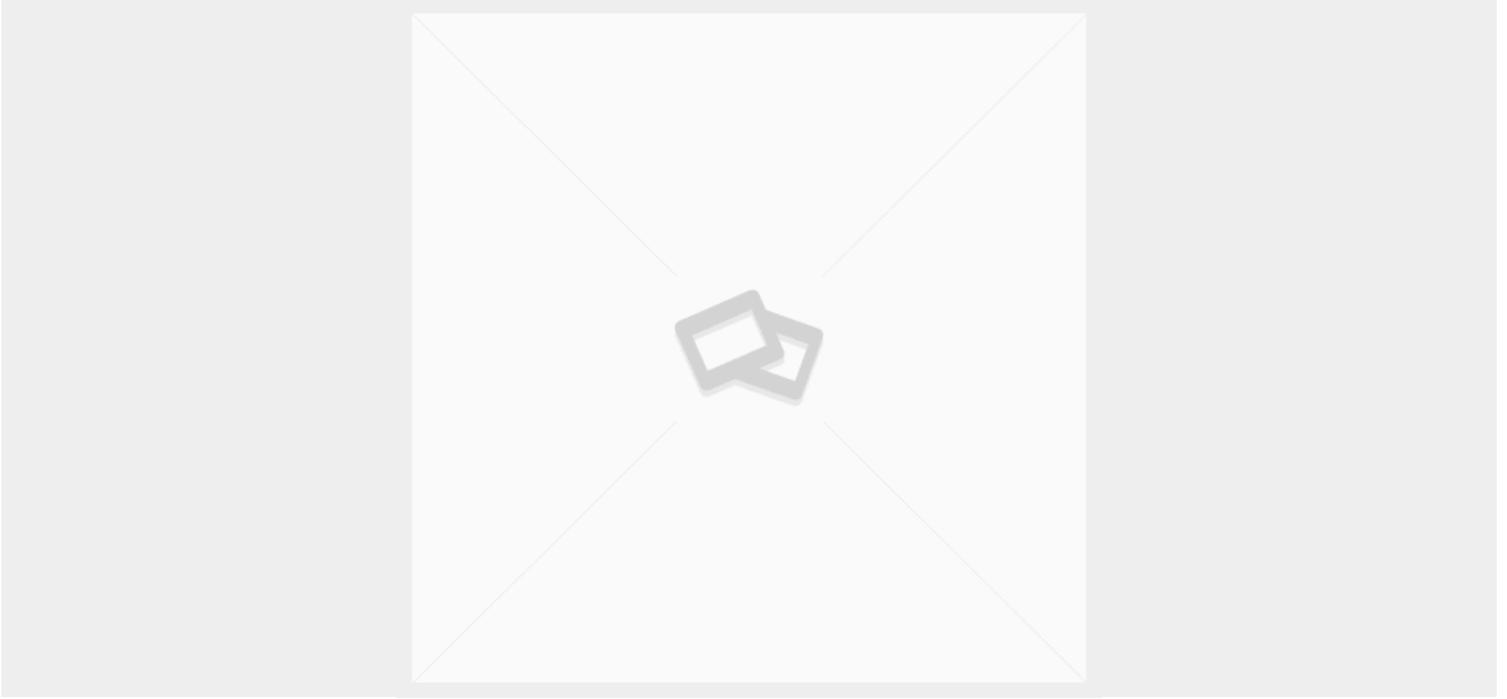


CHINA SHOULD RETALIATE AGAINST TURKEY BY RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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By Harut Sassounian, Publisher, The California Courier, 23 July 2009

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The Prime Minister of Turkey Rejeb Erdogan seems to have fallen into the bad habit of periodically accusing various countries of committing genocide. By doing so, the Turkish leader is inadvertently creating new opportunities for the international media to raise the issue of the Armenian Genocide.

In January of this year, the Turkish Prime Minister accused Israel of committing genocide during its Gaza offensive. Several Israeli leaders and members of the media reacted by pointing out that Turkish officials should be the last ones to talk of genocide given their country's culpability in the Armenian Genocide. Some members of the Israeli government were so offended that they threatened to retaliate by acknowledging the Armenian Genocide.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Erdogan returned to his favorite topic, this time accusing China of committing genocide. He was furious that several dozen Turkic-speaking Muslim Uighurs were killed in the Xinjiang province, during clashes with the Han Chinese who suffered many more casualties.

According to a Reuters report, Erdogan stated on July 10: "The incidents in China are, simply put, a genocide. There's no point in interpreting this otherwise." Erdogan's unwise words elicited immediate reaction from the international media which pointed out his foolishness in accusing others of genocide, given his country's poor record on minority rights and its responsibility for the Armenian Genocide.

The Economist magazine reported that "in the past few days internet forums in China have been clamoring their support for Kurdish separatists," a subject that was practically unheard of in China before Erdogan's accusation of genocide! The magazine also stated that Turkey is now "finding itself in the line of fire."

The Associated Press, in covering Erdogan's characterization of the clashes in China as genocide, devoted an entire paragraph to the Armenian Genocide: "Turkey itself is extremely sensitive to the use of the term 'genocide.' Armenia says 1.5 million Armenians were slain by Ottoman Turks around the time of World War I in what Armenians and several other nations recognize as the first genocide

of the 20th century...."

Reuters also covered Erdogan's accusation of genocide against China, indicating that "the genocide label is particularly sensitive in Turkey, which strongly refutes Armenian claims that the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during World War One constituted genocide."

Sylvia Hui, columnist of Hong Kong's Asia Sentinel, ridiculed Erdogan for his flippant use of the term genocide. She wrote: "What's interesting about this accusation is not only the premature and almost casual way it has been pronounced (especially given how sensitive Turkey is to the word with regard to Armenian accusations that Ottoman Turks committed the first genocide of the 20th century), but also how it contradicts other things Erdogan reportedly said on the same occasion.... In any case, the Turkish leader comes across as thoroughly hypocritical or too eager to please Uighurs at home to have thought it through before making such a strong remark."

Liberal Turkish newspaper "Radikal" joined the fray by quoting from the editorial of the Boston-based "Armenian Weekly" on Erdogan's ludicrous condemnation of China: "People who live in glass houses should not throw stones." The editorial took Erdogan to task for having "the audacity to compare the killing of a few dozen Uighurs to genocide while it continues to spend millions to deny the killing of a million and a half Armenians." "Radikal" concluded by quoting the Weekly's sarcastic conclusion: "After all, even by the official Turkish account, there were more than 150 people who were killed in 1915."

The Chinese state press, not surprisingly, was even more critical of Erdogan. "The People's Daily" wrote on July 14: "Many Chinese citizens feel insulted by Turkish actions and suggest that China should change its attitude towards the Kurdistan Workers Party and support their appeal for independence, so as to make Turkey pay a heavy political price.... Turkey was once accused of committed genocide in Armenia by the West and its crackdown on Kurdistan Workers' Party has also stirred up numerous controversies." "The People's Daily" also published several letters critical of Turkey, one of which stated: "The Kurdish massacres in Turkey were a kind of genocide and Nazism. Linking China to genocide is like a thief shouting 'stop thief.'"

Another Chinese newspaper, "The China Daily," in an editorial titled, "Don't Twist Facts," urged Erdogan to "take back his remarks...which constitute interference in China's internal affairs."

The most effective measure China can take in response to Erdogan's hysterical accusations is to have the Chinese Parliament adopt a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

