



THE ARMENIAN CAUSE

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EDITORIAL

Genocide should not be disguised

In the spring of 1915, eighty years ago, began a genocide which surpassed in its scale and cruelty anything history had recorded since the Dark Ages. The Ottoman Turkish government was to spearhead a Pan-Turanic empire which would join people of Turkic origin from Asia Minor all the way to Central Asia. Two million non-Turkic Armenians living in their ancestral homeland on the plains of biblical Mount Ararat stood in the way. They had to be eliminated.

Although there were no television cameras to bring the heart-wrenching images of the carnage into the living rooms of the civilized world, all major newspapers carried graphic reports of the atrocities perpetrated against a peaceful population. The state archives of Armenia, Britain, France, the United States and even Germany - Turkey's ally in WWI - are replete with irrefutable evidence that the plan of annihilating the Armenians was deliberate Turkish state policy. Even the records of the 1919 Turkish court-martials are there to corroborate the same.

At a time when the term genocide had not yet been coined, contemporary statesmen called it a CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY, A DEATH WARRANT TO A WHOLE RACE, or A CAREFULLY PLANNED SCHEME TO EXTINGUISH THE ARMENIAN RACE: words which define what we now call genocide. In fact, the 1948 UN Convention on the prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide recognizes as genocide five categories of crimes, any single one of which would suffice to label the act as such. The 1915 Turkish persecutions against the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire embrace not one, but all five of these categories. This explains why all serious scholarship on the subject of genocide refer to the Armenian case, along with the Jewish Holocaust, as a classical case of genocide.

Because of political expediency and the self-interest of the major powers, the 1915 genocide remained unpunished, a fact that prompted Adolf Hitler to state on the eve of the Holocaust, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Encouraged by the indifference of the world towards the plight of the Armenians, and despite the overwhelming evidence mentioned above, successive Turkish governments have refused to acknowledge the crime of their predecessors. More-



Truth or dare: untangling Turkish-Armenian relations

Raffi K. Hovannisian

April 24, 1995 marks the 80th anniversary of the Genocide committed by the Ottoman Turkish government against the Armenian people beginning in 1915.

The eight decades separating us from this prototype of twentieth-century nation-killings have fundamentally changed the political composition of the region. Virtually no Armenians remain upon their historic territories in what is today eastern Turkey. The Armenian people have been scattered the world over. And a small independent republic recently has come to replace the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic which had been created as part of a joint Bolshevik-Turkish action at the end of 1920.

But one thing has stayed the same. Notwithstanding the eloquent, compelling evidence in the US National Archives, in Canada, and in repositories around the world, successive Turkish governments have denied that Ottoman Turkey committed genocide. Making facially plausible but essentially empty arguments of an Armenian "rebellion," a mutually deadly civil war, and Armenian ties with Great Britain, France and Russia, the Turkish authorities have flouted the worldwide testimony, rejected the charge, and—like the Nazis who followed—sought to deflect blame by accusing the victims themselves.

What is more, Turkish officialdom, far from educating new generations about the crimes of its predecessors, has attempted to cover up the evidence of genocide and has gone to great lengths to entice North American and other apologists of high repute to assist in this effort.

Perhaps the time has come for Turkey to reassess the propriety of its approach, take Germany and its road to redemption as an exemplary precedent for such reassessment, and begin the process of graduating into the post-genocide era.

Turkey and the newly sovereign Republic of Armenia are neighbors. Since its declaration of independence in September 1991, Armenia has integrated into its foreign policy the desire to normalize relations with all neighboring countries, including Turkey. Yet Ankara, citing a variety of domestic and international considerations, has not reciprocated in kind or intent, instead refusing to establish a diplomatic relationship with Yerevan, closing the border to all commercial crossings and humanitarian

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Russian Duma recognizes the Armenian Genocide

Turkey dismayed at Duma resolution

The Russian Duma unanimously recognized the Armenian Genocide on April 14, 1995, also condemning the Genocide perpetrators the Turkish Ottoman government.

Director of the Moscow based Russian-Armenian Commonwealth Fund, Aram Karapetian characterized the Russian State Duma's April 14 resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide as a major step in the pursuit of the Armenian Cause. According to Karapetian, resolution passage activities had already begun at the beginning of 1994, when he and Edward Hovannesian raised the issue of recognizing the Armenian Genocide during meetings with Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma, Alexander Vengerovsky. This was followed by meetings with 12 factions of the State Duma and a statement by the Russian-Armenian Commonwealth Fund condemning the Armenian Genocide. 1,500 telegrams calling for condemnation of the Genocide were also addressed and sent to the State Duma.

"The Russian-Armenian Commonwealth Fund took up this difficult task, and as you can see, the first victory has been attained," Karapetian stated. He announced the Armenian Genocide resolution was submitted for consideration to the Russian State Duma on April 12 and on the evening of April 13, meetings were held with representatives of all parliamentary factions so as to ensure a quorum for adoption of the declaration. On April 14 at 11:56 p.m., by a vote of 224, the resolution, recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, was adopted by the Russian Duma. Karapetian also mentioned that Turkish leaders sent a special diplomatic note to the Russian Foreign Ministry in connection with the resolution's adoption.

An international academic conference dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide also took place in Moscow on April 18-19, 1995, and a number of rallies, including a demonstration in front of the Turkish Embassy, took place on April 23, 1995.

A delegation headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Lower House of the Russian Parliament Artur Chilingarov arrived in Armenia on April 23, to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. "We have arrived in Armenia to commemorate those who fell victim to the Genocide 80 years ago," stated Chilingarov. He also said that the visit of this delegation underscored friendly relations between Armenia and Russia.

Konstantin Zadulin, chairman of the Duma Commission on Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs and a member of the visiting delegation, expressed hope the adoption of the Duma statement would make it possible to prevent another genocide in Armenia in the future.

During a visit with the leadership of the Armenian parliament, Chilingarov presented the official copy of the Duma statement to his Armenian counterparts and further stressed the importance of Russian-Armenian cooperation. Armenian Parliament chairman Babken Araktsian expressed gratitude to the Duma leadership for recognizing the Genocide.

Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ferhat Ataman

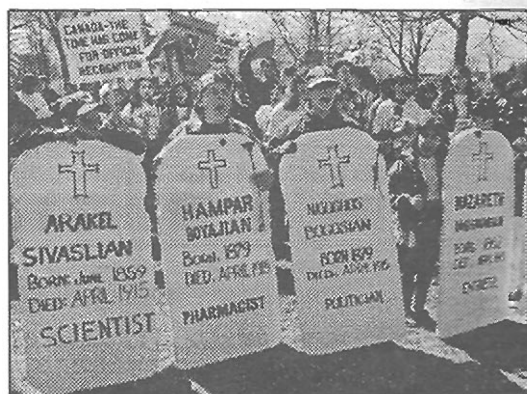
Message from Canada's Prime Minister

I am honoured to extend my greetings and sincere best wishes to the members of Canada's Armenian community on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian tragedy of 1915.

Canada recognizes and deplores the fact that a great number of Armenians were killed during the wars which marked the end of the Ottoman empire and extends its sympathy to the Armenian community. Following the war, numerous displaced Armenians came to Canada and their contribution, as well as that of their descendants, has greatly enriched Canadian society. It is my hope that the memories of the past will serve to remind us of the importance of tolerance and respect for the diversity of our people.

Please accept my best wishes on this occasion.

Jean Chrétien
Ottawa 1995



Reuters Photo

Protest at the Turkish Embassy in Ottawa, April 24, 1995.

expressed Turkey's dissatisfaction with the April 14 Russian Parliament resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, international news agencies reported.

Ataman called the resolution an "extreme step," and accused Russia of endangering Turkey's territorial integrity when it used "historic Armenia," in its resolution. The spokesperson also said the resolution not only will affect Turkish-Russian relations, but also hinders the advances made in normalizing Turkish relations with Armenia. Sources close to the Turkish Embassy in Moscow reported that Erdan Tezger, a representative of the Embassy, visited the Russian Foreign Ministry, to officially express his government's dismay over the Duma resolution.

Tezger told Russian Foreign Ministry representative Vasili Ystratov that a so-called "Western Armenia" can never be considered an Armenian homeland, and further stressed efforts between Armenia and Turkey to normalize relations. The Turkish representative stated the Russian Duma's intervention in this matter, with the active participation of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, was impeding the betterment of Armeno-Turkish relations and also was straining Turkish-Russian ties.

Ystratov told Tezger that Duma decisions have always stemmed from Russia's best interests and are taken without the intervention of foreign entities.

Bulgaria recognizes the Armenian Genocide

On April 20, 1995, the Bulgarian Parliament paid respect to the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide with a moment of silence. An official statement concerning the Genocide, and adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament, was read on Bulgarian television. The statement reads, in pertinent part: "We, as a civilized nation, having signed the United Nations convention on genocide, as well as all major international agreements on human rights, officially commemorate this anniversary and announce we will struggle to prevent the recurrence of genocide as we approach the 21st century." The resolution received 94.5 percent of the votes, with a Turkish minority representative as its lone opposition.

Kurdish Parliament-in-Exile recognizes Genocide

The Kurdish Parliament-in-Exile, which began operating last week despite massive Turkish opposition, issued a statement on April 23, 1995, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In the statement, the Parliament also discussed KURDISH complacency in the Genocide during the early part of the century. Below is the text of that resolution:

In addition to the Kurds, there are Armenians and Assyrians living in Kurdistan. The invasion and occupation of their lands have adversely affected all three constituent peoples. The implementation of divide-and-rule policies have resulted in internal feuding. The natives of millenniums have fought one another and forced each other to migrate.

A most telling example of this policy was put into action in 1915. For a few years, we were provoked to kill one another in order to benefit our self-appointed leaders.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman administrators began a policy of annihilating the Armenians and the Assyrians. This was a plan long in the making, meticulously carried out with the aid of some tribal Kurds who were organized into an auxiliary force, the 'Hamidiye Alaylari' or Hamidiye Brigades, of the Istanbul government. Today, a similar force has been established, the 'Koy Koruculari' or village guards. In that singular act of brutality at the turn of the century, millions of Armenians, Assyrians, and Kurds were murdered and many more were forced to embrace the coldness of Diaspora.

The policy of divide and rule has been inherited by the new Turkish government in Ankara. The same hideous crimes are now inflicted on the Kurds. At times, the Kurdish religious communities are provoked into fighting one another, as the Alevis and Sunnis do from time to time. A more sinister plan is the empowerment of an auxiliary force of mercenary Kurds to fight against their fellow Kurds who are on the side of freedom and liberty. New chapters of blood and pain, suffering and migration are written daily in the history of Turkey.

A cursory look at the history of the Ottomans reveals more about the nature of the Turkish state's practices. In Asia Minor,

Armenian parliament adopts Genocide resolution

On April 21, 1995, the Armenian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution calling for international recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide. The resolution was presented by member of parliament Suren Zolyan, and passed by a vote of 171 to 0. The text of the resolution,

"April 24, 1995 marks the 80th anniversary the Armenian Genocide, one of biggest crimes committed against humanity. Under the state-planned Genocide by the Ottoman Empire, 1.5 million Armenians were martyred in their native lands and elsewhere, while others were dispersed throughout the world.

The Armenian Genocide became not only the greatest tragedy in Armenian history, but a symbol of state-sponsored brutality, sounding the alarm against not only genocide, but any instance of ethnic or racial hatred.

The Parliament of the Republic of Armenia expresses its deep gratitude to those, nations, parliaments, political, public organizations and officials, as well as academic representatives and all those who have protested and condemned the Armenian Genocide, demanding its recognition, based on internationally accepted norms and values.

The Parliament of the Republic of Armenia specifically emphasizes approved measures by the European Parliament and Russian Duma, which recognize the crime committed against the Armenian people in Western Armenia as Genocide and their condemnation thereof.

Today, 80 years following this crime, the Republic of Armenia, and Armenians in the Diaspora, mark this mournful anniversary, in honor of the innocent martyrs, in defense of historical truth. The Parliament of the Republic of Armenia being lead by the concern of preventing such crimes, vows to achieve international recognition and condemnation of the 1915 Armenian Genocide."

historians tell us, there were once vibrant societies, different languages, and various cultures. Today, there are no vestiges left of these communities. A similar policy is now in the works for Kurdistan: Some Kurds are killed, many are legally and forcibly made to become Turks, and more are forced to flee in an attempt to end the way of life which is known as Kurdistan.

As the Chair of the Executive Council of the Parliament of Kurdistan in Exile, a representative body of the Kurds in Diaspora, I am urging the world public opinion not to let history repeat itself and not to remain silent to the annihilation of the Kurds.

Tomorrow is the 80th anniversary of the massacres of the Armenians and the Assyrians. Let history note that we at the Parliament of Kurdistan in Exile share the pain of the survivors and their relations. We unequivocally denounce the act and condemn the perpetrators of this inhumanity, the Ottomans and their collaborators of the Kurdish auxiliary forces. We urge you all to do the same.

Zubeyir Aydar,
Chair of the Executive Council

President Clinton issues statement on Armenian "massacres"

On April 22, 1995, US President Clinton issued a statement on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. A delegation representing the Armenian National Committee of America met with senior foreign policy advisors for both President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore to discuss the Armenian American community's profound disappointment with the President's retreat from use of the word "genocide" in his statement commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

As a candidate in 1992, President Clinton had spoken of the Armenian Genocide and used the word "genocide" to describe the systematic and deliberate destruction of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Turkish government.

During the meetings, ANCA representatives stressed that any efforts to diminish the nature or scope of the Armenian Genocide were morally unacceptable to the Armenian American community. They stressed that political considerations should never be allowed to influence the resolve of the United States to speak out against and condemn any and all instances of genocide, past or present. They added that the President's statement, which should have been an opportunity for him to reach out to Armenians during their solemn remembrance, had instead caused widespread dissatisfaction among Armenian American voters.

The following is the text of President Clinton's statement:

Statement by President Bill Clinton

On this solemn day, I join with Armenians throughout the United States, in Armenia, and around the world in remembering the 80th Anniversary of the Armenians who perished, victims of massacres in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Their loss is our loss; their courage a testament to mankind's indomitable spirit.

It is this spirit that kept the hope of Armenians alive through centuries of persecution. It is this spirit that lives today in the hearts of all Armenians—in their church, in their language, in their culture. And, it is this spirit that underpins the remarkable resilience and courage of Armenians around the world. The Arme-

Message from Ontario Premier

Although I'm unable to attend, I join in spirit all those who have gathered to participate in this commemorative service for the Armenian slain in the First World War.

April 24th is a date of profound meaning for many people in Armenia, in our own province and nation, and around the world. The terrible misery and suffering caused by war must prompt the international community - and each of us in our daily roles - to work harder to secure in the present the foundations for a future of peace, understanding and cooperation.

Bob Rae
April 22, 1995

CIS council recognizes the Genocide

The CIS Interparliamentary Council also adopted a resolution on April 28, 1995, expressing deep sympathy to the loss suffered by the Armenian people at the hands of Ottoman Turks, citing several United Nations conventions on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, and condemning the perpetrators of the Genocide, calling it a "crime against humanity."

nian American community—now nearly one million strong—has made enormous contributions to America. Now, with the emergence of an independent Armenia, the Armenian people are bringing the same determination to building democracy and a modern economy in their native land.

Even as we commemorate the past—which we must never forget—we commit ourselves today to Armenia's future as an independent and prosperous nation, at peace with its neighbors and with close ties to the West. That is why the United States has provided more than \$445 million in assistance to alleviate humanitarian needs and support democratic and economic reform. I will do everything in my power to preserve assistance levels for Armenia.

