

DIPLOMATIC HISTORY: The Turkey-Armenia Protocols

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DIPLOMATIC HISTORY:
**The 2009 Protocol on the Establishment
of Diplomatic Relations between the
Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey
and
The 2009 Protocol on the Development
of Bilateral Relations between the
Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia**

By David L. Phillips



Institute for the Study of Human Rights
in collaboration with the
Future of Diplomacy Project, Harvard Kennedy School

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) was the first academic center in the world to be founded on an interdisciplinary commitment to the study of human rights. ISHR also bridges the study and practice of human rights on both a national and international level. It promotes dialogue between scholars and practitioners through human rights research, education, lectures, conferences, and capacity-building activities. ISHR is currently the largest human rights program for graduate studies in the United States.

The Future of Diplomacy Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs is dedicated to promoting the study and understanding of diplomacy, negotiation, and statecraft in international politics. The Project aims to build the Harvard Kennedy School's ability to teach in this area, support research in modern diplomatic practice, and build public understanding of diplomacy's indispensable role in an increasingly complex and globalized world. The Project redefines diplomacy in a modern context through the lens of leading practitioners who are engaged in innovative means of conflict prevention and resolution at the negotiation table and beyond.

The author has been extensively involved in Turkish-Armenian issues since 1999. This monograph draws on the author's discussions with Turkish and Armenian officials directly involved in negotiations, as well as Swiss and U.S. mediators. Interviews were also conducted with Turkish and Armenian scholars, analysts, think tank representatives, and media in Turkey and Armenia. The monograph is further informed by workshops organized by Columbia University and the Future of Diplomacy Project at the Harvard Kennedy School.

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Introduction

The Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey (hereafter called “the Protocols”) were signed on October 10, 2009. The Protocols represented an unprecedented advancement in relations between Turkey and Armenia. However, failure to ratify them was a significant bilateral, regional, and international setback.

This monograph is a diplomatic history of events leading up to the signing of the Protocols. It assesses the work of Turkish and Armenian diplomats negotiating the Protocols and the role of Swiss mediation, as well as the positions of the United States, France, Russia, and Iran. The monograph evaluates ensuing problems, including conditions imposed on ratification, as well as the effect of domestic politics in Turkey and Armenia on normalization.

Turkish-Armenian relations are also considered in regional context. The Middle East is in the midst of transformation, with Turkey playing a central role. Turkey is involved in the troubled transitions of Egypt and Libya, and at odds with Syria and Iran. Other regional issues, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) conflict, Cyprus, and relations with Armenia are stalemated. At present, Armenia is not a foreign policy priority for Ankara.

The Protocols may be dormant, yet they still provide a roadmap to the way forward. Studying the history of Turkish-Armenian rapprochement serves as the basis for specific recommendations provided in this monograph aimed at (i) intensifying civil society activities, (ii) expanding commercial cooperation, and (iii) stimulating intergovernmental contact. These pages are more than a record of historical events. Lessons can also be applied to conflict resolution efforts in other countries facing similar challenges.

History

Turks and Armenians are divided by different perceptions of history and separated by a border closed to travel and trade. Central to their disagreement is the huge gap in national perceptions of events that occurred at the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Sultan Abdül Hamid II launched bloody pogroms in the late nineteenth century that resulted in the deaths of an estimated 250,000 Armenians. On April 24, 1915, approximately 800 Armenian community leaders were rounded up and deported. Armenians were systematically eliminated from their historic homeland. More than a million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923.

Some Turks dispute these facts, underscoring the war context in which events occurred. According to Üstün Ergüder, former director of the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University, "Armenians are viewed as traitors for rebelling against the Ottoman Empire and collaborating with the Russian army, which invaded." After Russia's Communist revolution, Tsarist forces withdrew protection for Armenians who were deemed a security risk and deported. "Though the rebellion was in the East," notes Ergüder, "Armenians were deported from all over the country."¹ The Allied Powers called for the prosecution of the Young Turks after World War I; Turkish trials convicted government officials for crimes against the Armenians.

Turks also talk about "shared suffering," recalling their forefathers who were driven from homes in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Black Sea region as the Ottoman Empire collapsed. An estimated 4.4 million Muslims lived primarily in the Balkans under Ottoman rule at the beginning of the twentieth century. Between 1911 and 1926, an estimated 2.9 million were either killed or forced to migrate to Turkey.² At the beginning of World War I, the Ottoman Empire spanned 4.3 million square kilometers. By war's end, it was reduced to 770,000 square kilometers.

Most Turks reject the use of the term "genocide" to characterize what happened to the Armenians and object to efforts aimed at gaining international recognition. The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) was established in 1975 "to compel the Turkish Government to acknowledge publicly its responsibility for the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, pay reparations, and cede territory for an Armenian homeland."³ Between 1975 and 1982, ASALA was responsible for the assassination of thirty-four Turkish diplomats around the world.

Turkish-Armenian relations are also influenced by the conflict over NK, an Armenian territory placed by Stalin in Soviet Azerbaijan. Violence started in February 1988, with pogroms and killings of Armenians in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait. Karabakh Armenians responded with reprisals and establishment of self-defense forces. In early 1990, Moscow introduced a state of

emergency as violence escalated. When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan declared independence. NK followed by declaring itself independent from Azerbaijan in September 1991. A full-scale war ensued by the end of that year, with Armenians capturing Shusha and Lachin in May 1992. Azerbaijan imposed an economic blockade of Armenia and NK and launched a counterattack. Armenian forces opened the Lachin corridor connecting NK with Armenia, and NK formally declared independence on January 6, 1992. Approximately 900,000 people were displaced by the conflict.

Turkey expressed solidarity with its Turkic brethren in Azerbaijan by joining Baku's economic blockade of Armenia, sealing Doğu Kapi and the Iğdır border gates. Though a ceasefire was negotiated in 1994, no final peace agreement was reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Turkey recognized Armenia, but did not establish diplomatic relations. Armenia's western border with Turkey and its eastern border with Azerbaijan remain closed to this day.

Stakeholders

Relations between Turkey and Armenia are influenced by regional events, as well as the global context. Turkey sits at the crossroads between Europe and Asia. It is a major energy hub, transporting oil and gas to European markets. Turkey is a NATO member. As a secular and pro-Western democracy, Turkey is a vital partner in the struggle against extremism. Armenia lies between Turkey and Azerbaijan along the ancient Silk Road. The Armenian Diaspora is a powerful force, internationalizing Armenian issues in the region and worldwide.

The United States

The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, was outspoken about the mass killing of Armenians in the early twentieth century. In 1981, President Ronald Reagan issued an executive order recognizing the Armenian genocide. Subsequent presidents have taken more ambiguous positions. They call for genocide recognition during their campaigns, and then reverse course upon entering the White House. On April 24, Genocide Remembrance Day, presidents issue statements noting the mass killings, atrocities, and suffering of Armenians. Their statements always fall short of explicitly characterizing the events as “genocide,” while using other words to define the term.

Serving presidents have weighty considerations. They are reminded by their national security advisers of the special relationship between the United States and Turkey and the important “strategic partnership” between the two countries. Turkey played a critical role in containing the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Turkish bases became NATO facilities and U.S. nuclear weapons were deployed in Turkey. Beginning with the Korean conflict, U.S. and Turkish forces served side-by-side for half a century. Turkey was an invaluable ally during the 1991 Gulf War, despite concerns about financial losses resulting from international sanctions on Iraq. President Turgut Özal overcame domestic opposition to ensure Turkey’s cooperation with Operation Provide Comfort, which provided humanitarian assistance to Iraqi Kurds fleeing reprisals from Saddam Hussein, and Operation Northern Watch, which monitored Saddam through a no-fly zone in Iraq’s air space. The United States heralds Turkey as a secular, pro-Western democracy, serving as an example to the broader Muslim community and as a moderating influence to countries in Central Asia.

The Armenian lobby effectively represents the interests of its Armenian-Americans, who number about 1.2 million. Many Armenians arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth century, after the Hamidian massacres of 1894–1896, and after the deportation and genocide of 1915–1923. The community is politically represented by two competing groups: the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) and the Armenian National Committee of America

(ANCA). Both have a strong presence in Washington. The AAA and ANCA have different organizational cultures, but they share an overarching goal: recognition of the Armenian genocide by the U.S. government and Congress.

In 2000, House Resolution (H. Res) 596 moved through the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) by a vote of 24 to 11 in the waning days of the 106th Congress.⁴ Just as the bill was about to come to the floor, President Bill Clinton called Speaker Dennis Hastert and asked him to pull the resolution. The president invoked national security concerns about terrorism and emphasized the need for Turkey's assistance in meeting threats to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

The Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was established to resolve the NK conflict. The Minsk Group is co-chaired by the United States, Russia, and France. One of President George W. Bush's first foreign policy efforts involved NK. Secretary of State Colin Powell joined Armenia's President Robert Kocharian, former head of NK's defense committee, and Azerbaijan's President Heidar Aliyev at Key West, Florida in May 2001. Though the two leaders came close to an agreement, the deal unraveled. Kocharian's attendance at Key West was his last official visit to the United States.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Turkey became a pivotal partner in the fight against Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, despite attacks by home-grown radical Islamists against targets in Turkey. Turkey twice assumed overall command of NATO's International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF). Incirlik Air Force Base in southeast Turkey became a major staging ground and supply hub for NATO operations. Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2001–2005, maintained, "To win the war against terrorism, we have to reach out to hundreds of millions of moderate and tolerant people in the Muslim world." Wolfowitz called Turkey a "truly indispensable nation," maintaining that "Turkey is crucial to bridging the dangerous gap between the West and the Muslim world" whose "partnership with the United States has become even more important in the wake of the crisis that has gripped the world since September 11."⁵

Turkey plays an important role in the G-20 and as the world's seventeenth largest economy. As an energy hub, Turkey is essential to the West's strategy for diversifying energy supplies. Turkey helped finance the \$3 billion, 1,100-mile-long Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, which opened in July 2006 and transports energy supplies from the Caspian Sea to Europe via Turkey. Today the BTC delivers 1 million barrels of oil per day to the port of Ceyhan in the eastern Mediterranean. BTC is politically symbolic, signifying Azerbaijan's reorientation away from Russia to the West. Turkey is also a major investor in the \$12 billion Nabucco pipeline, which aims to transport natural gas from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to Western markets. In addition, it is a new partner

with Russia's Gazprom in "South Stream," a Russian-Bulgarian-Italian joint venture transporting natural gas along a route that bypasses Ukraine.

Turkey's foreign policy has become increasingly independent of the United States after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a landslide victory in Turkey's general elections on November 3, 2002. The AKP gained more than two-thirds of the seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), returning Turkey to single-party rule for the first time in fifteen years. As Turkey became more confident and prosperous, it also became more assertive, Islamic, and independent of Washington.

Abdullah Gül served as prime minister until a constitutional amendment allowed Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was jailed for four months for publicly reading a poem with Islamist overtones, to assume office. During his meeting with Bush and his national security team at the White House in July 2002, Erdoğan argued against going to war to remove Saddam Hussein. He believed that the war was unjustified and illegal. Erdoğan warned Bush that Shi'a extremists would take over Iraq and that a quasi-independent Kurdish state would emerge in Iraqi Kurdistan. He was concerned that Kurds in Turkey would seek something similar.

On March 1, 2003, the TGNA voted on a measure authorizing transit of the U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division through Turkey into Northern Iraq. Though a narrow majority voted in favor, the TGNA fell three votes short of the required absolute majority. Failure to open the northern front and delays in authorizing the over-flight of U.S. war planes incensed U.S. officials. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld reproached Turkish officials: "We have not been able to gain control in Iraq because you did not allow our forces to cross into northern Iraq."⁶

U.S.-Turkish relations worsened when U.S. troops detained, hooded, and evicted from Iraq eleven Turkish soldiers implicated in a plot to assassinate Kurdish officials on July 4, 2003. In response, Turks burned U.S. flags outside the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and a bomb exploded near the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul. Turkish officials resented the Bush administration for ignoring their advice and pursuing policies that destabilized the region. Turkish media accused the United States of providing weapons and money to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and supporting its Iranian sister organization. Ankara believed that then-Senator Joseph R. Biden's confederation plan was laying the ground to divide Iraq and steward the emergence of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan. Turks were also outraged by the torture and humiliation of Muslim detainees at Abu Ghraib, and the assault by U.S. troops on the Sunni stronghold of Fallujah. Former Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Gündüz Aktan fueled "conspiracy theories," writing, "The United States aims to control Iraqi oil, instead of bringing democracy to the country, eliminate Islam, divide Iraq into three sections, use the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party against us, ignore the Turkmens and give Kirkuk to the Kurds, paving the

way for Kurds to divide Turkey.”⁷ By the end of 2005, a majority of Turks viewed the United States as the greatest threat to Turkey’s security.⁸

Erdoğan took steps to improve U.S.-Turkish relations. At an AKP party meeting, Erdoğan affirmed that relations between Turkey and the United States remained one of the pillars of Turkish foreign policy. Recalling fifty years of cooperation, he declared that “improving Turkish-U.S. ties is a priority.” He highlighted areas of shared interest: “Iraq, solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Caucasus, stability in Central Asia, reform efforts in the Middle East, reconstruction in Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism, and energy security.” He also emphasized “finding some peace to the Armenian claims.” Erdoğan continued, “The Turkish nation has never forgotten the support that the U.S. extended in many issues . . . the two countries need each other today and tomorrow.”⁹

The European Union

Turkey applied for EU membership on April 14, 1987. While former Warsaw Pact countries were on a fast track, Turkey—a long-time NATO ally—was not given a starting date for negotiations on its candidacy. At the 1997 EU-Luxembourg Summit, Luxembourg’s Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker said, “A country in which torture is still common practice cannot have a seat at the table of the European Union.” Former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing warned that Turkey’s EU membership would mark the “end of Europe.”¹⁰

Other European leaders understood Turkey’s strategic importance. EU membership would anchor Turkey in the West, fortify it as a firewall against terrorism, and help make it a model of democracy in the Muslim world. After Turkey finally became a candidate in December 1999, the EU outlined political and economic conditions that Ankara would have to satisfy before formal accession talks could begin. The 2002 “Copenhagen criteria” included a functioning market economy and stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, including arrangements to protect and promote minority rights.

