

BETRAYAL OF SOULS AND DENIAL OF THE GENOCIDE

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✘ By Gregg Rickman, [The Cutting Edge](#), 8 March 2010

✘ *Cutting Edge contributor Gregg J. Rickman served as the first U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism from 2006–2009. He is a Senior Fellow for the Study and Combat of Anti-Semitism at the Institute on Religion and Policy in Washington, DC; a Visiting Fellow at The Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut; and a Research Scholar at the Initiative on Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israelism of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research in San Francisco.*

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Nearly a hundred years after the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians by Turkish forces during World War One, Turkey, an otherwise moderate country, continues to deny what eyewitness accounts prove to be an undeniable fact. Turkey's reaction in recalling its Ambassador to the United States is both heavy-handed and a touch of "thou protesth too much."

In recent efforts to defeat similar resolutions, Turkey has enlisted the help of high-paid Washington lobbyists to cajole, persuade, and arm twist individual Members of Congress to make it impossible to pass the resolution recognizing this genocide. Threats of dire consequences to US-Turkish relations ensued, with cynical accusations of damaging the relationship over a resolution recognizing what the world already knew to be true. March 4th's Turkish reaction is no different.

During the Senate Banking Committee's three-year investigation into the actions of the Swiss banks withholding of the assets of Holocaust victims, Swiss banks tried the same trick of buying their way out of trouble. Perhaps in the end, their settlement with the survivors and claimants of \$1.25 billion was tantamount to the same, but it was nevertheless accompanied with a quasi-admission of guilt. For Turkey, there is plenty of money being spent to fight the campaign against them, but certainly no admission of responsibility or wrongdoing is forthcoming, only simple, stubborn, unremitting denial.

Turkey's denial of its forefathers' actions would be laughable were it not so deadly serious for its historical precedent. As it has often been said, Turkey's genocide of the Armenians opened the door to further genocides in the twentieth century: the Holocaust, Cambodia, Biafra, Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan, and the long list goes on. Official Turkey is overwhelmed with denial.

During meetings with Turkish diplomats years ago in Ankara to discuss Turkey's role on the ill-fated United Nations Oil-for-Food program, instead of addressing the topic I was serenaded by complaints about the "propaganda" spewed from Armenian summer camps in California about the "supposed genocide." Even Turks who promote the idea within their own country, including Nobel Laureates, are prosecuted. This is sad.

While this denial is awful in its construction, it is harmful no less to Turks than it is to Armenians. For Turkey to continue this irresponsible attitude is to tar their country with an almost snickering response to its protestations. Far better for Turkey would be to confess its wrongdoings in a responsible, humble way and to move forward. Germany, the obvious poster child for historical guilt and genocidal successor to the Turks—as Hans Frank, the former Governor-General of Poland was to have stated, "A thousand years will pass and the guilt of Germany will not be erased."—has long dealt with the responsibility for its crimes.

Some will say that now is not the right time. They will say Turkey and Armenia are in delicate negotiations. They say it will damage Israel's relations with this important Muslim country. While not discounting the threats Turkey will bring out, surely, the souls of those marched out into the Anatolian desert and slaughtered cry out for more. They cry out for recognition.

About the Holocaust, Alan Dershowitz argues, all Jews are victims. For the Armenians, the same is true. Jews are so clearly pained when idiots who deny the Holocaust do so with a straight face, defiant in their ignorance. When Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the Holocaust is a lie, Jews cringe. How must Armenians feel when Turkey denies its responsibility for the same type of crime? As long as Turkey refuses responsibility for its sins, then all Armenians are in fact victims: the souls of the Armenian dead wander and their descendants are betrayed. The time for denial is over and the time for recognition is overdue. When this crime is finally recognized, memory, history, and truth will be restored.

