



Correcting the Record on **H.Res.252**

Turkish Coalition of America

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The Resolution Skews the Historical Argument:

Statement #1: *'This resolution is cited as the 'Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution'.*



FACT: The resolution presents a one-sided selection of the U.S. record. The complete U.S. record on events in eastern Anatolia during the closing years of the Ottoman Empire contains reports depicting a tragedy, but offers no proof of genocide. The U.S. record also includes reports of respected envoys, who documented the Armenian Revolt and questioned accounts of massacres. H.Res.252 willfully omits this record.

- Admiral Mark Bristol, U.S. High Commissioner to the Ottoman Empire

Admiral Bristol's often-overlooked annals contain 33,000 items including eyewitness accounts and investigator reports that reveal deliberate misinformation about atrocities. (From Bristol's "Report on Operations" for the week of November 7, 1920.)

- Colonel Charles Furlong, U.S. Army Intelligence Officer & Delegate to Paris Peace Conference

In a speech, Colonel Furlong declared, "We hear half the truth when we hear of the massacres of Armenians in Turkey; we'll hear the other half when we hear of the massacres of Turks by Armenians and Greeks." (July 25, 1921.)

- Captain Emory Niles and Mr. Arthur Sutherland, U.S. Government Commissioners

While investigating the situation in eastern Anatolia, Captain Niles and Mr. Sutherland held Armenians responsible for the damage and destruction in the region. They observed, "only quarters left at all intact in the cities of Van were the Armenian quarters, [...] while the Musulman quarters were completely destroyed." (See U.S. 867.00/1005, Philip Brown of Princeton University to William Carr, Princeton, 11 October 1919, as referenced in Justin McCarthy's *Death and Exile*, p. 225)

- Robert Lansing, U.S. Secretary of State

After the war, a genuine effort was made to distinguish between propaganda and fact. Secretary of State Robert Lansing played a key role in the deliberations of the *Commission on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on Enforcement of Penalties for Violations of the Laws and Customs of the War* at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Lansing objected to the commission holding trials for the 'Armenian massacres' and to the creation of so-called crimes against the laws of humanity. He reasoned that creating new laws to punish the Turks would not only offend general legal principles against ex post facto laws, but also would tread into uncharted areas of international jurisprudence. He stated, that he knew, "of no international statute or convention making a violation of the laws and customs of war an international crime." Ultimately, the commission omitted these crimes and the associated charges. ("Memorandum of Reservations presented by the Representatives of the United States to the Report of the Commission on Responsibilities," April 4, 1919, pp. 51-63)

- Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire: An Unreliable Witness.

Those who summon Ambassador Henry Morgenthau as impartial and authoritative part of the U.S. record on the so-called Armenian genocide ignore the many faults in his reporting. They also suppress reports by U.S. officials who tell of the suffering of the Muslim population at the hands of Armenians and contradict reports by the Morgenthau's Armenian sources and staff.

First, Morgenthau's reports were based on hearsay only. He never traveled beyond Istanbul during his 26 months of ambassadorial service. He never visited the regions where the alleged great crimes were committed. He did not speak Turkish, Greek, French or Armenian, the four languages of the Ottoman capital. And, he misled by selective reporting. On November 26, 1917, Morgenthau confessed in a letter to President Wilson that he intended to write a book vilifying Turks and Germans to, "win a victory for the war policy of the government." He conceded that his works were edited and occasionally altered by his Armenian assistants: Arshag K. Schmavonian and Hagop S. Andonian, neither of whom visited the areas in rebellion, but were tightly connected to the rebellious Armenian leadership. It is therefore not surprising that Morgenthau was deeply critical of the Ottoman leadership and painted them in the most negative light possible.

Second, Morgenthau scorned the scruples of truth: "I have instructed Andonian to take my diary and copy it with some elaborations of his own. Of course this relieves me of all responsibility for any error." In a Feb. 2, 1920 letter, the U.S. Consul General in Beirut and then London, W. Stanley Hollis, wrote to the Secretary of State severely questioning the honesty and reliability of Schmavonian, who was still in the employ of the U.S. Embassy in Istanbul.

Third, in his biography, "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story," Morgenthau betrays his racist hatred toward Turks ("humanity and civilization never for a moment enters their mind," "They are possessed of "an inferior blood") and his admiration for Armenians ("They are so superior to the Turks intellectually and morally.").