Nationalist Turks see the EU as a “Christian club” that would never allow Turkey to become a member. The so-called deep state—a shadowy network of nationalist bureaucrats and security officials who propagate both internal and external threats to create a climate of fear, aimed at preserving their position and power—viewed the requirements of membership as challenging their privileged role in society. Aktan maintained, “Important members and groups within the EU, in an openly patronizing manner, are questioning the founding principles of the republic, while trying to distance Turkey from the EU, claiming it is culturally and religiously apart from European civilization.”¹¹ British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw retorted, “Turkey is a European country. . . . It being mainly Muslim did not constitute an obstacle to its being admitted to NATO” and should not get in the way of its joining the EU.¹²

Erdoğan referred to the Copenhagen criteria as the Ankara criteria, indicating that Turkey would pursue reform regardless of the EU. He reaffirmed Turkey's commitment to joining the EU. "The EU is not a Christian club," he explained. "It is the outcome of a compromise among civilizations."¹³ Erdoğan reflected a consensus in Turkish society at the time. Liberals and the business community wanted membership because it would promote their basic freedoms and accelerate economic reform. Minorities saw it as the best way to secure greater rights. Islamists thought that EU accession would reduce the chance of a coup d'état. Military officers, ever concerned about Turkey's dismemberment, believed it would ensure Turkey's territorial integrity, because mutual recognition of borders is a core principle of EU Member States.

The AKP-led government vigorously pursued legislative, constitutional, and economic reforms. It changed the distribution of power between civilian and military authorities, imposing stricter control of the security sector and structural reforms to curtail powers of the National Security Council (NSC). Even opponents of Turkey's membership did not want to close the door to Turkey, on the grounds that would bring the reform process to a halt. French President Jacques Chirac wanted to postpone the decision to give Turkey a starting date for negotiations, lest it affect the referendum on the EU constitution. While the EU deferred a decision on starting negotiations until December 17, 2004, delay did not mollify EU skeptics or Turkey's opponents. The EU constitution was submitted to voters in France on May 29, 2005. Almost 55 percent voted "No." On June 1, 2005, more than 61 percent of Dutch voters voted "No."¹⁴ The tallies set back Turkey's chances for membership and raised fundamental questions about EU enlargement.

A Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Armenia went into effect in 1999. Beginning in 2004, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) encouraged closer ties. Recognizing the Armenian genocide was not a formal requirement for membership. On September 29, 2005, however, the European Parliament (EP) passed a nonbinding resolution establishing Turkey's recognition of the Armenian genocide as a requirement for membership. Another resolution called on Turkey to recognize the Republic of Cyprus and withdraw its troops. The European Commission (EC) asked Turkey to implement EP decisions even if they were not binding as Copenhagen criteria.

Armenia did not oppose Turkey's accession to the EU. In fact, Yerevan hoped it would lead to a more open society with freer discourse, culminating in recognition of the genocide. Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian did not believe that opening the border should be a pre-condition for membership in the EU. Oskanian said, "Turkey's foreign policy should be in line with Brussels. That means Turkey cannot have closed borders with its neighbors."¹⁵

After the screening process evaluated the compatibility of Turkey's legislation with EU laws, Turkey was invited to begin formal membership negotiations

on October 3, 2005. The EU released a new Accession Partnership Document on November 9. The 2005 Progress Report and Enlargement Strategy Paper included requirements on minority rights. The EP's Foreign Affairs Committee issued a report criticizing Turkey on September 4, 2006; the report indicated that Turkey had shown "insufficient progress" in the areas of freedom of expression, civilian-military relations, religious and minority rights, women's rights, and law enforcement since the formal opening of accession talks in October. The report called on Turkey to recognize the genocide of Armenians as a precondition for full membership. It also raised concerns about the confiscation of property and assets of Armenian foundations by the Turkish authorities.

Influenced by French-Armenians numbering about 500,000, France was Turkey's primary antagonist. France proposed "special status" and Germany floated the idea of "privileged partnership." Erdoğan objected, demanding equal treatment with other candidate countries. French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier proposed including the Armenian genocide in negotiations with Turkey, while Chirac publicly called on Turkey to face its history.¹⁶ On October 12, 2006, France made it a crime to deny that Armenians were victims of genocide.

Though the EC insisted there would be no extra condition for Turkey's candidacy, a growing number of Turks complained of a double standard. The EU's view of Turkey's role in Cyprus validated their concern. In a vote on the 2004 Annan plan, which envisioned a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, 64.9 percent of Turkish Cypriots voted "Yes," while 75.83 percent of Greek Cypriots rejected it. Though Ankara played a helpful role mobilizing support among Turkish Cypriots, Turkey was criticized by the EU for failing to ratify and implement the Additional Protocol of the customs union under which Turkey would have to open its ports, harbors, and airports to vessels and aircraft of Cyprus. A public opinion poll conducted in December 2005 found that a decreasing percentage of Turks saw Turkey's future as part of the EU, while a growing number saw the Islamic and Turkic worlds as alternatives; 55 percent of those polled believed that EU membership would be achieved, down from 61 percent the previous year.¹⁷

Turkey forged economic ties with its eastern neighbors, using its economic clout to advance strategic objectives. Ahmet Davutoğlu articulated a diversified foreign policy called "zero problems with neighbors."¹⁸ When critics decried Turkey's neo-Ottoman ambitions, Erdoğan insisted that Turkey was acting as a stabilizing power, intent on spreading peace and security from the Middle East to the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Russia

Russia has strategic, security, and commercial interests with both Turkey and Armenia, as well as with Azerbaijan. Moscow has taken an even-handed

approach. Its short-term strategic interests are served by good relations with both Turkey and Armenia, and Moscow has pursued policies designed to achieve tactical gains with both. While Turkey is the bigger partner, it is also Russia's long-term strategic competitor.

Cooperation between Russia and Turkey has expanded over the past decade. Signed on November 16, 2001, the "Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia" established a Joint Working Group and a Caucasus Task Force. Turkey began distancing itself from the United States and deepening its ties with Russia after the AKP came to power in July 2002. During a state visit to Moscow in February 2004, Gül pledged to crack down on Chechen circles in Turkey as part of a "strategic partnership and cooperation against common threats." Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Ankara in December 2004. He and Gül signed two agreements on economic cooperation in the fields of energy and banking, two on military and technical cooperation, an agreement on the prevention of maritime incidents, and another establishing cooperation between strategic research centers.¹⁹

When Erdoğan led a delegation to Moscow in January 2005, Putin agreed on a role for Russian oil pipeline operator Transneft and Russian oil company Rosneft in the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline. The \$2.5 billion pipeline would transport 1.5 million barrels per day between Turkey's northern and southern Black Sea coasts. In addition, the "Blue Stream" pipeline bypasses third countries by transporting Russian and Central Asian gas to Europe through Turkey. An agreement was finalized for a complementary pipeline, called "South Stream," on December 28, 2011. South Stream will start operating in 2015, transporting up to 63 billion cubic meters of gas annually to Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, and Italy in one leg and Croatia, Macedonia, Greece, and Turkey in another.²⁰ Energy interdependence between Russia and Turkey advances one of Moscow's strategic objectives: an outlet to the Mediterranean via Turkey.

After the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, Moscow more strongly supported rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia. Normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia would allow Russia to access the Caucasus region, bypassing Georgia. Russia opposed the BTC for favoring Georgia to the detriment of Russian energy interests. It also opposed the BTC for establishing Turkey as an energy hub, diversifying energy supplies to Western markets. Russia only took a position in the BTC consortium when it was clear that the project was going ahead. Gazprom tried to buy up Azerbaijan's gas production to prevent Turkey from gaining a major stake in Azerbaijan's natural fields.

To address the trade imbalance resulting from natural gas and oil imports, Moscow took steps to buy more commercial goods and open Russia's construction sector to Turkish companies. Turkish construction companies expanded activities in Russia and the region by, for example, building

Russia's military bases in Abkhazia. Commerce between Russia and Turkey nearly tripled between 2005 and 2010. In 2005, bilateral trade was \$11 billion; by 2010, it jumped to \$30 billion and is projected to surpass \$100 billion annually by 2020. When Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Gül met in May 2010, they signed seventeen cooperation agreements, including a contract for Russia to build a nuclear power station in Mersin. In June 2010, Turkey lifted visa restrictions for Russian passport holders. That year, about 5.5 million Russian tourists visited Turkey.²¹

Russia recognized the Armenian genocide in 1995. Russia and Armenia have a long history of cooperation. Armenia is strategically dependent on Russia, which is essential to Armenia's survival. Russian concerns control Armenia's electricity production and distribution system. Russia also controls Armenia's railroad system and would stand to benefit from trade via surface transport between Turkey and Armenia. Electricity sales from Armenia to Turkey would also represent a windfall for Russia.

Security ties between Russia and Armenia are also extensive. In 2010, Russia and Armenia extended the lease of Russia's 102nd Military Base in Gyumri through 2044. Russian troops provide security and border control along the Turkish-Armenian frontier. According to an ex-Ministry of Intelligence official, Turkish and Russian flags are displayed when Turkish security officials meet their Armenian counterparts on the border for security discussions.

A majority of Armenians think that Russia, followed by the United States and the EU, should be Armenia's priority in foreign policy. According to polling, 90 percent of those questioned welcomed the lease extension of Russian bases in Armenia.²² Security cooperation between Russia and Armenia is also enabled through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Armenia joined on May 15, 1992, followed by Azerbaijan the following year. In 1999, Armenia and five other CSTO members renewed their participation. Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova withdrew in April of that year, however, forming a non-aligned cluster called "GUUAM." Russia still sells weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite their conflict over NK. Moscow's even-handed approach is beginning to wear on its amity with Armenia. Thomas de Waal, the well-known Caucasus scholar, sensed "a growing estrangement of Armenia towards Russia" during his Yerevan meetings in November 2011.²³

Though Russia is a co-chair of the Minsk Group, it was ambivalent about resolution of the NK conflict in the 1990s. A solution would weaken Russia's position in the region, obviating Armenia's need for its protection. The status quo suited Russia's needs, making both Armenia and Azerbaijan dependent on Moscow. By 2010, Russia was brimming with self-confidence and was more actively seeking a solution. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called on Turkey and Armenia to move forward with normalization. "The

quicker this happens, the better it is for the entire region.” Putin rejects pre-conditions. “Both the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and the Turkish-Armenian problem are very complicated by nature. I do not think it is right to tie them into one package. It is unwise from both tactical and strategic points of view to package these problems.” Erdoğan responded by calling on Russia to put more pressure on Armenia. “If Russia falls back on this issue, achieving a result will become more difficult.”²⁴ On June 17, 2010, Medvedev pledged to Gül that Russia would use its influence on Armenia to realize an agreement on NK.²⁵

More than 2 million Azerbaijanis live in Russia. Though they represent less than 1.4 percent of Russia’s population and vie for influence with the larger and more powerful Armenian lobby, many Azerbaijanis in Russia are successful businessmen and traders, representing an important constituency. Russia also has security interests. It controls the Gabala radar and military bases in Azerbaijan. According to Leila Alieva, president of the Center for National and International Studies in Baku, “Russia feels at ease with Ilham Aliyev, even though Azerbaijan does all kinds of nasty things to Russia and Azerbaijan acted independently from Russia since 1994. Azerbaijan applies old Soviet-style relations showing respect to Russia at the same time doing whatever it wants in the energy field.” She adds, “Russia does not hide that it is Armenia’s ally. They have security and defense cooperation, and Armenian bases. How can it be an impartial mediator?”²⁶

Iran

Iran is Armenia’s southern neighbor in the Caucasus. About 400,000 Armenians live in Iran, primarily in Isfahan and Tehran. They enjoy religious freedom, with no restrictions on the Armenian Apostolic Church. Iran also borders on Azerbaijan. Some 18 million ethnic Azeris live in Iran, mostly in Tabriz and the rural northwest. The Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is half Azeri, and many of his advisers are ethnic Azeris. Though well represented in Iran’s leadership, the Azeri minority represents a security concern. Azeri activists seek greater cultural rights and there are occasional demands for territorial autonomy or to join with “eastern Azerbaijan.”

Tehran played both sides when armed conflict erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1991. It trained and equipped Azerbaijan’s forces. In addition, Iran was indispensable to Armenia when Turkey and Azerbaijan closed their borders, and Georgia was swept up in civil war. It provided trade preferences to help boost Armenia’s faltering economy, building bridges and providing essential supplies. Yerevan State University’s David Hovhanissyan says, “Iran was Armenia’s access to the outside world. It was our only hope.”²⁷

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was the point man when Tehran tried to mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1992. On May

9, 1992, Karabakh Armenian forces overran Shusha, Karabakh's ancient capital (known as Shushi to Armenians). Shusha is strategically located on the hills overlooking Stepanakart and was used by Azerbaijan's forces to shell Armenians down below. The battle for Shusha occurred just as the Armenian delegation was sitting down with Iranian mediators. The timing was humiliating for Tehran, causing friction between Armenia and Iran. The crisis in relations worsened the following year, when Armenians allegedly shot down an Iranian plane over Karabakh. Iran abandoned its mediation efforts after the Minsk Group was established. It strongly opposes U.S. influence in the region, including the presence of peacekeepers from Western countries that may be deployed as part of a settlement to the NK conflict.

Turkey and Iran have competed for influence since the Ottoman and Safavid Empires vied for power. There was a warming of relations after Erdoğan's ascendance. Tehran welcomed an agreement brokered by Turkey and Brazil for Iran to send its uranium abroad for enrichment. Over U.S. objections, Turkey also voted against new sanctions on Iran in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Ankara has since changed its approach because it is alarmed by the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran against Turkey and other Sunni countries. Angering Tehran, Ankara approved the deployment of a NATO anti-missile system on Turkish territory on October 15, 2010.

