

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1a)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

I strongly believe that the killings and other atrocities perpetrated against some 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1915 clearly constituted genocide. Acknowledging when genocide has occurred is not simply a theoretical or legal exercise. It is key to preventing genocide from happening again. That's why, in my view, we must change U.S. policy to reflect the true nature of the tragic events that were perpetrated against the Armenians by calling them what they were: genocide.

I understand the following to be accepted facts:

- Article II of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” – and it lists “killing members of the group” as one of these acts.
- The United States has “never denied the tragic events of 1915,” and the Bush Administration has acknowledged “the forced exile and mass killing inflicted on as many as 1.5 million Armenians,” as indicated by the State Department in its response to my letter of June 5, 2006.
- The atrocities conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923 resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom about 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, the expulsion of 500,000 survivors, and a concerted campaign that resulted in the elimination of the more than 2,500-year presence of Armenians in their historic homeland.
- The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, described to the Department of State the policy of the Government of the Ottoman Empire as “a campaign of race

extermination,” and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the “Department approves your procedure . . . to stop Armenian persecution.”

- Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century.
- Proclamation 4838 of April 22, 1981 (95 Stat. 1813) issued by President Ronald Reagan, stated, in part, that “[l]ike the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it--and like too many other persecutions of too many other people--the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.”
- President George W. Bush, on April 24, 2004, stated, “[o]n this day, we pause in remembrance of one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th century, the annihilation of as many as 1,500,000 Armenians through forced exile and murder at the end of the Ottoman Empire.”

a) Do you dispute any of the above? If so, which facts and why?

Answer:

As noted above, the Administration has never denied the facts of what happened in 1915, and it does not deny the facts that are listed above. The Administration believes that the best way to honor the victims is to promote understanding and reconciliation between the people and governments of Armenia and Turkey and to help Turkey come to terms with this dark chapter in history. The Administration continues to encourage both Turkey and Armenia to work towards reconciliation. There are some hopeful signs that they are engaging each other.

Many Americans believe that the events of the past should be called “genocide.” It has been President Bush’s policy – as well as that of several previous Presidents on both sides of the aisle – not to use that term. The Administration’s focus is on encouraging people in Turkey to reconcile with their past and with the Armenian people regarding these horrific events.

There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind that the U.S. government—and I—certainly recognize and deplore the mass killings and deportations that occurred in 1915 and after. No words of any kind can convey our sorrow for the suffering that still endures as a result of these terrible events. It is exactly this tragedy that makes us so determined to support reconciliation between the Armenian and Turkish peoples today.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1b)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

(b) Do you personally believe that these atrocities meet the definition of a genocide? If not, please specify why not and provide your legal opinion.

Answer:

As the child of refugees – at a different time and place – I do feel very strongly about the great suffering experienced by the Armenian people both at that time and today as they remember this dark chapter in their history. I too mourn the loss of so many innocent lives and fully respect that the Armenian-American community and the Armenian people want their pain and loss to be acknowledged. The specific terminology the Administration uses to refer to this tragedy is a policy determination made by the President. Should I be confirmed as the personal representative of the President, I would have the duty to faithfully represent the policies of the President and his Administration.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1c)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

(c) Can you explain how the Administration's denial of the Armenian genocide can be reconciled with the United States' long history of opposing genocide in any form?

Answer:

The Administration has never denied the facts of what occurred in 1915. President Bush acknowledges this horrific tragedy each year on April 24, Armenian Remembrance Day.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1d)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

(d) Do you personally believe there should be a change in the Administration's policy of non-recognition of this genocide?

Answer:

The Administration has never denied the terrible events of 1915. The President annually recognizes this tragedy on Armenian Remembrance Day. This policy is determined by the President and, should I be confirmed as the personal representative of the President, I would have the duty to represent the policies of the President and his Administration faithfully. I pledge to provide the very best advice in this process that I can; this is what I have tried to do my entire career.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1e)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

(e) Can you explain why the Administration still refuses to recognize these atrocities as a genocide?

Answer:

The Administration has never denied the terrible events of 1915 and acknowledges the human tragedy of the mass killings and forced exile of over 1.5 million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Administration also understands that many Americans and many Armenians believe that these events should be called "genocide." It has been the policy of this Administration, as well as that of previous administrations of both parties, not to use that term. The President's focus is on encouraging Turkish citizens to reconcile with their past and with the Armenian people. Our goal is to stimulate a candid exploration within Turkish society of these horrific events in an effort to help this reconciliation. This is not easy. It was not easy for the United States to address its own historic dark spots. Turkey is making progress addressing these issues. The Administration seeks not to undercut voices emerging in Turkey who call for a truthful

exploration of these events in pursuit of Turkey's reconciliation with its own past and with Armenia; we share their goal of opening Turkey's past through honest, if painful, self examination.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1f)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

f) To the best of your knowledge, is there any effort underway to reexamine this policy? If so, when can Congress expect the result of this reexamination?