Fourth, several of Morgenthau's consuls sent inflammatory stories to him, customarily in the form of unsubstantiated assertions of atrocities. They are the most oft-cited evidence offered by proponents of the genocide allegation. Morgenthau simply withheld conflicting consular reports to avoid undermining his wartime propaganda. U.S. Consul in Mersin, Edward Natan, for example, reported to Morgenthau on August 30, 1915 that the railway route from Tarsus to Adana was full of Armenians, that the Ottoman Government organized the transportation in the most orderly fashion, and that the government assisted needy Armenians. That report was concealed from the U.S. State Department by Morgenthau.

Sadly, even under Morgenthau's successors, the tradition of suppressing reports that do not condemn the Ottoman state continued. On February 2, 1920, W. Stanley Hollis, the U.S. Consul General in Beirut and then London, felt it necessary to write directly to the Secretary of State voicing extreme doubt about the quality of the reporting produced by the U.S. Embassy in Istanbul. He accused the Embassy of disregarding his reports and falling under the sway of the Embassy's Armenian translator, Mr. Arshag Schmavonian. Hollis wrote, "Although in all of my dispatches, and in my letters to the Embassy, I confined myself to statements of actual fact ...such reports of facts and actual occurrences were not well received by the Embassy. ... [T]he attitude of the Embassy at

[Istanbul] towards a Consular Officer's reports was largely influenced by the opinions of its Armenian Dragoman, Mr. Schmavonian..."

Similarly, the infamous "Blue Book," the much-referenced portion of the British record on the fate of the Ottoman Armenians, was by and large a product of the wartime propaganda according to a March 16, 1966 letter penned by Arnold Toynbee, one of the Blue Book's authors. According to a biography on Toynbee, William H. McNeill sees Toynbee's work on the Armenian massacres as "a disinformation book favoring the Allied states and aiming at shaping the public opinion, which does not go beyond the obsessive task of humiliating the Turks." (*Arnold Toynbee – A Life* by William H. McNeill, Oxford, 1989)

Statement #2: *'Vast majority of experts, including the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) confirm that events of 1915 constitute genocide'*



FACT: This couldn't be further from the truth. Genocide accusations are too important for fleeting or skewed analysis. A large group of reputable and independent scholars and a vast body of scholarly work disputes the characterization of the mutual mass killings of World War I in eastern Anatolia as an Armenian genocide.

- Experts who dispute the characterization of the mutual mass killings among Ottoman Muslims and Armenians alike as genocide include:

Arend Jan Boekestjin, Utrecht University, Netherlands
Youssef Courbage, National Institute of Demographic Studies, Paris, France
Paul Dumont, March Bloch University, Strasbourg, France
Bertil Dunér, The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Stockholm, Sweden
Gwynne Dyer, Military Historian and Journalist
Edward J. Erickson, Birmingham University
Philippe Fargues, National Institute of Demographic Studies, Paris, France
Micheal M. Gunter, Tennessee Technical University
Eberhard Jäckel, Stuttgart University
Yitzchak Kerem, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Bernard Lewis, Princeton University
Guenther Lewy, Massachusetts University
Heath W. Lowry, Princeton University
Andrew Mango, University of London
Michael E. Meeker, University of Washington
Justin McCarthy, University of Louisville
Hikmet Ozdemir, Turkish History Council in Ankara, Turkey
Stephen Pope, former Oxford modern-history scholar
Michael Radu, Foreign Policy Research Institute
Jeremy Salt, Melbourne University
Stanford J. Shaw, UCLA
Norman Stone, Bilkent University
Hew Strachan, Oxford University
Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, Cambridge University
Brian G. Williams, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
Gilles Veinstein, Collège de France
Malcom E. Yapp, University of London
Robert Zeidner, University of Utah

-The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) is not an impartial scientific or scholarly body.

Identifying the organization as "the leading body of scholars on genocide" misrepresents the diversity of the organization's membership, which includes students, activists, journalists, and poets, in addition to genocide scholars.

IAGS does not test members for factual or historical knowledge about any claimed genocide, for the elements of genocide under the authoritative U.N. Genocide Convention of 1948, or for knowledge of genocide precedents rendered by national or international courts. Its position on the Armenian allegation of genocide was adopted in a closed meeting without any opportunity for those who hold an opposing viewpoint to present their case.