With Turkey and Iran in confrontation and Azerbaijan cooperating closely with the West on energy transport, Armenia and Iran are drawing closer. Armenia is more important to Iran today, as Iran becomes increasingly isolated by international sanctions. The bilateral relationship is also important to Yerevan, which remains embargoed. According to Ruben Safrastyan, director of the Institute for Oriental Studies at the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, "Tehran knows that Armenia needs Iran. Azerbaijan has other options because of its oil wealth, connections with the west, and ties to Russia."²⁸

Contact

Contacts between Turkish and Armenian officials started after Turkey recognized Armenia in the early 1990s. In December 1992, Armenian officials traveled overland to a ministerial meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council (BSEC) in Antalya. Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) arranged their passage at the border and vehicles to Erzerum, from which they were flown to Antalya. Armenia's Acting Foreign Minister, Arman Kirakossian, had a friendly meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Hekmit Çetin. They were joined by Azerbaijan's foreign minister for a trilateral meeting. Constructive and sustained contacts were maintained between Armenian officials and Turkey's Ambassador to Russia, Volkan Vural, who functioned as Ankara's envoy on Armenian issues.

Worsening hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan brought an end to Turkish-Armenian rapprochement. Trade relations were also interrupted when Turkey sealed its border with Armenia in April 1993. Closing the border required merchandise bound for Armenia to be transported through a third country, usually Georgia. A group of Turkish and Armenian businessmen working in the transport and logistics sector delivering U.S. humanitarian aid to Armenia proposed a mechanism to facilitate regular contacts and information exchange between Turkish and Armenian businesses. The initiative was supported by Telman Ter-Petrossian, brother of Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian.

The Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council (TABDC) was established on May 3, 1997. Kaan Soyak and Aram Vartanyan were named co-chairmen. TABDC was the liaison on a range of activities that focused on person-to-person and commercial contacts. TABDC is a track two activity. Track two involves contact, communication, and cooperation between civil society representatives who come together to discuss their differences. By engaging private citizens in developing ideas and experimenting with solutions, non-state actors are able to creatively explore the underlying conditions that gave rise to conflict and develop joint strategies for addressing shared problems through reciprocal efforts. Track two contributes to the development of mutual understanding with the goal of transferring insights to decision-makers and shaping public opinion. It is not a substitute for official diplomacy; however, its flexibility helps compensate for the inherent constraints on officials.

TABDC worked with the Kars and Iğdır Chambers of Commerce in Turkey and the Yerevan Chamber of Commerce to coordinate the visit of a Turkish business delegation to Armenia in August 1997. An Armenian business delegation made a reciprocal visit to Turkey in November of that year. TABDC facilitated a partnership agreement between the Middle East Technical University and the Yerevan State University (YSU), as well as subsequent student

exchanges. The University of Ankara and YSU also signed a memorandum of understanding to cooperate in various academic fields. In addition, TABDC developed plans for restoration of Akhtamar, the tenth-century Armenian Orthodox church on an island in Lake Van, as well as cultural exchanges, media tours, and tourism activities.

Robert Kocharian was elected president of the Republic of Armenia on March 30, 1998. Kocharian was from Stepanakart, and strongly supported NK's independence from Azerbaijan. In coordination with the worldwide Armenian Diaspora, Kocharian and Vartan Oskanian also made genocide recognition a foreign policy priority. Retaliating for France's resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide and a similar resolution pending in the U.S. Congress, Turkey imposed a visa requirement for Armenian passport holders in December 2000. Turkey's restrictive new visa regime required Armenian citizens to get a visa at Turkey's embassy in Moscow or in Tbilisi, which could take more than thirty days. Turkey's visa restrictions heightened resentment of Turkey among Armenians and spurred talk of a trade boycott by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, known as "Dashnaks."²⁹

When Armenia threatened to boycott the 1999 OSCE Summit in Istanbul, U.S. officials approached the governments of Turkey and Armenia about starting a dialogue. Turkish officials publicly maintained that they would not negotiate under duress, despite "closed door" meetings underway between Ünal Çeviköz and David Hovhanissyan.³⁰ Discussing Armenian issues meant addressing the Armenian genocide, and Ankara rejected territorial or financial claims arising thereof. Kocharian tried to assuage these concerns in an interview with Turkey's well-respected journalist, Mehmet Ali Birand, stating: "Genocide recognition by Turkey will not lead to legal consequences for territorial claims."³¹

Beginning in June 2000, prominent Turks and Armenians, including former diplomats and leading Diaspora representatives such as Van Krikorian and Andranik Migranyan, held a series of exploratory meetings at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. There was no contact between Turkish and Armenian officials at the time and, other than TABDC's activities, there was no contact between Turkish and Armenian civil society representatives. The governments of Turkey and Armenia gave their tacit approval, however. Vartan Oskanian was briefed on several occasions and endorsed the initiative.³² The Vienna meetings culminated in the creation of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC), which was announced on July 9, 2001.

The Turkish daily, *Milliyet*, welcomed TARC as an "historic breakthrough." TARC broke the ice. It focused on confidence-building measures (CBMs), including travel and trade between Turkey and Armenia. Six months after TARC was established, Ankara lifted restrictions and normalized the visa regime for Armenian citizens traveling to Turkey. New regulations allowed Armenian passport holders to pay \$15 and get their visa upon arrival at the Istanbul airport. Ankara called it a "goodwill gesture."

In November 2001, TARC asked the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) to “facilitate the provision of an independent legal analysis on the applicability of the United Nations Genocide Convention to events which occurred during the early twentieth century.” The legal analysis was presented to TARC on February 4, 2003. It found that: “International law generally prohibits the retroactive application of treaties. The Genocide Convention contains no provision mandating its retroactive application. To the contrary, the text strongly suggests it was intended to impose prospective obligations only on the states party to it. Therefore, no legal, financial, or territorial claim arising out of the events could successfully be made against any individual or state under the Convention.”³³

The analysis also concluded that “the term genocide . . . may be applied to many and varied events that occurred prior to entry into force of the Convention.” It continued, “As developed by the International Criminal Court (whose statute adopts the Convention’s definition of genocide), the crime of genocide has four elements: (1) one or more persons were killed; (2) such persons belonged to a particular national, ethnic, racial, or religious group; (3) the conduct took place as part of a manifest pattern of similar conduct against the group; and (4) the conduct was perpetrated with the intent to destroy in whole, or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such. At least some of the perpetrators knew that the consequence of their actions would be the destruction of, in whole or in part, the Armenians of eastern Anatolia, as such, or acted purposefully towards this goal, and therefore, possessed the requisite genocidal intent. The Events, viewed collectively, can thus be said to include all the elements of the crime of genocide as defined by the Convention, and legal scholars as well as historians, politicians, journalists and other people would be justified in continuing to so describe them.”³⁴ The analysis offered both sides just enough to feel affirmed. Its full impact has not yet been realized.

TARC was envisioned to last twelve months, but it worked for more than three years. Issued on April 13, 2004, TARC’s final recommendations called for:

- Intensifying government-to-government contacts between Turkey and Armenia.
- Opening the Turkish-Armenian border.
- Enhancing confidence-building measures between Turkey and Armenia.
- Issuing public statements of support for civil society programs focused on education, science, culture, and tourism.
- Establishing a standing mechanism for cooperation on disaster assistance; and
- Encouraging inter-religious dialogue to promote mutual understanding.

TARC’s final recommendations and the ICTJ-facilitated study were endorsed in a letter to the peoples of Turkey and Armenia signed by fifty-three Nobel

laureates. Organized by Elie Wiesel, recipient of the 1986 Nobel Prize for Peace, the signatories called on Turkey and Armenia to ease tensions “through additional treaty arrangements and full diplomatic relations.” It also commended civil society initiatives and called for normalizing travel and trade between Turkey and Armenia, adding: “An open border would greatly improve economic conditions for communities on both sides of the border and enable human interaction, which is essential for mutual understanding.”³⁵

In his 2004 Remembrance Day statement on the Armenian genocide, Bush indicated: “On this day I commend individuals in Armenia and Turkey who have worked to support peace and reconciliation, including through the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission.” In his 2005 statement, Bush specifically highlighted the ICTJ-facilitated analysis as a way forward. Aktan responded, “The reference (Bush) has made to the ICTJ report, in reality, amounts to an indirect recognition of the Armenian genocide.”³⁶

TARC was a catalyst that enabled other track two activities. In 2001, the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) used funds allocated through the Freedom Support Act to make a grant of \$2 million to support the “Track Two Program for Turkey and the Caucasus” at American University (AU). The initiative was championed by Dr. Helena Kane Finn, ECA’s Acting Assistant Secretary of State. The Program was a well-financed and flexible mechanism that eliminated at least one obstacle to civil society cooperation: the constant need to raise funds.

CBMs initially focused on culture and media. Projects sought to emphasize the human dimension and thereby personalize Turkish-Armenian relations. A group of 150 Armenian-Americans visited cultural and sacred sites in Turkey to mark the 1,700th anniversary of Armenian Christianity in 2001. The Ankara String Quartet performed at a music festival on the occasion of their visit. The concerts were widely reported in Turkish and Armenian media. Journalist exchanges were organized. A delegation from the Yerevan Press Club visited Istanbul, leading to more extensive news coverage of Turkish-Armenian issues and the exchange of editorials. Journalists were trained in the role of media in conflict resolution. The *Turkish-Armenian Women’s Magazine* was launched. International restoration experts, including members of the Armenian Diaspora, met in Istanbul to discuss technical details for restoration of the Akhtamar Church.

In conjunction with TABDC, the International Center for Human Development (ICHHD) used web-based technologies to organize a “Virtual Agricultural Wholesale Market,” which evolved into the Marketing Network of the Caucasus and a Task Force on Regional Economic Cooperation. The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) and the Armenian Sociological Association developed a joint methodology for surveying mutual perceptions. Practical cooperation projects were undertaken between faculty from YSU, the Turkish Studies Department at Armenia’s National Academy

of Sciences Institute of Oriental Studies, and Bilkent University and Sabanci University in Turkey.

Turkish and Armenian parliamentarians associated with Parliamentarians for Global Action, which focused on energy and transport issues. Mayors, chambers of commerce, and civil leaders from bordering Turkish and Armenian communities discussed economic cooperation and tourism. They also participated in workshops on mediation, cross-cultural communication, and collaborative problem-solving organized by ICHD and the Turkish Foundation for Research of Societal Problems. Contact and cooperation was boosted when Turkey allowed the Armenian airline Armavia to fly between Istanbul and Yerevan, to use the Turkish air corridor for other destinations, and to allow direct flights between Yerevan and the resort town of Antalya. The *Turkish Daily News* reported, "People to people contacts are paving the way for second steps between Ankara and Yerevan."³⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, who became foreign minister on May 1, 2009, reflected on a decade of track two activities: "Just ten years ago the Armenian question was taboo in Turkey, but now our public freely discusses it. The events in the early twentieth century were denied before, and now Turkey does not deny that Armenians suffered tragic events."³⁸

While TARC sponsored academic cooperation between universities and their faculties, it did not support activities bringing historians together. Several Turkish partners approached AU seeking funds for historical research activities, including one retired officer and a senior member of the TGS who wanted financing to microfiche the National Security Council archives. He raised suspicions, however, by refusing to allow Armenians access. YSU scholars insisted that Turkish archives had already been purged of incriminating materials. TARC decided that a joint commission of historians would take a long time to do its work and its efforts would be undermined by inadequate access to credible archival materials. Scholars would reference documents justifying their well-known positions. The process would be polarizing, and the result inconclusive.

Convened by Professor Ronald Suny at the University of Chicago on March 17–19, 2000, the Workshop in Armenian-Turkish Scholarship (WATS) was an exception. Participants included prominent scholars like Taner Akçam and Halil Berktaş. Five subsequent workshops emphasized scholarship, rather than polemic and rancor. As such, they represented a singularly successful collaboration among academics. Suny reports, "The two opposing nationalist narratives were replaced by a single shared account based on evidence. Yet many blank spots remained; archival access in Turkey remained restricted; and disagreements about the timing of events, the motivation of Ottoman leaders and, most importantly, whether to call the mass killings genocide remained yet to be resolved."³⁹

Even when such workshops are designed to be non-political, politics is inescapable. It is necessary to consider the political context for scholarly work. Collaborative scholarship is most relevant when it affects the political discourse outside the classroom in the arena of public affairs.

From the beginning, political, legal, and historic differences between Turks and Armenians undermined goodwill and limited the impact of track two activities. For example, Armenian pilgrims were barred from crossing the border from Turkey into Armenia in 2001. A performance by Lalezar in Yerevan was disrupted by Dashnaks protesting the event. A delegation from the Marmara Foundation visited Yerevan on International Women's Day in 2002; Turks and Armenians argued publicly when a leader of the Armenian Women's Group called for recognition of the genocide during their joint press conference. When the Turkish-Armenian Platform met in Vienna in July 2004, the Turkish History Foundation presented one hundred documents refuting the genocide, while Armenian participants countered with documents affirming the genocide. The exchange was a reminder that there are "multiple truths" and two sides to every story. According to Davutoğlu, "1915 is an important date for the Armenians, but we must also remember that in the same year 250,000 Turks were killed in just one battle, and among them was my grandfather. If there were mistakes, they should be named. We must remember that we are talking about an historic period, when there was no law and order in Turkey."⁴⁰ These facts do not exculpate the Ottomans from their crimes against Armenians. Davutoğlu, however, offers them as context to the events.

The restoration of Akhtamar was emblematic of both the opportunities and pitfalls of cooperation. Restoration was authorized by the Turkish government, which spent \$1.5 million on the project. But the goodwill gesture backfired when Turkish authorities refused to install a cross at the top of the church or allow the church's consecration as a place of worship. The word "Armenian" was not uttered during the unveiling ceremony. Instead Turkish officials evoked the names of kings, making no mention of the church's Apostolic affiliation. Armenians condemned the display of state symbols at the ceremony, especially a large Turkish flag and a photo of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk hanging at the church's entrance. Though the event was attended by Turkish Culture Minister Atilla Koç, representatives of the international community, and Turkish-Armenians, the Holy See of Echmiadzin Catholicos Garegin II, the Holy See of Cilicia, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem refused Erdoğan's personal invitation. They cited Turkey's failure to install a cross and complained that the church had been turned into a museum instead of a place of worship. The unveiling occurred on the eve of debate in the U.S. Congress on recognition of the Armenian genocide, which convinced Turkey's critics that the unveiling was more a political event than a spiritual gathering.⁴¹

Joint History Commission

The idea of a joint history commission first surfaced in 1998. TABDC's Kaan Soyak wrote then-President Süleyman Demirel proposing it. Soyak envisioned that the commission's findings would be the basis for Turkey and Armenia to approach the International Court of Justice. Soyak revisited the proposal with Gül when he became prime minister in 2002, and again with Erdoğan in 2003. Soyak asked, "What are we afraid of?" He characterized Erdoğan's response, "We are Turks. We are not afraid of anything."⁴²

On April 10, 2005, Erdoğan sent a letter to Kocharian proposing the establishment of a joint history commission to study archives and historical records: ". . . we are extending an invitation to your country to establish a joint group consisting of historians and other experts from our two countries to study the developments and events of 1915 not only in the archives of Turkey and Armenia but also in the archives of all relevant third countries and to share their findings with the international public. I believe that such an initiative would shed light on a disputed period of history and also constitute a step towards contributing to the normalization of relations between our countries."⁴³

The letter was conveyed via Turkish Ambassador to Georgia Ertan Tezgor, who had good relationships in the region, having served as the MFA's Deputy Director General for the Caucasus and Central Asia from 2001 to 2004. Erdoğan's proposal was intended as a game-changer. By inviting dialogue, Erdoğan wanted to address the Armenian issue once and for all. Not only did he expect that the commission would refute the genocide, he also wanted to undermine efforts aimed at genocide recognition by demonstrating that Turks and Armenians were talking to each other. Ankara resents foreign parliaments "legislating history." It objects to efforts by the government of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora to gain international recognition of the genocide. It insists there can be no diplomatic recognition or progress on other issues as long as they continue campaigning for recognition.

