



ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

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May 27, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Lugar
Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
450 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kerry and Ranking Member Lugar:

In anticipation of the confirmation hearing upon the nomination of Matthew Bryza by President Obama to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Armenian Assembly, I am writing to offer our views and express our concerns.

As you know, stated U.S. policy in the region is to foster regional cooperation and economic integration. Rather than foster regional cooperation however, Azerbaijan continues: 1) to threaten war against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh; 2) to rapidly increase its military budget; 3) to impose a blockade against Armenia in coordination with Turkey; 4) to reject U.S. funding for confidence building measures; 5) its intransigence regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict; 6) to eliminate all traces of Armenian culture as evidenced by the complete destruction of a centuries-old Armenian cemetery in Julfa. In addition, most recently Azerbaijan derailed Turkey-Armenia rapprochement and the resulting Protocols, which were supported by the Obama Administration.

In terms of economic integration, Azerbaijan has consistently used its hydrocarbon resources as a weapon to isolate and deprive Armenia of economic opportunities. Throughout our history and as the recent events in the Gulf of Mexico remind us, the politics of big oil often hijack U.S. policy. In addition to using its natural resources as a weapon against Armenia, Azerbaijan also seeks to build a rail-line that would completely by-pass Armenia, despite existing lines that transit Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, which could be operational with only minor repairs.

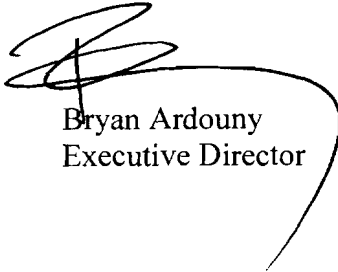
As the confirmation process begins in earnest, it is incumbent to ensure that the next Ambassador to Azerbaijan clearly annunciate their understanding of U.S. policy and priorities in the South Caucasus region. In addition, it is critically important to ensure that the next Ambassador will:

- 1) Forcefully adhere to U.S. objectives of ensuring regional cooperation and economic integration (in other words, counter Azerbaijan's attempts to isolate Armenia).

- 2) Faithfully apply the letter and spirit of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act as well as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- 3) Bring an end to Azerbaijan's war mongering.
- 4) Uphold President Obama's stated policies in 2008 to a) "promote Armenian security by seeking an end to the Turkish and Azerbaijani blockades; and b) work "for a lasting and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict that is agreeable to all parties, and based upon America's founding commitment to the principles of democracy and self determination."

We look forward to a robust confirmation process and to working with you and members of the Committee on these important policy matters.

Sincerely,



Bryan Ardouny
Executive Director