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Armenian National Committee of America  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

November 29, 2022

Hon. Robert Menendez  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez:

I am writing to express the appreciation of our community and coalition partners for calling the November 16, 2022 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on "Assessing U.S. Policy in the Caucasus," a much-needed Congressional spotlight on the failure of the Biden Administration to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its record of aggression and ongoing war crimes against Artsakh and Armenia.

As you stated so very accurately and directly during your remarks, "It seems to me that the United States is in bed with Azerbaijan." This evaluation was borne out by the non-responsiveness of the State Department witnesses to your straightforward queries, their inability to answer in any meaningful way for their own actions in the Caucasus. This was, as you noted, deeply disappointing, placing on display for our Congress and the broader American public the bankruptcy of U.S. policy toward this strategically important region.

U.S. policy on the Caucasus needs a fundamental reset, based upon our nation's actual interests and values. As was so painfully put on display during your hearing, our current U.S. engagement in the region is driven by oil-rich Azerbaijan, a corrupt dictatorship that the Biden Administration has allowed to hijack U.S. policy. This must end, with Congress reclaiming U.S. policy – in the same spirit as the noble effort you led in 2019 to break Turkey's gag-rule against honest American remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.

Three concrete steps toward a truly American approach to the Caucasus, consistent with the points you raised on November 16th, are:

-- Providing robust, direct U.S. humanitarian aid to meet the food, water, health, energy and other security needs of Armenians in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh). It was both shocking and outrageous that, more than two years after Azerbaijan's 2020 attack, senior State Department officials could not, with any degree of specificity – confirm the existence of any U.S. humanitarian assistance to the indigenous Armenian population of Artsakh.

-- Enforcing Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act and ending all U.S. military or security assistance to the government of Azerbaijan. It is truly shameful that the Biden Administration has made such an utter mockery of this law..

-- Investigating documented reports of Azerbaijani war crimes, among them the execution of Armenian soldiers, the use of prohibited munitions, recruitment of foreign mercenaries, and the illegal detention and abuse of Armenian POWs. It is inexcusable that our Department of State has given Azerbaijan a free pass on these crimes.

As your hearing so plainly and very powerfully confirmed, U.S. policy toward the Caucasus requires a fundamental realignment. We share your disappointment with the Administration's deeply flawed and demonstrably failed approach, and remain ready to support your efforts to bring this much needed change to U.S. diplomatic engagement with the region. Thank you, once again, for your leadership in holding this hearing and for all of your support over the years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Raffi Haig Hamparian'.

Raffi Haig Hamparian  
Chairman