Ankara also wants Armenia to recognize its existing borders unequivocally. The European Commission made the mistake of admitting a divided Cyprus, and it wants to avoid future complications with candidate countries over contested borders. In fact, Armenia recognized Turkey's borders in the 1921 Treaty of Moscow and the 1922 Treaty of Kars. Many Turks, however, are still smarting from the 1920 Treaty of Sevres. The so-called Sevres Syndrome is a view that great powers are still conspiring to diminish Turkey or dismember it.

Thomas de Waal describes three main drivers for normalization on the part of Ankara. The first is an identity issue for Turkey. De Waal maintains that "Turkey will be stronger by confronting its past and the truth about what its minorities in general, and the Armenians in particular, suffered during the

break-up of the Ottoman Empire." The second motivation is more cynical: "A successful rapprochement with Yerevan would more or less kill off the campaign to have international parliaments call the 1915 Armenian 'Great Catastrophe' a genocide." Third is a desire for greater influence in the Caucasus where "Turkey has punched way below its weight for many years."⁴⁴

Turks have a noble self-image. To them, genocide is equated with the Holocaust. They cannot fathom that their forefathers committed atrocities comparable to what Adolf Hitler did to the Jews. Hitler's exhortation to Wehrmacht commanders on August 22, 1939, a week before the German invasion of Poland, is inscribed on a wall of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.: "Kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of the Polish race or language. Only thus will we gain the living space that we need. Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?"⁴⁵ Turks feel they are unfairly represented, and are sensitive to history that besmirches their honor.

Ankara denies that Hitler drew a parallel between his "Final Solution" and the experience of Armenians during the waning years of the Ottoman Empire. It also threatens reprisals against countries that recognize the genocide. As of early 2012, nineteen countries and the European Parliament have recognized the Armenian genocide; Slovenia and Switzerland treat denial of genocide as a crime. In different instances, Turkey has strongly objected and taken punitive steps, either recalling its ambassador, embargoing trade relations, or refusing to cooperate in the international arena.

According to the *New York Times*, "Turkey's self-destructive obsession with denying the alleged genocide seems to have no limits." The editorial continued, "Turkey's stance is hard to fathom. Each time the Turks lash out, new questions arise about Turkey's claim to a place in the European Union, and the Armenian diaspora becomes even more adamant in demanding a public reckoning over what happened. Granted, genocide is a difficult crime for any nation to acknowledge. But it is absurd to treat any reference to the issue within Turkey as a crime and to scream 'lie!' every time someone mentions genocide. Turkey's continued refusal to countenance even a discussion of the issue stands as a major obstacle to restoring relations with neighboring Armenia and to claiming Turkey's rightful place in Europe and the West." The article concluded, "It is time for the Turks to realize that the greater danger to them is denying history."⁴⁶

Erdoğan's proposal for a joint history commission resonated in foreign capitals. Governments expend great effort to dissuade their parliaments from recognizing the genocide. The debate became an annual rite in Washington. Members of Congress would table legislation. The Armenian Issues Caucus, in conjunction with the Armenian Diaspora, would mobilize to move the resolution through committee for a vote by the U.S. House of Representatives. Turkish officials and TGNA deputies would troop to Washington as part of an

orchestrated lobbying campaign. Ankara would mobilize its allies on Capitol Hill and its advocates. The American-Israel Public Affairs Committee was a staunch supporter of Turkey, in light of Turkey's strong and multifaceted relations with Israel. The administration would oppose the bill on national security grounds, invariably stalling the process until another legislative session.

The Bush administration was quick to support Erdoğan's proposal for a joint history commission; Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Laura Kennedy endorsed it during a visit to Ankara on May 5, 2005. Switzerland and other countries acted similarly. The Swiss embassy in Ankara issued a statement: "The claims in question should be researched by historians. The Swiss government supports the Turkish government's quest to set up and carry out a joint commission to look into the Armenian claims."⁴⁷ Swiss President Joseph Deiss indicated, "The Swiss Federal Council welcomes the proposal of Prime Minister Erdoğan to establish a joint commission of Turkish and Armenian historians to shed light on the tragic events in the past."⁴⁸

The initiative garnered rare unanimity among Turkey's political factions. It was embraced by Deniz Baykal, head of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), as well as deputies of the National Action Party (MHP). CHP Deputy Şükrü Elekdağ said, "This is motivated by a desire to be proactive; a desire to stop being defensive and start an offensive."⁴⁹ The TGNA issued a consensus declaration in support of the initiative. "Unless Turkey and Armenian look at history from the same perspective, they will only leave prejudices, enmity and revenge to their children and forthcoming generations. It is reasonable to Turkey and Armenia to end taboos with a joint initiative, clarify all sides of what they experienced, and be ready to settle old scores."⁵⁰ While many Turks understand that Armenian identity was forged by the tragic events in the early twentieth century, they believe that the Diaspora is primarily behind international efforts at genocide recognition. In their view, the Armenian Diaspora has thrived, while Armenians in Armenia are primarily concerned about material challenges stemming from their isolation.

Kocharian was wary. Rather than a good-faith effort to confirm what really happened, he saw Erdoğan's initiative as a ploy to advance Turkey's denial and deflect support for international recognition.⁵¹ Erdoğan's letter was publicized in order to influence international public opinion. Gül announced the letter on April 10, two weeks before the ninetieth anniversary of Remembrance Day. Though timing of the announcement was seen as an effort to head off recognition efforts, Kocharian recognized the opportunity presented by Erdoğan's overture. Rather than close the door on dialogue, he wrote back proposing an official intergovernmental commission on all bilateral issues. Kocharian's letter of April 25, 2005 indicated, "We have proposed and propose again that, without pre-conditions, we establish normal relations between our two countries. In that context, an intergovernmental commission can meet to

discuss any and all outstanding issues between our two nations, with the aim of resolving them and coming to an understanding.”

Erdoğan and Kocharian had different views on sequencing. Erdoğan wanted to address historical issues, and then consider other topics effecting Turkish-Armenian relations. According to Erdoğan, “There is a very important issue that must be settled before making political decisions, and this issue concerns problems stemming from history.” He insisted that the Armenian campaign to gain recognition was an obstacle to establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Kocharian wanted to tackle everything at once, insisting there should be no pre-conditions to normalization. “Our proposal is that diplomatic relations begin, the border gate open and dialogue between the two countries and two peoples start,” said Kocharian. “The responsibility to develop ties lies with governments and we have no right to delegate this to historians.”⁵² Then-Defense Minister Serge Sarkisian was asked at the National Press Club in Washington if the joint history commission could deal with the genocide issue. He noted that the legal opinion facilitated by ICTJ for TARC had already settled the terminology matter. He questioned whether Turkey would keep proposing commissions until one upheld Ankara’s position.

Kocharian and Erdoğan both attended a Council of Europe summit for heads of state on May 16–17, 2005. Turkish and Armenian media speculated that they would meet privately. When Kocharian addressed the forty-six-member body, he renewed Yerevan’s pledge to seek international recognition of the genocide. Erdoğan was incensed and canceled their meeting. At a working level, however, the exchange of letters between Erdoğan and Kocharian resulted in a series of discreet exploratory meetings between Turkish and Armenian officials.

On July 14, 2005, reports surfaced of “secret talks” between Turkish Undersecretary Ahmet Üzümcü and Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian and other Armenian diplomats in an unnamed European country. A total of three meetings were held in Vienna, which Ankara had proposed as a venue. Ankara insisted that no mediators be involved, deliberately seeking to exclude U.S. and Russian officials. It also wanted to limit the influence of the Armenian Diaspora by insisting on confidentiality.

At the first meeting, Üzümcü raised concerns about a clause in Armenia’s declaration of independence that stated: “The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.” Üzümcü asked Yerevan to desist from efforts aimed at gaining international recognition of the genocide. He also questioned the reference to “Western Armenia.” The Armenians insisted that genocide recognition was non-negotiable. The Armenian people are bound by their common suffering and collective loss as a result of the genocide. Kirakossian pointed out that the genocide occurred during the

Ottoman period and discussed Turkey's obligations as the successor state. He explained that Western Armenia was a term associated with "historic Armenia," which distinguished territories under Ottoman control from those under Tsarist rule. There was no Armenian state in 1915. Victims were citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

Armenian diplomats offered a simple text on recognition and normalization, which was similar to the text of the 2009 Protocols. Turkish officials responded by reiterating Erdoğan's proposal for a joint history commission, offering terms of reference including its mandate, composition, procedures for opening archives in Turkey, Armenia, and other countries, and publishing findings with a respected third party such as UNESCO. Armenian diplomats indicated that their archives merely consisted of eyewitness accounts, memoirs, and copies of archives from different countries. The archives of greatest value were in Turkey, where the genocide had occurred. They focused on the need for a confidence-building process to address all bilateral issues rather than wait for the commission to do its work. They believed that opening the border and person-to-person contact were the most effective ways of addressing problems.

Turkish MFA Spokesman Namik Tan acknowledged the meetings. He indicated that discussions were seeking "to determine whether there is common ground on which to make progress with respect to bilateral ties." Tan confirmed, "There have been talks with Armenia for a long time at several levels, including foreign ministers, both on international and other platforms. Bilateral and regional issues that concern both countries are discussed during the talks."⁵³ He called the discussions "routine."⁵⁴

Contact between Turkish and Armenian officials had indeed become more regular. Prior to TARC's establishment, the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers had not met in almost two years. In November 2001, however, İsmail Cem and Oskanian met at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in New York. In March, Armenia opened a liaison office in Istanbul to the BSEC. Cem and Oskanian held a bilateral meeting at the Reykjavik NATO Summit in April 2002. They met again in June 2002 at the BSEC ministerial. Foreign Minister Gül conferred with Oskanian at the NATO Summit in Madrid in the spring of 2003, and again on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2003. Gül and Oskanian met a couple more times before their bilateral meeting at the UNGA on September 27, 2004. These meetings contributed to good personal relations, but they were inconclusive.

Gül left his post as foreign minister to be sworn in as president on August 28, 2007. During a visit to Konya, Gül met with an old family friend whose son, Ali Babacan, was working in a lingerie business. Babacan had neither the training nor experience for government service. Gül, however, told him to come to Ankara the following day and promised him a job in the government. Babacan succeeded Gül as foreign minister the day before Gül's swearing-in as president.⁵⁵

The round of talks in Vienna started in mid-2005 and ended the following year. An official from Switzerland's European Directorate played an informal facilitation role, but the meetings were exploratory and Switzerland had no mandate. At the final meeting, Üzümcü proposed two parallel commissions, one on historical issues and another on bilateral matters. He indicated that progress in the former would result in Ankara opening its border for diplomats to travel. The border would be opened for normal travel and trade based on the commission's final conclusions. Kirakossian proposed one commission with sub-commissions. When Üzümcü rejected this format, Yerevan broke off the talks. Kirakossian made it clear that Yerevan would not discuss the Armenian genocide issue. "Historians are not diplomats and could not agree," he remarked. "They will argue forever."⁵⁶

Swiss Mediation

Switzerland has five foreign policy pillars: (1) economic national interests, (2) contribution to peace, (3) the environment, (4) development assistance, and (5) global security. It is also a steadfast supporter of human rights. Switzerland incurred Ankara's ire as a strong critic of Turkey's human rights record in the 1980s. When Bern imposed an embargo on arms sales in 1991, Turkey responded by putting Switzerland on a "red list" barring weapons trade. Ankara also accused Switzerland of harboring members of the PKK and allowing the PKK to take advantage of Switzerland's banking system to establish a financing hub in Zurich.

Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey was scheduled to visit Ankara in October 2003. It had been more than two years since foreign ministers from the two countries held a working meeting. The Turkish MFA, however, cancelled her visit following a decision of the Canton Vaud Swiss Regional Parliament to recognize the Armenian genocide. Relations deteriorated further when the Lower House of the Swiss Parliament recognized the genocide on December 16, 2003.

