COMMENTS ON SEVERAL IMPORTANT ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO ARMENIANS

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By Harut Sassounian Publisher, The California Courier, 19 February 2009

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Here is a summary of some of the more interesting articles with a brief comment on each:

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Here is a summary of some of the more interesting articles with a brief comment on each:

-- A senior Israeli general retaliated last week against the Turkish Prime Minister's criticism of Israel. Major General Avi Mizrahi urged Erdogan to "first look in the mirror," and reminded him of the Armenian Genocide, repression of the Kurds, and Turkey's occupation of Northern Cyprus. In response, the Turkish Foreign Ministry angrily summoned Israel's Ambassador and handed him a diplomatic note of protest. In addition, a top Turkish official said he was offended by the Israeli General's statement. Ironically, the murder of 1.5 million Armenians did not bother this official, but its mere mention did offend him!

-- According to the Turkish "Dogan Haber Agency," Ali Ihsan Ozturk, President of the Teachers' Association of Kayseri, and his colleagues, distributed halva (sweets) to passers-by in the main square of the town, "for the soul of Hitler." Ozturk said he was doing this in reaction to the Israeli General's criticism of Turkey. It is to be seen whether Israel's leaders will swallow this bitter halva or retaliate with a protest note of their own!

-- As if Prime Minister Erdogan had not angered Israel and American Jews enough, a Turkish prosecutor now has launched an investigation into whether Israel's leaders committed "genocide and crimes against humanity" in Gaza. If charged, these Israeli officials would be arrested if they visit Turkey. Regardless of the legal merits of this case, Turkey should be the last country on earth with the right to accuse anyone else of genocide! What audacity! What hypocrisy! As they say in Turkish: "Hem Suclu; Hem Guclu." (Guilty and Macho)!

-- Zeev Elkin, a member of Israel's Parliament, recently announced that the Knesset would shortly consider recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Israel, after years of officially refusing to recognize the Armenian Genocide in expectation of political-strategic gains from Turkey, could be finally getting on the right side of this issue.

-- Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that Israel has suspended its flights to the Turkish resort town of Antalya, fearing terrorist attacks against its citizens. The Jerusalem Post reported that thousands of Israelis are boycotting Turkey because their "anger is both deep and palpable." Could a ban on

selling Israeli arms to Turkey be next?

-- Some American Jewish organizations are waking up from their deep moral coma, at long last! The American Jewish Committee (AJC) issued a press release on January 29, denouncing "Turkish Prime Minister's shameful outburst at Davos." On February 1, David Harris, Executive Director of AJC, issued an Open Letter to Erdogan, accusing him of using "vicious" and "inflammatory" words to criticize Israel. Harris even dared to remind Erdogan that Turkey "chose to close the border with landlocked Armenia from 1993 to today." Will the AJC now desist from playing the role of designated liar for Turkey on the Armenian Genocide?

-- James Holmes, a former U.S. Ambassador to Ankara and President of the American-Turkish Council (ATC), told Hurriyet newspaper: "The American-Jewish community's support for Turkey's position on the Armenian genocide resolution is gone. They will not expend any political energy in blocking a resolution or a presidential proclamation." Holmes should resign from the ATC rather than lobby for genocide denial for a fistful of dollars!

-- The Jerusalem Post quoted an unnamed official with "a leading American Jewish organization" as saying: "A deterioration in Israel-Turkey relations might prompt his group and others to reconsider" support for Ankara's denial of the Armenian Genocide. In my opinion, some Jewish groups, seeing that the Armenian Genocide might be acknowledged by the Obama administration, are wisely abandoning the sinking ship of Turkish denial and jumping on the winning side before April 24!

-- David Plouffe, former campaign manager for Barack Obama's presidential race, was offered $50,000 by Pres. Ilham Aliyev's despotic regime to lecture in Baku on human rights and democracy and meet with Azerbaijan's leaders. Plouffe was so embarrassed by criticism in the international media that he decided to donate his speaking fee to "groups that advocate democratization in the turbulent post-Soviet states of the region around the Caspian and Caucasus mountain range," according to the Wall Street Journal. One can imagine the contortions on Aliyev's face when he finds out that his money ended up with Azeri opposition groups or Armenians in Artsakh!

-- The Azeri Press Agency (APA) reported last month that the European Union supposedly paid millions of dollars to several prominent Turks to initiate a petition apologizing for the Armenian Genocide. APA alleged that professors Ahmet Insal, Halil Berktay, Murad Belge; journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, and writer Adalet Agaoglu had received $137,000 each; Prof. Ibrahim Kaboglu, $250,000; journalist Mine Kirikhanat, $90,000; Prof. Atilla Yayla, $575,000; Ertugrul Kurkchu, $1 million; "Mazlumder" group, $100,000; and Etien Mahchupian, Editor of Agos Armenian newspaper in Istanbul, $1.3 million. The Azeri press is even more notorious than Turkey's for distorting the news! These Turks could truly make millions of dollars should they sue the APA for libel!