Strangely, the IAGS's position on the tragedy in Bosnia has been unusually muted, despite the fact that the crimes against Bosnian Muslims or the massacre of 8,000 men and boys in Srebrenica have been adjudicated as genocide. Fully six of the eleven statements or resolutions adopted by the IAGS advocate for the Armenian viewpoint. There is no IAGS statement on Srebrenica and the IAGS' President has been widely criticized for stating that Srebrenica did not constitute the crime of genocide, leading to claims of an anti-Muslim bias.

Statement #3: *“United Nations General Assembly Resolution 96(1) and the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide itself recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations intended to prevent and punish by codifying existing standards.”*

FACT: H.Res.252 flagrantly misstates the United Nations' position on the issue. According to U.N. spokespersons, "There is no indication that the U.N. has taken an official position on this."

- U.N. Spokesman Farhan Haq stated unequivocally on October 5, 2000 “The United Nations has not approved or endorsed a report labeling the Armenian experience as Genocide.”

Mr. Haq repeated this statement again on April 9, 2007, when H.Res.252's predecessor H.Res.106 made the same assertion. Mr. Haq stated “the U.N. does not take a position on events prior to the establishment of the organization. For this reason, the claim that the U.N. ‘corroborates’ any archival account or population figure is incorrect.”

Mr. Haq was referring the report of Benjamin Whitaker, Executive Director of the nongovernmental Minority Rights Group (MRG) made upon a request of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Mr. Whitaker was the author of a book entitled, “The Armenians,” in which he argued for the Armenian version of events to the exclusion of all other views.

Yet, after deliberations, the Sub-Commission decided **not to accept** Whitaker's report. The U.S. delegate, Mr. John Carey, stated, “It is certainly impossible to apply juridical norms retrospectively and in the future one should be extremely careful when using words qualifying such vigorous events. ... Certainly there exist other persons that the Special Reporter [Mr. Whitaker] should have consulted.... all existing sources have not been taken into account and the matter has not been elaborated sufficiently in depth. ... The question of genocide has not been elucidated sufficiently.”

Statement #4: *'1.5 million innocent Armenians perished and the proof is irrefutable.'*



FACT: The presumption that 1.5 million were killed has no statistical or scholarly basis. The figure likely inflates the Armenian death toll, while ignoring Muslim and Jewish casualties. To dispute the numbers is not to challenge the existence of a tragedy, though it may challenge its scale. It is immoral to count only one side's deaths while denying the other side's suffering caused by the same chain of events.

- Population estimates of prewar Ottoman Armenians do not exceed 1.6 million.

Christian missionaries and foreign diplomats estimated the prewar Ottoman Armenian population at between 1 million and 1.6 million. Likewise, George Montgomery – President Wilson's emissary to the Paris Peace Conference – estimates the Armenian's prewar population at 1.6 million.

- There is no consensus among scholars on the Armenian death toll.

Counting civilian losses during wartime is not an exact science, as demonstrated by the civilian body count controversies surrounding the ongoing war in Iraq. According to George Montgomery, U.S. Representative to the Paris Peace Conference, Armenian wartime losses did not exceed 500,000.

- The number of Armenians who died in the World War I years and their causes can at best be conjectured.

Scholars in Ottoman history generally agree that the Armenian deaths resulted from a multiplicity of causes: inter-communal warfare, the conditions of the forced relocations, murder, famine, disease, deficient medical care and austere conditions of life during wartime. The fact remains that there is no reliable assessment of the Armenian death toll or its categorization according to causation.

Statement #5: *'No one holds modern Turkey responsible for what happened.'*



FACT: Claims that the resolution is not aimed at Turkey should be dismissed out of hand. In an April 24th rally in 2005, Congressman Frank Pallone, Co-Chair of the Armenian Caucus, declared that “it is important not only to recognize the genocide, but we have to make it clear that those who committed it pay restitution.”

- Genocide allegations imply U.S. involvement in what some consider a border dispute.

The Armenian Diaspora's lead organizations are on the record for demanding reparations and land from the modern Republic of Turkey. These claims have been publicly amplified by the lead sponsors of the congressional resolution. With this purpose, the timeline covered by the perennial congressional resolutions over the course of years has changed from covering 1915-1917 to 1915-1923. The latter period includes the four formative years of the young Republic of Turkey and the Turkish National Resistance Movement, whose legitimacy was established with the formation of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on April 23, 1920.