Despite strained relations, Switzerland was the sixth biggest foreign investor in Turkey; Swiss companies employed 6,000 Turks. Erdoğan invited Calmy-Rey and President Joseph Deiss to visit Turkey when they met at the WEF in January 2004. Calmy-Rey did visit Ankara the following year. She had official meetings with President Necdet Sezer and Gül. Discussions focused on economic cooperation. She agreed to end Switzerland's embargo on weapons sales to Turkey. Ruag, Switzerland's aerospace giant and manufacturer of artillery, small arms, and ammunition, stood to gain. Another Swiss company, Platus, was interested in Turkey's \$400 million tender for jet trainers. She also pledged that Switzerland would designate the PKK as a terrorist organization. "Switzerland is more determined now to improve its relations with Turkey," said Calmy-Rey. "My visit is indicative of this desire."⁵⁷

Just as relations started to improve, Swiss authorities opened an inquiry into Yusuf Halaçoğlu, head of the Turkish Historical Society. Halaçoğlu was accused of making public remarks in Switzerland denying the genocide in May 2005. The Turkish Foreign Ministry called in Switzerland's ambassador, Walter Gyger, to protest. The Turkish Ambassador in Bern, Alev Kılıç, also issued a demarche. The Swiss MFA scrambled to contain the crisis. Its statement emphasized that the complaint was filed by a third party, not by the official state prosecutor. "It is not true that Halaçoğlu was condemned, formally accused or has been issued a warrant for arrest by the Swiss authorities."⁵⁸

In a similar incident, Doğu Perinçek, head of the Turkish Workers' Party, was detained in Switzerland on July 23, 2005. Perinçek proclaimed that the Armenian genocide was an "imperialist lie" at a rally in Opfikon-Glattburg, Lausanne. He was questioned by the prosecutor for three and a half hours and

charged under a Swiss law making it a criminal offense to “grossly minimize or justify genocide.” Turkish Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek rushed to Bern two days later to meet with his Swiss counterpart, Justice Minister Christophe Blocher. Çiçek protested the detention, warning that Perinçek’s prosecution could undermine the positive trend in Swiss-Turkish relations.⁵⁹ He also threatened to cancel Deiss’ upcoming visit. Perinçek was sentenced to a ninety-day suspended jail term and fined 3,000 Swiss francs (\$2,461). Blocher tried to revoke the law criminalizing genocide denial after the trial.

The Swiss initiative to revitalize contacts between Turkish and Armenian officials was launched on September 16, 2007, when the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers had an initial exchange on the margins of the UNGA about Switzerland’s involvement. Michael Ambuhl, a highly regarded diplomat and negotiator who was serving as State Secretary and Head of the Directorate of Political Affairs in Switzerland’s Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, was the point man. He had no history of involvement on Turkish-Armenian issues and no family ties to either side.

When Ambuhl discussed the need for third-party facilitation with Turkish and Armenian officials, they agreed that Switzerland was ideally suited for the task. Switzerland’s role as an honest broker was based on the concept of neutrality. Switzerland had recent experience making its “good offices” available on Iran and the Russia-Georgia conflict. Switzerland also has experience that is relevant to Turkey-Armenia issues. It is a small land-locked country with seven hundred years of history as an independent state surrounded by big neighbors. According to Ambuhl, “Switzerland is too small to harm.”

Ambuhl approached Calmy-Rey, who agreed that Bern should get involved; Ambuhl was assigned to the file. He was not given any specific guidance. Bern “only wanted a success.” He was told to “bring (Turks and Armenians) together and do something good. You’re just not allowed to spoil it.”⁶⁰

A proposal from the Swiss government to assist the creation of a commission of historians to jointly and scientifically examine the shared history of Turkey and Armenia was conveyed to Turkish officials by the Swiss ambassador in Ankara during the summer of 2007. Ambuhl met Oskanian in Yerevan at the end of September to discuss an initiative on the normalization of relations, including the settlement of differences regarding the historical past. Oskanian suggested that the normalization of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia should run parallel to activities of a historical commission. Ankara agreed to broaden the scope of talks to include opening and mutual recognition of the borders, as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations, if Yerevan agreed to the joint historical commission.

The Swiss ambassador to Turkey proposed that Professor Jean-Francois Bergier brief both sides as a confidence-building measure. The Bergier Commission had been established by Swiss federal authorities to investigate Switzerland’s conduct during World War II and its handling of assets by Jewish

depositors who died during the Holocaust. Bergier was also highly regarded for his work bridging gaps between adversarial parties on a range of historical issues in Europe.

Bergier presented his methodology in a PowerPoint presentation to Kirakossian at a meeting in Bern, then visited Ankara in December 2007 to brief Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ertuğrul Apakan. Ambuhl emphasizes, "Professor Bergier was not a specialist in the region, which was paradoxically an asset. He was a specialist in the methodology for dealing with the past (when memories and historical truths do not overlap)."⁶¹ His methodology focused on what happened, why, and in what context.

In response to Switzerland's concept paper on "Dialogue Turkey-Armenia" of September 2007, Ankara submitted its views in writing on January 4, 2008. The Swiss revised the paper on January 29, and submitted it to the Turks and Armenians. Turkish officials focused on preliminary ideas for the establishment of a joint history commission, insisting that the border could only be opened when the commission had been established and had started its work. After Ambuhl attended Sarkisian's inaugural, he presented both sides with a revised Dialogue Turkey-Armenia paper and invited Apakan and Kirakossian for their first trilateral meeting on May 21, 2008.

The meeting was held at an ornate castle in Gertzenzee, a hamlet close to Bern, which was taken over by Switzerland's central bank and turned into its study center. The Turkish delegation at Gertzenzee was led by Apakan and included Ünal Çeviköz. The Armenian delegation was led by Kirakossian and included Armenian Ambassador to Switzerland Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and its BSEC Representative Karen Mirzoyan. The session was a chance to get acquainted, gauge expectations, and explore the agenda. It was also an opportunity to define Switzerland's role as facilitator. "Both sides rapidly agreed that we should take it over," says Ambuhl. "We had an informal mandate. It would have been complicated to negotiate a written agreement."⁶²

Ambuhl explains, "It was an internal meeting. I tried to determine sensitivities," and emphasizes, "I cultivated neutrality." He focused on procedures. "Who should speak first? Do I go by the alphabet of the names or of the country?" Ambuhl asked at the outset, "Why is it necessary to deal with history? Do we need a commission to deal with the past? What (might be) the status of the commission? Is it a government commission or a commission of experts only?" Kirakossian rejected a stand-alone history commission modeled on the Bergier Commission. Ambuhl suggested a commission focused on all bilateral issues: "How do we go about this? Is recognition necessary? In our discussions, we came closer to the real question: How is the bilateral aspect done? Do we first need diplomatic relations? How do we develop diplomatic relations?"

At the end of the May meeting, Ambuhl issued the "Swiss Non-Paper Outline of the Discussion." The non-paper indicated that the process sought

to achieve the “normalization and development of bilateral relations, resolving differences and diverging interpretations regarding the historical past.” It also called for the creation of a “working group to elaborate the modalities for the establishment of an historical commission.”

The second meeting in Gertzenzee occurred in July 2008. The parties agreed that their work would focus on the establishment of diplomatic relations, normalization, mutual recognition, and opening the border, and creation of a trilateral commission of experts dealing with the historical dimension. Ankara entered into the process and was prepared to go along with the first two items, as long as the third item was realized. The historical commission was of primary importance to Ankara. Turkish officials sent Ambuhl a paper entitled “Elements of a Tripartite Commission of Experts and Historians” on July 23. Three days later, Swiss officials finalized their proposal for the tripartite commission and presented it to both sides.

Personal relations were established between Ambuhl, Kirakossian, and Apakan, whom Ambuhl affectionately calls “Kira” and “Apa.” Kirakossian and Apakan also got to know one another. They are both highly competent, professional diplomats. They are also very much alike in temperament. Ambuhl notes, “They both are not so different. They even look like they could be brothers.” He recalls, “We all got along quite well.”⁶³

Meetings moved from confidence-building to substance, addressing the delicate question of sequencing: who does what first? “Slowly, slowly, we prepared the text,” Ambuhl explains. “The text was always drafted by us, the Swiss.” The third meeting at Gertzenzee was held on September 15. Three Protocols became two, with the Protocol on the historical commission integrated into the Protocol on the Development of Relations. The Protocols were refined during ministerial and working-level trilateral meetings in New York (September 22–24, 2008), Gertzenzee (October 25, 2008), Bern (January 21, 2009), Davos (January 27, 2009), and on the margins of the Munich Security Conference (February 7, 2009).

U.S. officials were not informed. Switzerland cultivates its independence, which is why it is not a member of the EU. Washington was kept in the dark, until a chance meeting between Apakan and Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel P. Fried in the Lufthansa business lounge at the Munich airport in December 2007. Apakan told Fried about the Swiss facilitation. Fried told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who told National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, but no other U.S. official was informed at the time.

Matthew J. Bryza was Rice’s point man for the Caucasus. Bryza had worked closely with Rice in the White House when he served on the National Security Council as Director for Europe and Eurasia. Rice brought him with her to the State Department and appointed him Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs in June 2005. Bryza also served as

the U.S. Representative to the Minsk Group. Bryza was not told about the Swiss mediation but, as a smart diplomat, figured out what was going on. Bryza insisted, "We are not mediators of Armenia's relations with Turkey."⁶⁴

Congressional support for genocide recognition, the president's annual statement on Remembrance Day, and upcoming presidential elections made it difficult for the United States to play a mediation role. According to Fried, "Ambuhl conducted the trilateral work and deserves enormous credit. He would talk to the U.S. quietly before and after each meeting. We didn't do anything without Ambuhl. Our role was supportive by design."⁶⁵ Switzerland was an ideal mediator, performing its role superbly and with great skill.

Freedom of Expression

Turkish-Armenian contacts occurred against the backdrop of increased international concern about human rights in Turkey, and discussion about Turkey's place in Europe. Concerns centered on freedom of expression and Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalizes "insulting Turkish identity." Article 301 states, "A person who, being a Turk, explicitly insults the Republic or Turkish Grand National Assembly, shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months to three years." There are fourteen articles in the Penal Code that were used to stifle freedom of speech, leading to charges against ninety-six writers, publishers, journalists, and intellectuals as of September 18, 2006.⁶⁶

The prosecution of writer Orhan Pamuk and Turkish journalists fueled negative views of Turkey in Europe. Pamuk told a Swiss newspaper on February 6, 2005, "Thirty thousand Kurds, and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody dares to talk about it. What happened to the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 was a major thing that was hidden from the Turkish nation; it was a taboo. But we have to be able to talk about the past."⁶⁷ Pamuk was charged under Article 301, but the charges were dropped in January 2006. Controversy over his remarks reignited when Pamuk was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on October 12, 2006.

Sponsored by Bosphorus, Bilgi, and Sabanci Universities, the International Conference on Armenian Issues was scheduled for May 25–27, 2005. The sponsors suffered withering criticism. Şükrü Elekdağ said, "There is a desire to broadcast Armenian propaganda. No one was invited to speak about history in an objective and honest way. It is very sad that a meeting whose objective is to stain Turkey is being held at Bosphorus University."⁶⁸ Justice Minister Cemal Çiçek went further, stating, "We must end this treason, the spreading of propaganda against Turkey by the people who are a part of it." He called the conference "a stab in the back for the Turkish nation."⁶⁹ Erdoğan said, "Let's be relaxed, think and talk freely. We should not fear from people expressing their views. Let's hear who says what. Afterwards, we can also voice our own opinions. We should never forget that those who believe in their opinions should never be afraid of expressing them."⁷⁰ Though Istanbul's fourth administrative court twice suspended the conference, it was finally convened on September 24–25, 2005. Participants passed through a cordon of security shielding them from protesters waving Turkish flags, yelling insults, and throwing eggs.

On December 2, 2005, Murat Belge, Haluk Şahin, Erol Katırcıoğlu, and İsmet Berkan of the daily *Radikal* and Hasan Cemal of the daily *Milliyet* were charged under Article 288 of the Penal Code for trying to influence judicial proceedings. All except Berkan were also charged under Article 301. Hasan Cemal is a courageous intellectual and author. He comes from a respected

family with strong nationalist credentials. His grandfather, Cemal Pasha, was known as one of the “Three Pashas” who served as a commander in the Ottoman Army and was held responsible for the deportation and murder of Armenians. Prosecuting Hasan Cemal sent a signal to other Turkish intellectuals: no one can claim freedom of expression and avoid prosecution when they criticize Turkey. Hasan Cemal was undaunted. He addressed the Armenian General Benevolent Union in Los Angeles on March 31, 2011, “I came here to open my heart and open my mind to you . . . I know your pain, your grief of Genocide, your grief of Meds Yeghern.”⁷¹

Hrant Dink

Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian, was editor of *Agos*. Dink spent his life raising awareness of Armenian issues in Turkey. Dink was controversial among Turks for his writing on Armenian issues, and among Armenians for frequently rising to Turkey's defense. Dink said of the Conference on Armenian Issues, "The cost of postponement was high and unfair to Turkey because the anti-democratic image reflected by the debates was not a true reflection of Turkey."⁷² In Frankfurt, Dink claimed that "Armenians, even today, are being exploited politically by Europe." He criticized Germany's proposal for privileged partnership and questioned Germany's intentions in raising the genocide issue. "Merkel doesn't aim at recognition of the genocide; she just wants to prevent Turkey's EU membership." Before the French parliament was scheduled to vote on its "Genocide Denial Bill" on October 12, 2006, Dink went to protest the legislation, citing the paramount importance of free speech.⁷³ Dink also addressed the genocide: "We cannot go anywhere with such claims and counter claims. The Armenians cannot be expected to forget what happened during those years. But, I am a Turkish national as well. . . . I am a Turk of Armenian origin. Today's Turkish people cannot be held responsible for what happened almost a century ago."⁷⁴

The prosecutor brought charges against Dink under Article 301. The prosecutor maintained that a sentence in one of Dink's columns calling on Armenians to reject "the adulterated part of their Turkish blood" implied that Turkish blood was dirty.⁷⁵ Dink had, in fact, told Armenians that their enmity toward Turkey "had a poisonous effect in your blood," but the prosecutor took his remarks out of context. The prosecutor also made additional charges against Dink for remarks he made in 2002 criticizing the oath of allegiance required in schools, which Dink claimed was discriminatory. Dink had also objected to a line in the national anthem: "Smile upon my heroic race." On July 10, 2005, the Şişli Second Criminal Court found Dink guilty of "insulting Turkishness" and sentenced him to a suspended six-month jail sentence. Dink was unbowed. "I will not be silent. As long as I live here, I will go on telling the truth just as I always have."⁷⁶

As Dink left his *Agos* office for lunch on January 19, 2007, he was shot three times in the head and neck. In his last column before the assassination, Dink seemed to presage the incident, describing letters "full of anger and menace," calling him "an enemy of the Turks."⁷⁷ Erdoğan expressed his profound regret at Dink's death: "A bullet has been fired at democracy and freedom of expression." He called it an "attack on Turkey and Turkish unity and stability," adding that justice would be served to "dark hands" behind the incident.⁷⁸ Parliament Speaker Bülent Arınç condemned the murder, saying, "This felonious, insidious and willful attack is aimed at destroying Turkey's future and happiness."⁷⁹ Other political party leaders also expressed regret.