Answer:

U.S. policy on all issues is open to discussion both within and from outside the Administration. The Congress has been instrumental in raising this issue, as have many American citizens, as is appropriate in our democracy. Secretary Rice has made it clear that there are no taboo subjects and that all viewpoints are respectfully heard. If confirmed, I would seek to provide unbiased information and the best policy advice so that Washington policymakers can make the best decisions.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1g)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

(g) As the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, would you personally work to change U.S. policy and have these atrocities acknowledged as a genocide?

Answer:

As the child of refugees -- at a different time and place -- I do feel very strongly about the great suffering experienced by the Armenian people both at that time and today as they remember this dark chapter in history. I too mourn the loss of so many innocent lives and fully respect that the Armenian-American community and the Armenian people want their pain and loss to be acknowledged. We all have strong feelings about this. But, as the personal representative of the President of the United States, an Ambassador must faithfully represent the policies of the President and his Administration. The Secretary has made it clear that there are no taboo subjects for internal discussion and that all viewpoints are respectfully heard. I pledge to provide the very best advice that I can; this is what I have tried to do my entire career.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#1h)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

h) As the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, what actions, if any, would you take against your employees, if they properly characterized the massacre of Armenians during WWI as a genocide?

Answer:

As representatives of this Administration, all State Department officers have the duty to represent the policies of the President and his Administration faithfully, and I would expect the same of my staff. This is a basic tenet of a diplomatic career.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#2a)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

During your June 19, 2008 confirmation hearing, you stated that referring to the Armenian genocide as genocide was a “policy decision” that senior officials, such as the President and the Secretary of State, could determine.

a) Please describe, in detail, the source, purpose, content, and conclusions of all Administration “policy” documents, “decisions” and other materials concerning the Armenian Genocide that you reviewed and provide copies of these materials to the Committee for its review.

Answer:

The President's policy on this issue is described in the President's yearly Remembrance Day statements, and I have reviewed all the statements of this Administration. They are part of the public record and are attached to this response. I have studied the history of the tragic massacres and forced exile that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire and U.S. policy in that regard. I have reviewed the “U.S. Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917” and have read a number of books that examine the subject from various perspectives, including "The Burning Tigris," "A Shameful Act," and "Unsilencing the Past." The individual stories are horrifying; the magnitude of this terrible act – over 1.5 million murdered or

deported – is simply incomprehensible. I also have reviewed the statements made by various U.S. officials at that time, including those presented to me at my confirmation hearing on June 19.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#2b)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

What, if anything, has the State Department directed you to say in public statements on the Armenian genocide? Who, if anyone, directed you to make such statements in public?

Answer:

I have not been directed to say anything. However, I understand that I have a duty to faithfully represent the policy of the President. There is the same expectation for all Foreign Service officers and executive branch officials – regardless of the subject. This is a basic tenet of a diplomatic career. At the same time, the Secretary has made it clear that there are no taboo subjects for internal discussion and that all viewpoints are respectfully heard.

The U.S. government acknowledges and mourns the mass killings, ethnic cleansing, and forced deportations that devastated over one and a half million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The United States recognizes these events as one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, the “Medz Yeghern,” or Great Calamity, as many Armenians refer to it.

That is why every April the President honors the victims and expresses American solidarity with the Armenian people on Remembrance Day.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#2c)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

Have you been directed not to use the word genocide when discussing the Armenian Genocide?

Answer:

Policy on this issue is determined by the President. I understand that I have a duty to faithfully represent the policy of the President. There is the same expectation for all Foreign Service Officers and executive branch officials – regardless of the subject. This is a basic tenet of a diplomatic career.

The Administration understands that many Americans and many Armenians believe that the events of the past that I have referred to should be called “genocide.” It has been President Bush’s policy, as well as that of previous presidents of both parties, not to use that term. The President’s focus is on encouraging Turkish citizens to reconcile with their past and with the Armenian people.

**Questions for the Record Submitted to
Ambassador-Designate Marie L. Yovanovitch by
Senator John Kerry (#2d)
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 19, 2008**

Question:

If the Republic of Turkey recognized the genocide, would the United States then recognize it also?

Answer:

The U.S. Government acknowledges and mourns as historical fact the mass killings, ethnic cleansing, and forced deportations that devastated over one and a half million Armenians at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The United States recognizes these events as one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century, the “Medz Yeghern,” or Great Calamity, as many Armenians refer to it. That is why every April the President honors the victims and expresses American solidarity with the Armenian people on Remembrance Day. It is the prerogative of the President to set the policy on how the Administration characterizes these historical events.

We have strongly encouraged Turkey to come to terms with its past. That will not be easy, just as it has not been easy for the United States to come to terms with dark periods of our own past. As one part of that effort, the

United States is prepared to provide assistance if Turkey and Armenia agree to establish a joint historical commission.