

SENATOR COOLS BLOWS HOT AIR...AS USUAL

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✘ Editorial, 22 November 2014

Since Canada recognized the Genocide of Armenians nearly a decade ago, the Turkish Embassy in Ottawa has worked diligently behind the scenes to have the decision reversed. The Turkish lobby **✘** has developed a higher profile in Ottawa by sponsoring and hosting cultural and social events; it has helped establish Turkish-Canadian "friendship" groups, boosted Turkish community organizations, erected several monuments of some propaganda value, courted politicians and sent them on "familiarization" junkets to Turkey. Embassy officials have haunted Parliament Hill corridors with increasing frequency. Meanwhile, the Armenians have assumed Canada's decision is carved in stone. They have thus ignored the insidious Turkish threat.

Enter Senator Anne Cools.

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Enter Senator Anne Cools.

Earlier this year, during her speech as part of the senate's "Building Bridges: Canada-Turkey Relations and Beyond" debate, Senator Cools called on Canada to repeal its recognition of the Genocide. Has the longest-serving senator joined the tin foil-hat brigade?

Who is Senator Cools and why she's become an apparent mouthpiece for the Turkish lobby?

From the first day she came to the notice of Canadians, Ms. Cools has been a controversial figure. Older Canadians remember the dramatic and violent launch of her "career" when she was one of the ringleaders of a radical posse which occupied Montreal's Sir George Williams University. During the nearly two-week sit-in her fellow radicals destroyed the computer centre causing \$3-million (almost \$13-million in today's value) in damages. After the riot police put an end to the varsity insurrection, Cools' "Canadian-style Black Panther" stunt got her convicted and jailed for four months. One of her fellow-conspirators was the son of Guyanese firebrand Chedi Jagan. Another one was from Dominica. Cools herself is from Barbados.

What was Cools' beef? She and her cohorts alleged their teacher was racist who gave them low

marks because of their skin color. Following the outrage, the committee appointed by the university found "there was nothing in the evidence to substantiate a general charge of racism" on the part of the teacher. He was also found not guilty of racism towards Cools and her gang.

What made Cools crime worse was that the university was celebrated for its accessibility to a wide range of students from different backgrounds and social standing. It's possible that the university's easy-going philosophy enabled Cools and her fellow firebrands gain admission. Despite the university's generosity, Cools and her arsonist pals went on a rampage because they felt entitled to higher marks.

Gnawing the hand that feeds her became a habit for Cools. The ingrate senator crossed swords with Prime Ministers Jean Chretien and Paul Martin of the Liberal Party—the same party whose leader (Pierre Elliott Trudeau) had, years earlier, appointed Cools to the senate, despite her lack of qualification.

While playing the race card got her nowhere first time around, Cools benefited big time when she was—incredibly and controversially—appointed senator by Trudeau, the mercurial prime minister of Canada. Why did Trudeau hand her the sinecure? Was it because Trudeau wooed Caribbean leaders in Cuba and in Jamaica? Was it because she was black, a woman, and an immigrant? A hat trick in Canadian hockey parlance. Prior to getting the cushy appointment, Cools had been unsuccessful in her attempts to get elected to the legislature.

In 2007 Liberal Party appointee Ms. Cools jumped ship and joined the Conservative Party. Three years later the peripatetic senator was on the road again... this time she crossed the floor to become "non-aligned". That wasn't the last of her peregrinations: in 2010 she declared herself Independent.

Throughout her senate career Ms. Cools has tangled with feminists, called for the resignation of Prime Minister Paul Martin, claimed to have been assaulted by fellow senators, and exchanged words with Prime Minister Stephen Harper on same-sex marriage. She was finally turfed from the Tory caucus after she denounced Mr. Harper and bad-mouthed the government's Accountability Act. Upon her forced departure Mr. Harper said she had not attended party caucus meetings "for a long time." Leaving no stone unturned, Cools also attacked senate government leader Marjory LeBreton.

Columnist Michele Landsberg of the "Toronto Star" (Canada's largest-circulation daily) described Ms. Cool's performance during a widely-publicized hearing with these words: "...when representatives of women's services and shelters began their allotted five minutes of testimony, Senator Anne Cools smiled sarcastically rolled her eyes, and then got up to stroll the room and work the crowd, chatting and joking with her supporters." She was also accused of brow-beating presenters to her committee.

Ms. Cools also famously said: "Abusive mothers are responsible for creating violent sons...Behind every abusing husband is an abusing mother." It's all your fault, Ma.

