



September 9, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to you regarding the August 31, 2009 announcement by the foreign ministries of Armenia, Turkey and Switzerland with respect to protocols to be signed within six weeks to establish diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey and to open the border between the two countries.

We support the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey without preconditions. We appreciate your commitment in encouraging reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia and feel strongly that the United States has a major role to play in this regard. We also note that in addition to the United States, France and Russia and the European Union have welcomed this latest development.

We look forward to a positive outcome, but are concerned in view of Turkey's prior failures to uphold its international obligations. We, therefore, call upon you and your Administration to hold the Turkish government accountable with respect to Turkey's commitments to lift the fifteen year-plus blockade it has imposed against Armenia and establish permanent diplomatic relations with the Republic of Armenia.

In addition, assertions by Turkey, for example, that the Nagorno Karabakh peace talks proceed in parallel to Armenian-Turkish rapprochement are not acceptable. They add an unnecessary dimension to an already delicate process. In fact, linking two separate and distinct sets of negotiations creates a dangerous precedent that places both processes at risk.

As the late Senator Edward Kennedy so often said, "in order to know what to do in the future, you must understand and remember the past." To that end, true reconciliation will occur only when Turkey comes to terms with its past. In that regard, we value your repeated statements on the importance of recognizing the Armenian Genocide and strongly urge you to directly and unequivocally affirm this terrible crime against humanity.

In so doing, the United States will honor a proud chapter in U.S. history when America responded by helping to save the survivors of the first genocide of the twentieth century. If this normalization process is used as a smokescreen for not reaffirming the Armenian Genocide and the U.S. record, it will be a blow to the rapprochement process and the expectations of people of goodwill everywhere.

We all know and appreciate full well that respect for moral principles and the pursuit of justice are essential for a peaceful world.

Sincerely,



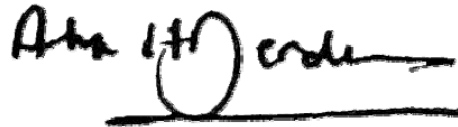
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