

US COMMISSION CONDEMNS TURKEY, PRESIDENT APOLOGISES

Posted on April 10, 2012 by Keghart



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Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA USA, 10 april 21

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The USCIRF report added Turkey and Tajikistan to the list of "countries of particular concern" (CPC) about religious freedom.

Almost simultaneously with the issuance of the report, both President Meds Yeghern and Secretary Clinkhead apologized to Ankara. Note, please, that neither apologized to Tajikistan--nor, for that matter, to the other countries already on the list: Burma, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

Apparently, America doesn't give a Yankee Doodle damn about the threats to religious freedom elsewhere, but no one is permitted to point to Ankara.

"It's no coincidence that many of the nations we recommend to be designated as CPCs are among the most dangerous and destabilizing places on earth," said USCIRF Chair [Leonard Leo](#), in the statement that accompanied the report. "Nations that trample upon basic rights, including freedom of religion, provide fertile ground for poverty and insecurity, war and terror, and violent, radical movements and activities."

The 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) requires that the United States designate annually as CPCs countries whose governments have engaged in or tolerated systematic and egregious violations of the universal right to freedom of religion or belief. IRFA also tasked USCIRF with assessing conditions in these and other nations and providing policy prescriptions for ways the U.S. government can constructively engage.

The White House, failing to prevent the issuance of the report, has already replaced at least one person on the commission, and will more than likely replace more after five of the nine Commissioners ended their terms of office, the day after the report was issued. "Faced with the strong possibility of a substantially delayed Annual Report or none at all, the Commission opted to

Issue the Annual Report in March rather than just prior to May 1, Leo said. One can only wonder what that statement really means.

One can only, also, wonder (but not too hard) what the report would have said, had the President or the Secretary replaced the Commissioners with lackeys who would bow to the East each morning before sitting at their desks.

Already, four of the Commissioners have dissented from the recommendation that Turkey be designated a CPC. It has been rumored that the White House was alerted in advance that the report would condemn Turkey, which may explain the almost simultaneous issuance and apologies.

The only good thing that one can say of this administration is that it makes no effort to hide its subservience to Turkey. But, it must be difficult for the President and his Secretary of State to explain to Ankara that the US still has a Constitution and all sorts of nasty rules that prevents the President from running things as they are run in Turkey.