Baykal said Dink's murder had caused "a very profound and most sincere agony" across the entire country and in every section of society.

Barely twenty-four hours later, Turkish police arrested Oğün Samast, a seventeen-year-old from Trabzon. Samast confessed to shooting Dink for "humiliating Turkish identity." Convinced that the assassination was not the work of a single gunman, many believed that Turkey's deep state was behind the incident. Samast was a poor, uneducated city boy with a pittance in his pocket when arrested, yet the weapon he used to kill Dink cost \$1,000. In addition, Samast flew to Istanbul on three occasions just prior to the incident. Questions were asked about how a penniless boy from the Black Sea region could manage to buy a gun, travel around the country, and kill Dink without some organization behind him.⁸⁰

Up to 100,000 people gathered in an eight-kilometer procession to the Armenian church in Kumkapi where Dink's funeral services were held. Doves were released as Dink was laid to rest in Istanbul's Armenian cemetery. More than one hundred people from the Armenian choir in Istanbul joined hands to chant with Istanbul State Opera soloist Sevan Şencan before the coffin's arrival. Patriarch Mesrob II, the spiritual leader of Turkey's 80,000 Armenians, spoke about the conflicting emotions of Turkish-Armenians: "Armenians have been living on this land for thousands of years. They should not be seen as potential enemies. We are attached to Turkey with a bond of citizenship and attached to Armenia with ethnic bonds. We are between two beloved ones."⁸¹

Tens of thousands of Turks rallied with placards reading, "We are all Armenians. We are all Hrant Dink." Gül indicated that Ankara was open to establishing ties with Yerevan, reiterating Turkey's proposal for a joint history commission. Turkish men and women commemorated the Armenian genocide, gathering in Taksim Square on April 24, 2007 for the first time in ninety-five years. These rallies morphed into the "Apology Movement," which was launched on December 15, 2008. Its website, called "We apologize," garnered 35,000 signatures on a petition stating: "My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915," and offering an apology for their suffering.⁸²

Kocharian honored Dink with a posthumous state award recognizing his contributions to Armenian culture and science. He cited Dink's contribution to "restoration of historical justice, mutual understanding between peoples, freedom of speech, and the protection of human rights."⁸³ Dink's murder presented a unique opportunity to mobilize support for Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. When Kirakossian went to attend Dink's funeral, Gül reaffirmed Turkey's position opposing normalization until Armenians abandoned their efforts to gain international recognition of the genocide. Kirakossian called for unconditional diplomatic relations, but was rebuked by the Turkish MFA

for “exploitation of feelings.” According to the MFA, “We sincerely hope that the tragic event that took place in our country last week will contribute to a new atmosphere in Turkish-Armenian ties and Armenia will reciprocate our well-intentioned efforts aimed at overcoming stagnation in our relations.”⁸⁴ Vartan Oskanian wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*: “Three weeks after the assassination of acclaimed Turkish Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, it appears the Turkish authorities have neither grasped the message of Hrant’s life nor the significance of his death. We all hoped that the gravity of this slaying and the breadth of reaction would have compelled Turkey’s leaders to seize the moment and make a radical shift in the policies that sustain today’s dead-end situation. However, after those initial hints at reconciliation, Erdoğan said there can be no rapprochement with Armenia because Armenians still insist on talking about the genocide.”⁸⁵

The window of opportunity quickly closed. There was a nationalist backlash after the initial outpouring of popular sympathy for Dink. Trabzon soccer fans in Kamil Ocak Stadium waved banners that read, “We are all Turks, we are all Mustafa Kemal” and “I am Turkish, I am from Trabzon.”⁸⁶ Shots were fired outside the Armenian church during a ceremony led by Mesrob marking the fortieth day after Dink’s murder. Prosecutors pressed charges against Dink’s son Arat and his *Agos* colleague, Serkis Seropyan, for publishing an interview with Hrant Dink about the genocide. A rival website was launched entitled “We don’t apologize.” A service denial attack bombarded the on-line petition of the apology movement with millions of messages, rendering it inoperable. The Internet attack was traced to Turkey’s Interior Ministry. MHP Deputy Chairman Ali Işıklar said “foreign powers” were behind Dink’s assassination. SP Deputy Chairman and former Justice Minister Şevket Kazan accused the CIA and Mossad.⁸⁷ On January 17, 2012, a Turkish court acquitted nineteen persons charged with conspiring to terrorize and kill journalists for political reasons and on state negligence for failing to protect journalists from an illegal network within the Turkish state.⁸⁸

Dink’s murder fueled concern about Turkey’s candidacy in EU countries, with Turkey’s antagonists citing lack of press freedom and minority rights problems to bolster their opposition. EU Enlargement Commissioner Ollie Rehn condemned the “brutal act of violence” and called on Turkish authorities to “fully investigate this crime and bring the perpetrators to justice.” The German presidency of the EU said it was shocked and “appalled” by the “abominable killing” of Dink: “He staunchly supported the democratic reforms in Turkey and, as a result, Hrant Dink was held in high esteem in various sections of Turkish society, as well as in Europe.”⁸⁹ Nicolas Sarkozy not only declared his opposition to Turkey’s EU membership, but also vowed to support genocide recognition if elected president of France. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) strongly condemned Dink’s assassination. Its resolution also criticized Article 301: “The existence

of this measure, which judicially limits the freedom of expression, only validates legal and other attacks against journalists.”⁹⁰

In a case filed by Dink’s family, the European Court of Human Rights found that the “Turkish authorities failed in their duty to protect the life and freedom of expression of journalist Firat (Hrant) Dink.” The Armenian Assembly of America (AAA) responded to the ruling, saying, “The Court’s decision must be accompanied by repeal of Article 301 from Turkey’s Penal Code, and a good faith effort by the Turkish state toward full compliance with its requirements under the EU negotiating framework regarding human rights, civil liberties, respect for minorities, and ethnic and religious tolerance. For Turkey’s Armenian minority, the neighboring Republic of Armenia, and Armenians worldwide, this also entails Turkey’s acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide and redress of its consequences. Extending full diplomatic relations and lifting its blockade against Armenia would be two concrete steps in the right direction.”⁹¹

On January 25, 2007, Gül suggested that “the door to changes of 301 is open,” but he was rebuked by Cemil Çiçek.⁹² Though Erdoğan took steps to modify parts of the Penal Code to bring it in line with European norms, half-measures failed to placate Turkey’s critics in Europe while incensing nationalists at home.

International Response

Divergent views within the Bush administration began to surface. On February 19, 2006, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, addressing a Diaspora audience, referred to the events as genocide. His remarks were disavowed by the U.S. government. Evans offered a “clarification” in which he said his remarks reflected his personal views. The State Department urged Evans to issue a further “correction,” accepting that his remarks misrepresented U.S. policy. In May 2006, Evans was recalled from Yerevan after serving two years.

Richard Hoagland was nominated to replace Evans. During his confirmation hearing on June 28, 2006, Republican Senators George Allen (R-VA) and Norman Coleman (R-MN) grilled him about “official U.S. complicity in Turkey’s campaign of genocide denial.” Allen questioned “his ability to effectively represent the United States in Armenia without properly recognizing the Armenian genocide.” The Committee approved Hoagland by a vote of 13 to 7 in September, but Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) put a hold on his nomination. In December, Menendez and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) wrote Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asking that Hoagland’s nomination be withdrawn.

Opposition to Hoagland’s nomination represented a groundswell of congressional support for Armenian issues. In September 2006, the Senate Banking Committee adopted a measure as part of the U.S. Export-Import Bank Reauthorization Bill to prevent funding for a railroad project connecting Turkey with Azerbaijan through Georgia that bypassed Armenian territory. Opponents argued against the 258-kilometer project, maintaining there was already a railway passing through Armenia that could be used as a trans-Caucasus railroad. When the EC declined financing for the project, Baku offered a \$220 million loan to Georgia at a symbolic rate of 1 percent payable after 25 years.

This groundswell of support further translated into momentum for genocide recognition. On April 18, 2005, 32 senators and 175 congressmen wrote Bush, calling for him to recognize the genocide. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), a strong supporter of genocide recognition, became Speaker of the House after the Democratic Party’s landslide win in November 7, 2006. “I have supported legislation . . . that would properly acknowledge the Armenian genocide,” said Pelosi. “It is imperative that the United States recognize this atrocity and move to renew our commitment to eliminate genocide whenever and wherever it exists. This effort enjoys strong bipartisan support in the House, and I will continue to support these efforts in the 110th Congress.”⁹³ Dink’s murder galvanized attention on Armenian issues. On February 1, 2007, Senate Resolution (S Res.) 65 condemned Dink’s assassination, urged Turkey to repeal Article 301, and called on Ankara “to act in the interest of regional

security and prosperity and reestablish full diplomatic, political and economic relations with the government of Armenia.”

Sponsored by Adam Schiff (D-CA) with George Radanovich (R-CA) and co-sponsored by more than 140 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, H Res. 106 called on Bush to “accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians as Genocide.”⁹⁴ Chaired by Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), the House International Affairs Committee moved the resolution through by a vote of 27 to 21 on October 10, 2007. Including Lantos, 19 Democrats and 8 Republicans voted in favor, and 8 Democrats and 13 Republicans voted against. Lantos had been a stalwart supporter of Turkey, based on Ankara’s support of Israel. All 8 Jewish representatives in the committee voted for the resolution, with the exception of Robert Wexler (D-FL). In a further blow to Turkey, Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) affirmed that the events were “tantamount to genocide.”⁹⁵

Pelosi was determined to bring the resolution to the floor before Congress adjourned on November 22. Opponents mobilized against a floor vote. A bipartisan group of 49 House members, including Ike Skelton (D-MO), Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and Silvestre Reyes (D-TX) of the Intelligence Committee, sent Pelosi a letter urging her not to schedule a vote. As co-chairman of the Turkish Caucus, Wexler organized a letter highlighting Turkey’s role in the war on terror and opposing the genocide resolution. John Murtha (D-PA) weighed in against a floor vote, maintaining that the resolution would endanger U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Buttressing security concerns, General David Petraeus, the commander of the multinational forces in Iraq, and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General James E. Cartwright held discussions with counterparts in Ankara about “critical subjects that concerned both countries, like Iraq, fighting the PKK, our mutual enemy, and intelligence sharing.” Lockheed Martin, Sikorsky, Boeing, and Raytheon, defense contractors doing \$8 billion in business with Turkey in 2007, also expressed their concerns about the resolution. With 226 co-sponsors in the 435-member House, H Res. 106 was sure to pass if it came to a vote.

Gül visited Washington on February 5, 2007. He asked Vice President Dick Cheney, Hadley, and Rice to block the resolution. They told him that the best way to stall the resolution would be to open the Turkey-Armenia border. Apakan was told the same when he visited Washington during the week of August 20. In a last-ditch effort to put U.S.-Turkish relations back on track, Erdoğan came to Washington on November 5 to highlight the war on terror and Turkey’s role moderating the Turkic republics in Central Asia. He also raised the issue of energy security, pointing out the BTC oil pipeline and construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline.

Football Diplomacy

Kocharian was barred by Armenia's constitution from serving a third consecutive term. Serge Sarkisian was Kocharian's hand-picked successor. Unlike Kocharian, however, Sarkisian was less beholden to the Dashnaks and had a broader horizon. Not only had he served as the Karabakh military commander, but Sarkisian had also held high-ranking positions in both the Ter-Petrosian and Kocharian administrations as Defense Minister, Security Minister, Interior Minister, and Prime Minister. He was head of the Republican Party of Armenia, and was elected president on February 19, 2008.

The official tally gave him 52 percent of the vote, just enough to avoid a run-off against former president and second-place finisher Levon Ter-Petrosian who, according to official results, received 21.4 percent. Ter-Petrosian claimed the election was stolen. While the OSCE's Election Observation Mission cited voting irregularities and intimidation at polling stations, it concluded that the election was "administered mostly in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards." The OSCE did, however, criticize the elections for "the absence of a clear separation between state and party functions, the lack of public confidence in the electoral process and ensuring equal treatment of election contestants."⁹⁶

Ter-Petrosian's supporters staged a week of protests in Yerevan's Freedom Square. Kocharian responded to Ter-Petrosian's effort to delegitimize the election with force. On March 1, the Interior Ministry sent security forces into the Square to disperse the demonstrators. Eight people died as a result of the widespread police crackdown, which involved tear gas, truncheons, and electric-shock equipment. The government exercised emergency powers from March 1–20, shutting down the Internet and using the National Security Service to censor the media. The Yerevan municipal government rejected more than 300 requests for permission to rally. Many prominent Armenians who supported Ter-Petrosian were rounded up and thrown in jail. Alexander Arzoumanian, a former foreign minister and TARC member, was among the political prisoners.

During the campaign, Ter-Petrosian had apologized for "disastrous errors of judgment," during his presidency from 1991 to 1998. He expressed deep regret at bringing Kocharian and Sarkisian from NK and naming them prime minister and defense minister. Sarkisian had close ties to Russia and maintained a hard line on NK. Vafa Guluzade, Azerbaijan's National Security Adviser in the 1990s, believed that Ter-Petrosian was capable of "real" compromises, whereas "the [peace] process will remain stuck" with Sarkisian in power.⁹⁷ Sarkisian assumed the presidency under a cloud. His administration was weakened by allegations of electoral fraud and the specter of violence against peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators.

Gül was one of the first foreign leaders to contact Sarkisian on his victory, writing a warm letter of congratulations. According to the Turkish MFA, "It broke the ice, extending a new hand to the Armenian side."⁹⁸ In response to this goodwill gesture, Sarkisian invited Gül to Yerevan to watch the World Cup qualifying match between Turkey and Armenia on September 6, 2008. Sarkisian's newly-appointed foreign minister, Edward Nalbandian, was tasked with arrangements. An experienced diplomat, Nalbandian had a distinguished record of service as a Soviet diplomat to Lebanon and a five-year stint in Egypt. He joined Armenia's Foreign Service after the Soviet Union collapsed and served as ambassador to France from 1999 to 2008.

Sarkisian and Nalbandian were qualitatively different from their predecessors. While Kocharian and Oskanian were reactive, Sarkisian and Nalbandian were more seasoned and strategic in their advancement of Armenia's interests. They raised Armenian diplomacy to a higher level, putting the issue on the agenda of the great powers. Their pro-active approach led to the signing of the Protocols, which was a breakthrough in Turkey-Armenia relations.

