsibilities, among them is not arming countries openly seeking to complete this very crime.

I encourage you to call upon the State Department to revisit your letter and provide an actual response to your policy priorities. Parallel to this outreach, I urge you to roll back Section 907 waiver authority and to enact, via statute, a prohibition on any and all U.S. military or security aid to Azerbaijan.

Thank you for your consideration of my views. I look forward to hearing from you about your engagement with the Department of State. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (202) 775-1918 with any questions you may have on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Raffi Hamparian
ANCA Chairman

cc: U.S. Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
U.S. Senator Jack Reed, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Representative Gregory Meeks, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee
U.S. Representative Adam Smith, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee