

Former Secretaries of State and Defense Object to H.Res.106

October 1, 2007

The following are letters sent to the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives by former US Secretaries of State and former US Secretaries of Defense voicing their objection to House Resolution 106 that asks for US recognition of Armenian allegations of genocide.

LETTER BY SECRETARIES OF STATE TO SPEAKER PELOSI

September 25, 2007

The Honorable
Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0508

Dear Madam Speaker:

We are writing to express concern that H. Res. 106 could soon be put to a vote. Passage of the resolution would harm our foreign policy objectives to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia. It would also strain our relations with Turkey, and would endanger our national security interests in the region, including the safety of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We do not minimize or deny the enormous significance of the horrible tragedy suffered by ethnic Armenians from 1915 to 1923. During our tenures as Secretaries of State, we each supported Presidential statements recognizing the mass killings and forced exile of Armenians. It has been longstanding U.S. policy to encourage reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia and to urge the government of Turkey to acknowledge the tragedy. We understand the Administration continues to urge the Turkish government to reexamine its history and to encourage both Turkey and Armenia to work towards reconciliation, including normalizing relations and opening the border. There are some hopeful signs already that both parties are engaging each other. We believe that a public statement by the U.S. Congress at this juncture is likely to undermine what has been painstakingly achieved to date.

We must also recognize the important contributions Turkey is making to U.S. national security, including security and stability in the Middle East and Europe. The United States continues to rely on Turkey for its geo-strategic importance. Turkey is an indispensable partner to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, helping U.S. troops to combat terrorism and build security. By providing the U.S. military with access to Turkish airspace, military bases, and the border crossing with Iraq, Turkey is a linchpin in the transshipment of vital cargo and fuel resources to U.S. troops, coalition partners, and Iraqi civilians. Turkish troops serve shoulder-to-shoulder with distinction with U.S. and other NATO allies in the Balkans. Turkey is also a transit hub for non-OPEC oil and gas and remains key to our efforts to help the Euro-Atlantic community bolster its energy security by providing alternative supply sources and routes around Russia and Iran.

It is our view that passage of this resolution could quickly extend beyond symbolic significance. The popularly elected Turkish Grand National Assembly might react strongly to a House resolution, as it did to a French National Assembly resolution a year ago. The result could endanger our national security interests in the region, including our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and damage efforts to promote reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey. We strongly urge you to prevent the resolution from reaching the House floor.

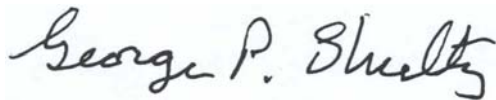
Sincerely,



Alexander M. Haig, Jr.



Henry A. Kissinger



George P. Shultz



James A. Baker III



Lawrence S. Eagleburger



Warren Christopher



Madeleine K. Albright



Colin L. Powell

LETTER BY SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE TO SPEAKER PELOSI

September 7, 2007

The Honorable
Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:


We write today to convey our deep concern regarding the damage that passage of H. Res. 106 could do to relations between the United States and Turkey, a long-time NATO ally and a country which plays a critical role in supporting U.S. national security interests in the Balkans, greater Middle East, the Black Sea region and Afghanistan. The depth and breadth of our defense and security relationship with Turkey are considerable, and, as former Secretaries of Defense, we value Turkey's friendship and partnership.

Turkey makes numerous and substantial contributions to U.S. goals and interests abroad, including its close relationship with Israel, its deployment of military forces to the Balkans and its contribution to the NATO effort to defeat terrorism and support democracy in Afghanistan.

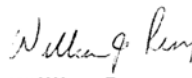
Just as public opinion plays a crucial role in our own country, the reaction of the Turkish public to the passage of H. Res. 106 would be considerable. Passage of H. Res. 106 would have a direct, detrimental effect on the operational capabilities, safety and well being of our armed forces in Iraq and in Afghanistan because the Turkish parliament would likely respond to the Turkish public's call for action by restricting or cutting off U.S. access to the Turkish air base at Incirlik and closing the crossing into Iraq at the Flabur Gate. The Turkish parliament would also likely retract blanket flight clearances for U.S. military overflights, which are vital to transporting supplies and fuel to our troops. We also believe the increasingly open debate about this issue in Turkey would surely be restricted by a negative public reaction to U.S. Congressional action. We are also concerned that any potential steps toward better relations between Turkey and Armenia will be set back by any action in the U. S. Congress.

In stating our opposition to H. Res. 106, we do not suggest that anything other than the most terrible of tragedies took place as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated in the early part of the last century. As President Bush and other Presidents before him have done, we recognize the need to acknowledge and learn from the tragedy. We respect that this issue is of great concern to you, and hope that you can consider other appropriate ways to highlight, commemorate and honor the memory of the victims without doing damage to our contemporary relations with modern Turkey.

Sincerely,


Frank Carlucci


William Cohen


William Perry