I continue to be deeply concerned about the conflict in the region surrounding Armenia. The terrible effects of this war have been felt throughout the Caucasus: tens of thousands have died, more than a million have been displaced, economies have been shattered, and security threatened. The United States is committed to working with the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to move beyond their cease-fire to a lasting political settlement. I plan to nominate a Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabagh at the rank of Ambassador to advance those negotiations. And I pledge United States support of OSCE efforts to back that settlement with a peacekeeping force.

The US also seeks to encourage the regional cooperation that will build prosperity and reinforce peace. I commend the recent decision of the Government of Turkey to open air corridors to Armenia, which will make assistance delivery faster, cheaper, and more reliable. We had urged that it do so and hope this is a first step toward lifting other blockades in the region, initially for humanitarian deliveries and then overall. Open borders would help create the conditions needed for economic recovery and development, including construction of a Caspian oil pipeline through the Caucasus to Turkey, which is a key to long-term prosperity in the region.

The Administration's efforts—assistance in support of reform, reinforced efforts toward peace settlement, building broad regional cooperation and encouraging the development of a Caspian oil pipeline through the Caucasus to Turkey—represent the key building blocks of U.S. policy to support the development of an independent and prosperous Armenia.

On this 80th anniversary of the Armenian massacres, I call upon all peoples to work to prevent future acts of such inhumanity. And, as we remember the past, let us also rededicate ourselves to building a democratic Armenia of prosperity and lasting peace.

Commemorative events in Armenia

Thousands gather at Genocide Memorial on April 24

Thousands of Armenians marched through Yerevan, on Monday, April 24, 1995, eventually reaching the Genocide Memorial at Dzidzernakabert. There the crowd observed a wreath-laying ceremony by President Levon Ter Petrosyan. Also in attendance were His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, and Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh President Robert Kocharian, along with other dignitaries and governmental officials. After laying flowers at the monument, built in 1965, the Armenian leaders attended a special memorial service at the cathedral of the Holy Sea in Etchmiadzin. Church services were also held throughout Armenia and in all Armenian churches throughout the world.

Beginning at dawn and lasting late into the night, Armenians climbed the hill to Dzidzernakabert to pay their respects to the martyrs.

Genocide Museum inaugurated

The highlight of the day was the inauguration and opening of a Genocide Museum at Dzidzernakabert. The museum will not only serve as a reminder of the past, but also as a research establishment gathering resources from throughout the world.

Armenian Vice-President Gagik Harutunian, who also served as the vice-chair of the State Council on the 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, stated: "This museum will not only become a permanent reminder of the Genocide, it will bring together all resources gathered throughout the world, as well as serving as a research establishment, a national center and a voice, whence the entire world and all peoples must be reminded that acts such as this will always be condemned, and that they are crimes against humanity and must never be repeated."

His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, was on hand to bless the museum. He brought with him the remains of a Genocide victim, he had personally retrieved from Der-el-Zor desert, where thousands of Armenians perished in grueling death



marches.

In his remarks the Catholicos said "let the museum serve as a new Unsilenceable Belltower," referring to the famous literary work by Armenia's renowned writer Baruyr Sevag.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, accompanied by Harutunian, Armenian Parliament Chairman Babken Araktsian, Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian and Robert Kocharian, president of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony and toured the museum's facilities.

International conference on Genocide

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian government organized a three-day international symposium entitled the Genocide Question, for which academicians from all over the world assembled at Yerevan's National Academy of Sciences on April 21, 1995, to present theses on the Genocide issue.

At the inaugural session of the symposium, President Ter-Petrosyan stated: "The Genocide was a purely political program worked out in the interest of the Ottoman Empire and aimed at the physical extermination of Armenians living on its territory,"

His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians also addressed the conference, stressing the importance of academic research and the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

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⇐1 Truth ...

shipments, and thereby completing an Azerbaijani blockade of Armenia.

Turkey has not acted in good faith—to the mutual detriment of the two nations. Just as Armenia needs access to Turkish roads and ports to reach European destinations, so too does Turkey require unhindered transit over the Armenian railways to points in the rest of the former Soviet Union. More importantly, at a time when Turkey faces a full internal and external agenda, both political and economic, its interests dictate that it put away once and for all the ghastly ghost in its closet, just as Armenia's interests demand peace on its western frontier.