Predictably, Ms. Cools has been described as a renegade, anti-feminist maverick, fruitcake, wing nut, loose cannon, among other epithets. Her long tenure has elevated her superior airs. Cools carries the distinction of being the longest-serving senator of recent decades. Why would anyone loiter at Canada's Foggy Bottom for four decades? In Cools' case, why not? Considering the perks, pomp and power... and considering her non-existent political career prior to the Trudeau gift. Her mandated retirement comes up in four years. There's no doubt she wouldn't leave a minute sooner. Then, of course, she will luxuriate in her generous pension, if not become consultant to... say, Turkey?

There you have it: the life and times of the notorious senator who wants Canada to repeal its recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Her recent pitch on behalf of the Turkish lobby is, of course, full of untruths and misdirection. To be kind Ms. Cools is simply ignorant.

Item:

She said that she had doubts about the resolution which recognized the Genocide. But she was a senator then. Why didn't she raise her voice when the senate voted? The Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) met her at least twice. She didn't object to the motion or raise any concern.

Item:

In her recent *pronuncimento* (the Latin word is apt since Ms. Cools likes to impress people by tossing Latin words) she alleged that when the government was considering the Genocide resolution, Liberal leader in parliament Sharon Carstairs had opposed its passage. Contrary to what Ms. Cools alleges, Ms. Carstairs met the ANCC delegation and said she would talk to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) regarding the issue. On a subsequent meeting Carstairs' senior policy advisor told the ANCC that the PMO did not have any objection to the motion.

Item:

In her anti-Armenian outburst Ms. Cools uttered: "The resolution was adopted, though it was never referred to or studied in a Senate committee. No witnesses were heard and no evidence was received or tested." This is also far from the truth. Otherwise why would the motion "languish" in the senate for over six months? The fact is the motion was debated, studied, and evidence was presented. As well, the ANCC representatives were called to the senate's Liberal caucus to examine the motion with the senators and answer their questions. Senator and lawyer Jerry Grafstein, one of the most trusted and experienced legal minds in the senate and in the Liberal Party, was the lead legal expert in the Liberal caucus who examined the legal aspects of the recognition. He was supportive of the motion. Serge Joyal, another leading senator, worked hard for the motion's approval.

Item:

The motion was also debated in the Conservative Party and caucus. Raynell Andreychuk and Consiglio Di Nino were the lead MPs who handled the file on behalf of their party. They were powerful supporters of the motion. The PMO and Foreign Affairs also debated the issue. Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy told ANCC representatives in his office: "If you are coming to convince me with historical facts of the Armenian Genocide, don't waste your time. I know it happened." He then added: "Unfortunately, there are other players in town and they are very influential." It's a safe bet he was referring to the Turkish lobby.

Item:

Rather than encountering difficulties, the motion passed almost unanimously. The single objection came from Liberal senator (Lorna Milne) who was involved with the Canada-Turkey Friendship Group.

Item:

Hard to believe but in her misguided mission on behalf of Turkey, Ms. Cools incredibly said Canada is the only country in the world which recognizes the Genocide.

Item:

Ms. Cools also insulted Senator Raymond Setlakwe when she alleged the senator was a crypto-Armenian who had lobbied Prime Minister Chretien without identifying his ethnic origins.

Item:

Describing the Genocide resolution, Ms. Cools said: "This is not proper, fair, just, or consistent with our common law." What, pray tell, is not proper, fair or just in calling a spade a spade or should it be *yataghan*?

Item:

The resolution "was driven by local politics at the riding levels..." said the voluble senator. So...fewer than 70,000 Canadian-Armenians had a decisive voice in Canada's relations with Turkey. Perhaps it's the same omnipotent Canadian-Armenians who have failed, after years of effort, to persuade Ottawa to establish an embassy in Armenia.

Item:

Ms. Cools quoted Raphael Lemkin to define "genocide", but somehow didn't mention that the Polish juror had coined the word to describe what Turkey had done to Armenians.

Item:

Ms. Cools went on to narrate Dogu Perincek's case at the European Court of Human Rights. This is opportunism par excellence. She didn't mention that the case has been appealed by the Swiss

government and that many international human rights and genocide experts, including Turkish organizations, have condemned Perincek. She didn't mention that Perincek is a notorious racist. Ms. Cools' champion was convicted in Turkey for his ultra-nationalist and racist activities. The 60,000-page transcript of his trial is replete with his venomous declarations against Armenians and other minorities.

And what's the superannuated senator's reason for repealing the Genocide resolution? Why, to avoid "future conflict and pain." The arsonist senator has a burning desire for peace.

The ball is in the Canadian-Armenian community's court. In addition to a collective effort to discourage Ms. Cools from fronting—knowingly or unknowingly-- the Turkish lobby, Canadian-Armenians should make certain no opportunistic politician will ever contemplate repeating the erratic senator's outburst to repeal the Canadian government's honorable and courageous decision to stand firm against Turkey's blackmail.

It's redundant to mention the damage to Canada's image if a future government contemplates reversing its decision which the erstwhile convict is preaching.