Çeviköz and Kirakossian were assigned to work out details for Gül's visit and subsequent modalities for talks. They met in May and July of 2008. Babacan acknowledged the meetings, saying, "It is important to discuss how relations between the two countries can be normalized through dialogue."⁹⁹ Şevki Mütevellioglu, Chief of Protocol for Gül, also visited Armenia for discussions with Armenian officials and Dashnak representatives. They negotiated the location and size of demonstrations, as well as the language of banners and signs. They agreed that protesters could condemn Turkey's denial of the genocide, but that signs should not personally criticize Gül.¹⁰⁰

Calmy-Rey urged Sarkisian to take steps aimed at creating positive conditions for Gül's visit. In June, Sarkisian said that Yerevan would not oppose the creation of a historical commission if Turkey established diplomatic relations with Armenia and opened its border. When Dashnaks objected, Sarkisian clarified that the commission would not consider whether or not genocide occurred, but would focus on "various details of the genocide."¹⁰¹

Gül did not announce his visit to Yerevan until one week before the football match because of security concerns and domestic political considerations. In publicly accepting Sarkisian's invitation, Gül released a statement expressing hope that his presence at the match "will be instrumental in removing the barriers blocking rapprochement between the two peoples with a common history."¹⁰² Bush called Gül to support his decision. The State Department spokesman indicated, "We commend both presidents for their courage to take steps to strengthen peace and prosperity in the region. We hope this historic meeting will help build momentum toward full normalization of Turkey-Armenian relations."¹⁰³

The Turkish delegation consisted of approximately 200 people. It included business, civil society, and media representatives such as Ali Birand

and Hasan Cemal. Hundreds of Dashnaks lined Gül's motorcade route, demanding that Turkey recognize the genocide and waving placards that read: "1915—Never Again." They staged a torch vigil at the Armenian Genocide Memorial and rallied near the presidential palace. Sarkisian and Gül had a private dinner, during which Gül reiterated Turkey's proposal to set up a joint history commission, as well as other pre-conditions to normalization such as resolution of the NK conflict and an end to Armenia's campaign to gain international recognition of the genocide. They also discussed Turkey's proposal to establish a Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP), bringing together Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Georgia to work on regional security, counter-terrorism, trade, and the environment.

In their joint news conference before driving together to Hrazdan Stadium, neither leader mentioned obstacles to normalization. Gül did not focus on Turkey's pre-conditions. He described his visit as "fruitful" and giving "hope for the future."¹⁰⁴ Kaan Soyak says, "It was a friendly atmosphere. Everyone was there."¹⁰⁵ Gül and Sarkisian sat in the box with their wives and foreign ministers. After Turkey won the match 2–0, Gül and his delegation headed to the airport and flew back to Ankara in his presidential plane.

Babacan stayed behind and met with Nalbandian at midnight. Nalbandian presented Babacan with a text, leading to discussions that went on for more than two hours. Each foreign minister then briefed members of his delegation. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister Erdoğan's foreign policy adviser, was in the Turkish group. He was agitated when Babacan went behind closed doors with Nalbandian. Karen Mirzoyan took him to the library of the foreign ministry to show Davutoğlu that a copy of his book, *Strategic Depth*, was on the shelf. Mirzoyan explained that the book was there for Armenian officials to read so they could better understand Turkey's worldview. Armenian officials noted the difference in style and temperament between Babacan and Davutoğlu. An anonymous Armenian foreign ministry official notes, "Babacan was not a political person. He was very progressive and business-oriented. (Babacan) was open to ideas that we were proposing."¹⁰⁶

Soyak was relieved that Gül's visit went without a hitch. "We were all nervous. Anything could happen to damage all our work." Turkish media favorably reported the visit. *Vatan* called it "a beautiful beginning." *Radikal* said it was "hope-inspiring." *Zaman* heralded a "new era."¹⁰⁷ Gül reflected, "I believe my visit has demolished a psychological barrier in the Caucasus. If this climate continues, everything will move forward and normalize. The visit will create a good opportunity to improve bilateral relations."¹⁰⁸

Azerbaijan strongly criticized Gül for visiting Armenia, threatening to limit its energy supplies to Turkey. Gül tried to assuage Azerbaijan's concerns about a softening of Turkey's position toward Armenia during a subsequent visit to Baku. Gül publicly reiterated that normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia would not precede resolution of NK.

To reciprocate and for symmetry, Gül invited Sarkisian to Turkey for the next World Cup qualifying match between Turkey and Armenia in October 2009. Babacan and Nalbandian discussed follow-up on the margins of the UNGA in September 2008.¹⁰⁹ When Nalbandian visited Turkey to attend a meeting of the BSEC in November, he told Babacan that, in principle, Sarkisian accepted Gül's invitation. Gül and Sarkisian had a friendly meeting in Davos on January 29, 2009. Meanwhile, negotiations at the foreign minister level continued, with Babacan and Nalbandian meeting again at the Munich Security Conference on February 6, 2009.

U.S. Approach

H Res. 252 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on March 17, 2007 by Representatives Adam Schiff, George Radanovich, Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), and Mark Kirk (R-IL). The resolution (1) “calls upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of the failure to realize a just resolution; and (2) calls upon the President in the President’s annual message commemorating the Armenian Genocide issued on or about April 24, to accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide and to recall the proud history of United States intervention in opposition to the Armenian Genocide.”

During the 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama stated, “The Armenian genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence.”¹¹⁰ Obama called for the United States to recognize the genocide on twenty-one separate occasions. Joseph R. Biden and Hillary Clinton were also on record as repeatedly calling for genocide recognition when they served in the U.S. Senate.

Fried insists that, “The change of administrations made no difference (in U.S. policy).” Fried briefed members of Obama’s incoming team, including Anthony J. Blinken, National Security Adviser to Vice President Biden. According to Fried, “(Blinken and Biden) immediately grasped the importance” of Turkish-Armenian normalization. Fried also reached out to Jake Sullivan, Secretary Clinton’s Deputy Chief of Staff. Philip H. Gordon was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, but his confirmation was held up. Senators in contact with the Armenian Diaspora accused Gordon of a pro-Turkey bias based on his 2008 book, *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive a Fading Partnership*. The hold was finally lifted, but Gordon did not take the oath of office until May 15, 2009. Fried named Gordon an adviser so he could participate in business of the State Department’s Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs. “The bureaucracy knew what was going on,” said Fried. “It was focused.”¹¹¹

Turkish officials tried to stall H Res. 252, warning that the resolution would undermine an imminent breakthrough in relations with Armenia. U.S. officials also urged sponsors of the resolution to wait until after Obama’s trip to Turkey. At a press conference with Gül in Ankara on April 6, 2009, Obama said that visiting Turkey just seventy-seven days after being inaugurated was a “statement about the importance of Turkey, not just to the United States, but to the world.” Obama described the deaths of Armenians as “one of the great atrocities of the twentieth century,” but did not use the term

“genocide.” His written statement indicated, “I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. My interest remains the achievement of a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts.”¹¹²

Obama addressed the TGNA. Heralding U.S.-Turkey relations as a “model partnership,” he referred to Turkey as “a critical ally.” While acknowledging that “the trust that binds us has been strained,” Obama emphasized Turkey’s role in helping to bridge the gap between the Muslim and Western worlds. “Let me say this as clearly as I can. The United States is not and will never be at war with Islam. In fact, our partnership with the Muslim world is critical to rolling back fringe ideology that people of all faiths reject.” Obama endorsed Turkey’s EU candidacy, stating, “Europe gains by diversity of ethnicity, tradition and faith—it is not diminished by it. And Turkey’s membership would broaden and strengthen Europe’s foundation once more.”¹¹³

The Armenian Diaspora criticized Obama for his remarks during the trip to Turkey. Focusing on his upcoming presidential statement of April 24, Pelosi and experts from the International Association of Genocide Scholars called on Obama to “formally recognize the Armenian Genocide.”¹¹⁴ While Obama was under strong pressure from Armenian-Americans to honor his campaign pledge, he was also under pressure from Ankara not to mention the “g-word.” Both Gül and Erdoğan warned that talking about the Armenian genocide would harm the diplomatic process underway between Turkey and Armenia.

Initials

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Ankara to meet Erdoğan, Gül, and Babacan on March 7, 2009. Neither Clinton nor Babacan mentioned Armenia or the Minsk Group during their joint press conference. She privately offered assurances to help strengthen Turkey's resolve. In response to Babacan's suggestion that normalization of relations with Armenia should be linked to resolution of NK, Clinton pledged more vigorous efforts by the Minsk Group. With that assurance, Babacan committed his initials on behalf of the Turkish government to the existing text.¹¹⁵

The actual process of initialing the agreement was achieved through Ambuhl's shuttle diplomacy. He flew to Ankara and, after lengthy discussions, finally got Babacan's commitment at 6:00 p.m. on April 2. Ambuhl called Nalbandian, who expressed some reservations, so Ambuhl flew to Yerevan to assure him. Initials of both parties were finally affixed to the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations, and an annex establishing a bi-national commission and a series of sub-commissions just before midnight on April 2.

Fried organized a meeting between Obama, Calmy-Rey, Babacan, and Nalbandian in Istanbul on April 8. Nalbandian was reluctant to attend. Fried finally convinced him, but Nalbandian said he could not make it because there were no flights from Yerevan that evening. Not to be deterred, Ambuhl sent a small Swiss plane to Yerevan to pick up Nalbandian and deliver him. Not only did the meeting buttress support of the signatories, but also Calmy-Rey got a coveted early audience with the newly elected Obama.

On April 22, Babacan and Nalbandian issued a joint statement announcing the Protocols. "The two parties have achieved tangible progress and mutual understanding in this process and they have agreed on a comprehensive framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations. Within this framework, a roadmap has been determined" whose objective is to "develop good neighborly relations in mutual respect and progress with peace, security, and stability in the entire region."¹¹⁶ According to an anonymous Armenian official involved in the negotiations, "Washington wanted us to announce the agreement before Genocide day so President Obama wouldn't have to mention genocide in his statement." He continued, "The Turks expected us to say 'no,' but we fooled them."¹¹⁷

There was no reference to NK in either the Protocols or the annexes. Fried reaffirmed the U.S. government's official position, extolling de-linkage as a procedural breakthrough. Turkish officials thought it was in the interest of the normalization process to allow "constructive ambiguity." In private they had made it clear to the Armenian negotiators that moving forward with the Protocols was contingent on resolving the NK conflict. Even though there was no "strict dependence," there was a "gentleman's agreement" that

the issues “would be considered in parallel.”¹¹⁸ U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James F. Jeffrey insisted that making no mention of NK did not mean that the two issues were de-linked. According to Jeffrey, Obama did not discuss de-linkage with Gül or Erdoğan during his April trip.¹¹⁹ Instead of affirming de-linkage, Obama was silent on the issue. So were Gül and Erdoğan.

Clinton welcomed the “historic step towards the establishment of normal relations between the two countries.”¹²⁰ However, a copy of the actual Protocols was not made public until August 31, 2009. Lack of transparency fueled speculation and criticism from within Armenia’s governing coalition, as well as opposition parties. Armenians also criticized timing of the announcement. Biden called Sarkisian on April 22, urging him to announce the roadmap. “We did it on that date because the U.S. asked us to,” says a senior Armenian official involved in the process. Sami Kohen wrote in *Mil-liyet*, “The goal is to make President Barack Obama not use an expression that will embarrass Turkey in his April 24 message to the Armenians.”¹²¹

The Armenian Diaspora hoped that Samantha Power, the Senior Director of Multilateral Affairs on the National Security Council, would convince Obama to characterize the events as genocide in his presidential statement on April 24. In her book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Non-Fiction in 2003, Power surveyed genocides of the twentieth century, beginning with the Armenian genocide. Power was on maternity leave in the spring of 2009, and primary responsibility for drafting the statement fell to Elizabeth Sherwood Randall, the NSC’s Senior Director for European and Eurasian Affairs, and Gordon, who was still waiting to be confirmed. No one consulted Fried, who had been drafting presidential statements since 2001. “It’s understandable they kept it to themselves,” notes Fried. “They were coming right out of the campaign, and I was identified with the Bush administration.”¹²²

Obama’s April 24 statement did not refer to the Armenian genocide. He did, however, use the Armenian words “Meds Yeghern” that, literally translated, means “great calamity.” Meds Yeghern is used by Armenians as an interchangeable term for the genocide. Obama went further than any president since Ronald Reagan. Some Armenians were upset, however, because the statement misspelled the Armenian term. They were also critical of Obama for speaking of his personal views, failing to recognize that he surrendered the right to have personal views upon becoming president.

The statement satisfied neither the Armenian Diaspora nor the Turkish government. Rather than welcoming Obama’s choice of words, Turkey’s MFA criticized him for failing to honor Turks killed by Armenians during the period. Gül reminded Obama, “Everyone’s pain must be felt.”¹²³

Azerbaijan's Reaction

Soon after Gül's trip to Yerevan, Babacan, Nalbandian, and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov held a series of bilateral meetings at the UNGA in September 2008. Babacan raised concerns about the Protocols and NK with Rice. Rice told Fried, "We have to get something on NK"¹²⁴ Rice asked Bryza to prepare a paper exploring the link between normalization and NK. Ross Wilson, who served as U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan from 2000 to 2003 and as Ambassador to Turkey from 2005 to December 2008, was adamant that settlement of NK should precede normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia. Even though there was no mention of Azerbaijan in the Protocols, Wilson insisted that the status quo was a deal-breaker. Others in the administration argued that normalization would pave the way for resolution.