The Turkish-Armenian knot that history has bequeathed to both peoples can be untangled only by the normalization of relations. And the record of the past years demonstrates that normalization can result, not from a puerile fiction that nothing has happened in their history, but from a brave reexamination of the issues dividing them, the definition of a program for negotiations, and the conclusion of a comprehensive, lasting solution achieved by direct dialogue and hard, honest exchanges of view.

Entering into political discourse with Armenia, rather than avoiding it, will enable Turkey to free itself and its generations from constantly having to look back over the shoulder of their past. Young Turks will be able to learn the lessons associated with recognizing the excesses of the Ottoman state, as well as the heroic stories of individual Turks who saved hundreds of Armenians from certain death. And Turkey will send a signal to countries near and far that it is prepared to take the high road in advancing bilateral relationships.

The proposed process will be easy neither for Turks nor for Armenians. In fact, current governments on both sides of the border may offer resistance to this approach, arguing that it is not pragmatic or sensitive to the existing political landscape. Domestic opinion, for its part, may be unleashed to block development of discussions.

But there is no escape. If Turkey and Armenia want to attain the heights of true normalization—window dressing excluded—then they must start facing the key questions of their common legacy. And these are, no doubt, the keys to a peaceful, prosperous, and harmonious future.

Turks and Armenians will have to defy the odds of history, grapple with their thorny issues, and ultimately give resolution to them. They owe it to future generations who are destined to live side by side in the same geopolitical neighborhood.

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⇐1 Editorial ...

over, some world leaders, as well as some members of the media, ever anxious not to offend the Turkish ally, avoid using the term "genocide" when referring to the 1915 events in question. Instead, they disguise it in euphemisms such as "tragic events." In their haste to cater to the sensibility of the perpetrator, they overlook the sensibility of the victim.

To them we say: the 1912 sinking of the Titanic was a tragic event; so was the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. However, sweeping Western Armenia clean of its native population is called something else.

When by the order of the Turkish government, an entire ethnic group is targeted for annihilation; when all able-bodied men belonging to that group are rounded up and slaughtered; when the rest of the community - women, children, and the aged - are uprooted from their ancestral homeland of three millennia and are marched into the desert without provisions for food, water, and shelter; when killer units of bloodthirsty convicts are released from prison for the express purpose of slaughter and are unleashed to prey upon defenseless caravans of deportees; when Armenian girls are sold for slavery in Turkish harems, and toddlers, too young to remember, are snatched from their mothers to be raised Turks; when the Turkish government refuses to allow the Red Cross to provide food, water, and medical assistance to the hapless deportees; and when, as a result, one and a half million souls perish through the most horrible deaths, and the survivors are not permitted ever to return to their ancestral homes...that is called G E N O C I D E.

Eighty years after the Turkish persecutions of the Armenians and fifty years after the Holocaust, the scourge of genocide still raises its ugly head every few years whether in Africa, Asia, or Europe. The cavalier attitude of some world leaders towards the 1915 Armenian Genocide may have something to do with it...

The West, too, should have an interest in promoting a fresh, new approach to the relationship of a NATO ally with another friendly, strategically-placed country. For reasons of regional security, economic development, and increased cooperation in a potentially volatile area of the world, Western governments might consider reassessing their own policies and coming in on the side of creative, contemporary solutions that address, not evade, the problem in question.

So that this century concludes on a note different from that on which it began, Ankara as the senior government should be persuaded to take the initiative in creating a good-faith, confidence-building environment free of the rigid policies of the past and conducive to open and frank communications.

While the 80th anniversary of the Genocide may come and go—without progress—as in preceding years, it would seem appropriate that this year's commemoration should challenge Armenians to continue to seek redress through dialogue and Turks to search their souls for who they were, who they are, and, should they take the right step, who they can be in regional and international affairs.

Turkey might properly assume this higher mission by looking truth in the eye and daring to turn a new page in Turkish-Armenian relations.