Statement #6: *'Hitler was inspired by what happened to Armenians.'*



FACT: The single version of the speech in which the quoted phrase appears was found insufficiently reliable by Nuremberg prosecutors and was rejected as evidence.

- The alleged quote is attributed to a 1945 Times of London article that cited the quote as having been included in Hitler's 1939 address to his commanders at Obersalzberg.

The Nuremberg tribunal entered into evidence two official versions of the Obersalzberg address in captured German military records. Neither document contains any reference to Hitler's remark about Armenians. In fact, neither document refers to the Jews; Hitler's address was an anti-Polish tirade.

Dr. Robert John, a historian and political analyst of Armenian descent from New York City, declared in his paper "Information and Misinformation," that a commonly used quotation of an alleged statement by Adolf Hitler concerning the Armenian massacres was a forgery and should not be used.

Dr. John demonstrated how he had traced the original document in the Military Branch of the U.S. National Archives after being handed a folder bearing the quotation at a rally outside the United Nations building in New York following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. (From The Armenian Reporter, Vol. XVII, NO. 40 August 2, 1984.)

Misplaced Moral Arguments:

Statement #7: *'U.S. foreign policy must reflect our moral obligation to uphold human rights'*



FACT: Congress is neither the conscience of the world, nor its historian.

- Sacrificing an important, long-term strategic relationship for the shortsighted political gains from appeasing a limited constituency is neither sound nor moral policymaking.

U.S. national interests lay in maintaining a strong U.S.-Turkish relationship, a relationship that cannot survive the repeated efforts of the Congress to sit in judgment on Turkey's history.

- Members of Congress who insist on substituting their judgment for that of international bodies and without due process of law are in no position to claim moral victory.

Rather than denying outrages against Armenians, the Ottoman Empire tried 1,673 individuals by court-martials for crimes committed against Armenians. Moreover, whereas the Turkish government has opened its archives to the use of researchers, Armenian archives and relevant sources remain inaccessible. The U.S. should support a Joint Historical Commission to determine what the facts of history are and refrain from prejudging what such a commission might discover.

- The U.S.'s moral obligation to uphold human rights cannot be fulfilled by hand-picking from historical tragedies on the basis of effective lobbying by one group over another or by ignoring the historical massacres and vast abuses committed by European powers.

Tragedies that are truly forgotten and for which Congress would not dream to seek redemption include English policies that claimed the lives of one million Irish in the mid-19th century, Belgian King Leopold II's insatiable greed that halved the population of Congo during his reign, the genocide of South West Africa's Herero and Namaqua tribes by colonial Germany at the turn of the 20th century.

Tragically, massacres committed against the Turks and Muslims in the Balkans, the Crimea and the Caucasus are also forgotten. By some estimates, nearly 10 million Ottoman Muslims were slaughtered and ethnically cleansed from these regions, millions arriving in impoverished wartime Ottoman Anatolia as refugees, as the Ottoman Empire contracted during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the Balkans alone 1,750,000 Ottoman Muslims were slaughtered and 1 million were forcibly removed from their homelands. During the same years and in the same region that H.Res.252 covers, hundreds and thousands of Ottoman Muslims were massacred and forcefully removed from their homelands as the Russian/Armenian invasion and Armenian Revolt ensued.

Statement #9: *'How is it that it is never a good time to pass this resolution!'*



FACT: It is never a good time to legislate history. H.Res.252, like previous incarnations of the so-called 'Armenian genocide' resolution, seeks to pave the way to try and convict a foreign state in a forum that lacks the requisite authority.

- H.Res.252 undermines efforts to advance peace and reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia.

Since signing of Zurich protocols in October 2009, efforts to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia have proceeded quietly under civil society initiatives. As the two countries seek ways to ratify protocols that will establish a historical commission to investigate the tragic events of 1915, efforts by U.S. and other nations to pass judgment on history threaten to stall negotiations irrevocably.

- H.Res.252 comes at a time when the U.S. critically needs to demonstrate that it is not engaged in a war against Islam.

Yet the resolution glorifies the U.S. record which displays extraordinary sensitivity to suffering Christians juxtaposed against the U.S.'s and absolute indifference toward suffering Muslims during the same years and in the same region.