

# YOU CANNOT TAKE AWAY THE RIGHTS OF OUR NATION

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By Kenneth V. Hachikian, Charirman of ANCA, New York NY, 3 October 2009

 Mr. President:

The Armenian National Committee of America stands with the overwhelming majority of the Armenian American community in opposition to the intense pressure by Turkey and its allies to force Armenia into accepting a flawed and dangerous set of Protocols that threaten the security of Armenia, surrender the rights of the Armenian nation, and insult the dignity of the Armenian people.

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Among the ANCA's primary concerns, in keeping with the basic American principles of fairness and the enduring values of the Armenian nation, is that Armenia, illegally blockaded by Turkey and under intense economic and diplomatic pressure, is being forced into accepting terms that threaten her interests, rights, safety, and future – very notably in the form of a proposed "historical commission", whatever its composition turns out to be. This provision, a tactic long pursued by Ankara to cast doubt on the historical record of the Armenian Genocide, is clearly intended to serve Turkey's drive to roll back the growing tide of international recognition of this crime against humanity. There can be, as a matter of basic morality and political reality, no enduring relationship between Armenia and Turkey that is not built upon the foundation of Turkey's acceptance of a true and just resolution with respect to the Armenian Genocide.

Further, these Protocols outrageously surrender the historical rights of the Armenian nation to a just resolution of the Armenian Genocide. They also dangerously undermine the right to freedom and self-determination for the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

Mr. President, your actions in pursuing these protocols are naïve. They are reckless. And they are simply irresponsible. Your assertion that they do not contain any preconditions insults our intelligence. The requirement for a commission of historians, which I might point out has been soundly rejected by the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the formal recognition of borders, and the acknowledgement of territorial integrity without any mention of self-determination are all preconditions imposed and insisted upon by Turkey, which you have unwisely accepted at the point of their blackmail of the closed borders. These preconditions were and are requirements of

Turkey; they are the price you are willing to pay to the Turkish blackmailers. Many countries readily normalize relations without such one-sided preconditions.

How dare you accede to Turkish blackmail when our forbearers sacrificed so much and suffered at the hands of the Turks, who to this very day deny the Genocide which the rest of the world acknowledges?

How dare you attempt to squander the political capital that so many have, at great sacrifice, built up over the decades in capitals around the world? And make no mistake, signing the Protocols would put at risk that very capital. You have no moral right to do so. You have no power to do so. And we will not allow you to do so.

You cannot take away the rights of our nation and our people simply because you view yourself as the savior of our country. You are not saving our country; you are relegating us to a subservient position to Turkey while simply abandoning our rights to justice. Your efforts are doomed to failure.

You will be remembered as the president who led our country to a path of dependency, who foolishly bargained away our lands, whose misjudgments led us to a weakened status. If you go forward with these Protocols, your legacy will be deeply flawed.

Do not attempt to hide behind the support of the minority who blindly offer support for your initiatives. They are not the true grassroots of the Diaspora. They simply do not represent the majority of the community. In the face of our vigilance in confronting successive US administrations over their blind and unwavering support for Turkey, their default position is to support these policies of the US State Department. They are the same people who surrendered Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, who supported the disastrous Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission, and who supported the nomination of Richard Hoagland, a morally reprehensible genocide denier, to be ambassador to Armenia. They no longer have political relevance in our community. Don't be seduced by their meaningless support.

Mr. President, you are making a grave mistake here. I hope you have the wisdom to listen to your countrymen and to back away from this disastrous agreement, before you bring great harm to our country, to our people, and to your presidency.