After discussions with Nalbandian in Munich on February 6, 2009, Babacan went to Baku, where he briefed Aliyev and Mammadyarov on the talks. According to Mehmet Ali Birand, "Babacan briefed Aliyev at least four times, but Baku did not take it seriously until the last minute."¹²⁵ The Protocols took Baku by surprise, despite efforts by Ankara to keep Azerbaijan's leadership informed. U.S. officials also kept Baku in the loop. On April 15, 2009, Bryza visited Baku to try and neutralize opposition. When negotiations culminated in an agreement, Baku publicly denounced the Protocols and condemned Turkey for betraying their Turkic brethren. According to Fried, "The Azeris had a fit."¹²⁶

Ahmet Davutoğlu replaced Babacan as foreign minister on May 1, 2009. Davutoğlu wanted to negotiate an entirely new agreement. He traveled with Erdoğan to Azerbaijan on May 12–13, 2009. Erdoğan dismissed reports of de-linkage as "slander" and "disinformation." He told the press, "Azerbaijan-Turkey fraternal relations have never been the subject of discussions. The Turkey-Armenia border has been closed due to Nagorno-Karabakh's occupation and will not be solved until it is liberated." He continued, "Occupation of Karabakh is the cause here and closing the border is the effect. It is impossible for us to open the border unless the occupation ends."¹²⁷ Erdoğan emphasized the principle of one nation and two states during his address to the Azerbaijan Grand National Assembly on May 13. "The current situation in Nagorno-Karabakh cannot be accepted and will never be accepted," Erdoğan said. "I want to repeat once more that until the occupation ends, the border gates [with Armenia] will remain closed."¹²⁸ Erdoğan explained that Turkey was showing "goodwill" to restore ties with Armenia. "We are trying to boost our relations with Armenia in a way that will cause no hard feelings for Azerbaijan."¹²⁹

Erdoğan's call for a complete withdrawal raised the bar higher than the Minsk Group's negotiating position, which was focused on a phased withdrawal of Armenian forces from areas around NK rather than from all territories in Azerbaijan. Presented at the OSCE ministerial conference in November 2007 and updated in 2009, the Madrid principles of the Minsk Group envisioned a settlement based on the return of territories surrounding NK to Azerbaijan, a corridor between NK and Armenia, self-government guarantees, and a legally binding referendum to determine NK's final status. Consistent with the Madrid principles, the Obama administration emphasized that progress should be based on three principles of the OSCE's Helsinki declaration: no use of force, respect for territorial integrity, and recognition of the right to self-determination.

Davutoğlu and Turkish officials involved in the mediation were surprised by Erdoğan's demand for a complete withdrawal of Armenian forces from all "occupied territories." Not only was Erdoğan very emotional during his press conference on May 12, but his speech on May 13 also included comments that were "not in notes sent by the MFA to the Prime Minister's Office." On this and other important issues, a small circle of advisers around the prime minister "made recommendations independent of the MFA."¹³⁰

Armenian officials were not surprised; Sarkisian had told Biden that Turkey would walk away from the deal when they spoke on April 22. They never thought that Ankara was serious about normalization, nor did they believe that the Obama administration would put enough pressure on the Turks to get them to fulfill their commitments. A senior Armenian official observes, "Obama's political team had to show something to the Armenian community." He explains, "We picked up the phone and called the Americans. I called Phil Gordon. Minister Nalbandian called (Deputy Secretary of State James B.) Steinberg. The bottom line: they thought it was disgusting."¹³¹

After Erdoğan's speech, Davutoğlu and his team, which included Apakan and Çeviköz, flew to Stockholm to see Calmy-Rey and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt. Calmy-Rey expressed dismay at Erdoğan's remarks. Turkish diplomats focused on damage control, assuring her that the speech would not endanger the normalization process. Davutoğlu sought assistance with keeping the Armenians on track. He and Calmy-Rey met again to coordinate arrangements at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Corfu a month later.

"We expected the Protocols would lead to reactivation of the Minsk Group," said Apakan.¹³² Sure enough, diplomatic activity on NK intensified. Sarkisian and Aliyev met for two hours on the sidelines of an EU Summit in Prague on May 7. Sarkisian and Aliyev also held bilateral meetings with Gül. Ever optimistic, Bryza welcomed "significant progress." Erdoğan went to Moscow after Azerbaijan in order to galvanize the Minsk Group. Sarkisian and Aliyev met again in St. Petersburg on June 4. After a private meeting, they were joined by their foreign ministers and the Minsk Group co-chairs. In the

twelve-month period beginning in June 2008, Sarkisian and Aliyev met seven times.¹³³ Davutoğlu reassured Baku, "Turkey will not take any steps that "hurt the interests of Azerbaijan."¹³⁴ Ankara's solicitous approach to Azerbaijan eliminated any sense of urgency, relieving Baku of pressure to do a deal. Lack of progress on NK also relieved Ankara of pressure to push for ratification, which would distract the AKP from battles on the domestic front.

Erdoğan's trip to Baku exposed differences with Abdullah Gül. The two men are both devout Muslims who rose together through the ranks of the Welfare Party. They always appear to be in lock-step regarding the AKP's political goals. Beneath the veneer of amity, however, tensions exist. Their personalities are dramatically different. Gül is statesmanlike with a serene demeanor and an aura of equanimity. Erdoğan grew up in a rough neighborhood and has behaved like a scrappy street fighter since entering politics at age eighteen. He is prideful and emotional. Their wives do not speak; Emine Erdoğan has never set foot into the Gül household.¹³⁵

The push for progress on Turkish-Armenian relations was envisioned by Gül and engineered by Babacan. While Gül was identified with Armenian relations, for which he was nominated to receive a Nobel Peace Prize, Erdoğan was identified with the so-called Democracy Opening that was intended to drain the swamp of support for the PKK through legal and constitutional reforms enhancing freedom of expression and other rights. Erdoğan did not think that talks on Turkey-Armenia relations would actually result in an agreement. He was also distracted by domestic politics. Erdoğan was focused on Turkey's local elections of March 2009. A big win would further consolidate the AKP's power and position him for a third term as prime minister.

Ergenekon

Beginning in 2007, Turks were consumed with the government's investigation of Ergenekon, a clandestine ultranationalist network of uniformed and retired military, secular dissidents, journalists, and academics. *Taraf* broke a series of stories about extraordinary measures by former military officers and members of the deep state intended to justify a coup and overthrow the AKP government.

In June 2007, *Taraf* reported that a cache of explosives was discovered and former soldiers detained. In July 2008, twenty people were arrested, including two former generals and a senior journalist, for "planning political disturbances and trying to organize a coup." In October 2008, eighty-six people went on trial for plotting to overthrow the government, and in July 2009, fifty-six more were charged. *Taraf* reported on Operation "Sledgehammer" in January 2010, alleging that the military planned to foment unrest to justify removing the AKP from power. Measures included bombing two major mosques in Istanbul's Fatih and Beyazit districts, an assault on a military museum by people disguised as religious extremists, and raising tensions with Greece by downing a Turkish plane over Greek air space.¹³⁶ More than forty retired officers were arrested, including Ergin Saygun, former deputy chief of the General Staff; İbrahim Firtina, former air force commander; and Özden Örneç, a former naval commander. Ergenekon was also allegedly involved in Hrant Dink's assassination.

Since 1960, Turkey's armed forces had intervened to overthrow elected governments four times, including that of the country's first Islamist prime minister in 1997. The TGS resented the AKP for implementing reforms aimed at subordinating the military to civilian authorities in a bid to advance Turkey's EU candidacy. Since the AKP's emergence, the military was convinced that Erdoğan had a hidden agenda to subvert the country's secular system.

The AKP's electoral victory in elections on July 22, 2007, further marginalized the military. So did direct presidential elections that Gül won on August 28, 2007, becoming Turkey's first openly devout Muslim president. In July 2008, the Constitutional Court considered a case outlawing the AKP for undermining secular principles of governance enshrined in Turkey's constitution. The case was brought by prosecutors after the government tried to lift a ban on the wearing of Muslim head scarves in publicly financed universities. Six of the eleven judges in the Constitutional Court voted in favor of banning the AKP, just one vote short of the required number. Instead of an outright ban, the Court restricted the AKP's activities and cut its state subsidy. The decision was intended as a warning. It also showed the Court's reluctance to take on the AKP. With broad popular support, the AKP could have dissolved the government and called for snap elections, reconstituting the party under a different name.¹³⁷

The AKP had a less-than-convincing victory in the local elections of March 2009. Nonetheless, it sponsored a parliamentary resolution challenging the authority of the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors to make judicial appointments. The resolution was not adopted due to opposition by the CHP and MHP. The AKP did succeed in pushing through changes to Article 5918 of the Penal Code in July 2009, restricting the military's power by allowing military personnel to be tried in civilian courts and preventing the prosecution of civilians in military courts. The AKP was encouraged to conduct a referendum on constitutional reform on September 12, 2010, which was approved by nearly 58 percent of voters. The referendum was a critical victory, boosting the AKP's prospects of winning a third term and fulfilling its pledge to do away with the 1982 constitution, which was drafted by the military junta. It also marked a significant defeat for opposition parties that campaigned for a "no" vote. The AKP had successfully undermined nationalist opposition, subordinated the military, and tamed the bureaucracy. The AKP-led government decided to sign the Protocols.

Signing Ceremony

According to Philip Gordon, normalization “should proceed within a reasonable time frame. It means that the process can’t be infinite. It can’t go on forever.”¹³⁸ As the process dragged on, Yerevan accused Ankara of buyer’s remorse; however, both Ankara and Yerevan contributed to stagnation in the diplomatic process.

On June 24, Switzerland drafted a press release announcing the text and affirming the parties’ intention to sign. Both sides drew exception to elements of the short draft, which included only three paragraphs. Yerevan strongly opposed indications that “the normalization of bilateral relations contributes to regional peace and stability.” According to Fried, “It [signing of the Protocols] should have been done much sooner, but the Armenians were negotiating too hard over little details.” Negotiations over petty points in the press release were a harbinger of disagreements to come. The release was finally issued during the evening of August 31.

Swiss mediation was once again indispensable. On September 1, 2009, Calmy-Rey joined the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers when they announced they would start “internal political consultations.” Their statement indicated, “The political consultations will be completed within six weeks following which the Protocols will be signed and submitted to the respective Parliaments for ratification. Both sides will make their best efforts for the timely progression of the ratification in line with their constitutional and legal procedures.”¹³⁹ Fried notes, “Both sides looked to the U.S. to keep pressure on them, and so did the Swiss.”

While signing the Protocols was the next milestone, ratification represented an exit strategy. Ratification was a way to involve the public in decision-making, giving voice to strong constituencies in both countries that opposed normalization. It also represented a way out should the political resolve of either government falter. Clinton and Davutoğlu discussed the Protocols during a telephone conversation on September 14. Clinton called Sarkisian on September 19, and met with Davutoğlu and Nalbandian separately on the margins of UNGA later that week. Calmy-Rey and Clinton strongly urged the parties to sign the Protocols. Another deadline was looming. The consultation period would close just in time for the Protocols to be signed, thereby enabling Sarkisian to visit Turkey for the World Cup soccer game.

The signing ceremony was scheduled to be held at the University of Zurich on October 10, 2009. Davutoğlu and Nalbandian each planned remarks to commemorate the “historic moment in Turkish-Armenian bilateral relations.” Turkish and Armenian negotiators had reached an understanding: they would avoid open discussion of sensitivities. To maintain constructive ambiguity, they agreed that neither Davutoğlu nor Nalbandian would mention the genocide or refer to NK.

Ten minutes before the signing ceremony, which was scheduled for 5:00 p.m., the Armenian delegation asked to see the Turkish statement. Texts were exchanged through the U.S. delegation. Nalbandian saw Davutoğlu's text and was aghast. According to an anonymous Turkish official, the Armenians objected to Davutoğlu's emphasis on the joint historical commission, insisting that allowing the commission's work was tantamount to denial of the genocide.¹⁴⁰ Armenian officials have a different recollection. An anonymous Armenian official insists that Davutoğlu intended to speak about the historical commission's importance, as well as NK. Ambuhl reflects on their different memories, "Both sides were speaking the truth."¹⁴¹ Implicit and explicit differences were conflated.

Calmy-Rey stayed upstairs in the "Aula," the auditorium where the signing ceremony was to take place. She was with the VIPs who were waiting to witness the signing of the Protocols. The media was off to one side of the auditorium. The Zurich mayor and university rector were mingling, trying to keep everyone engaged. Ambuhl left the Turkish delegation in the University of Zurich's Senate hall and rushed two kilometers in a police vehicle to the newly-renovated Dolder Hotel where the U.S. and Armenian delegations were staying. It was highly unusual in Zurich for a police vehicle with flashing blue lights to go speeding through town. He and Clinton went to Nalbandian's room. Nalbandian was visibly agitated, channel-surfing between football matches. The Swiss came up with a compromise: neither side would make remarks. Clinton and Nalbandian drove in the same car to the University of Zurich—three hours behind schedule.

Diplomats attending the ceremony responded to the delay differently. Secretary General of the Council of the European Union Javier Solana was concerned, but followed the U.S. lead. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner was energized, but did not play a major role; Ankara would never accept a mediation role for France. It viewed France as pro-Armenian because of the French Senate resolution recognizing the genocide and France's outspoken Diaspora community, which is a force in French politics. Lavrov used his influence to help seal the deal, providing Nalbandian with a strongly worded letter that urged him to sign.

The Protocols were finally signed at 8:00 p.m. As agreed, no statements were made after the signing. Clinton, Solana, Calmy-Rey, Lavrov, and Kouchner stood behind Nalbandian and Davutoğlu as witnesses, and as a signal of the international community's support. Calmy-Rey was the only speaker. Welcoming the agreement, she addressed the audience and media assembled in the Aula. Winston Churchill spoke in that same auditorium on September 19, 1946, saying: "The first step in the recreation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany." The historic address concluded, "Let Europe Rise."¹⁴² The symbolism was trenchant. If France and Germany could overcome their enmity and Europe could bind

together in common purpose, then Turkey and Armenia could also overcome their differences.

Everyone went to the University Tower for a cocktail reception after the ceremony. The city of Zurich was taking care of arrangements and “did a very good job logistically.” Guests were seated, except for Clinton, who left before the meal was served. According to Ambuhl, “Everybody was relieved. It was good moment after all.”¹⁴³

The Protocols

Through the Protocols and the annex, Turkey and Armenia agreed to:

- Establish diplomatic relations in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and to exchange Diplomatic Missions.
- Open the common border within two months after the entry into force of the Protocol on the Development of Relations.
- Conduct regular political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries.
- Make the best possible use of existing transport, communications, and energy infrastructure and networks between the two countries, and to undertake measures in this regard.
- Develop the bilateral legal framework in order to foster cooperation between the two countries.
- Cooperate in the fields of science and education by encouraging relations between the appropriate institutions, as well as promoting the exchange of specialists and students, and act with the aim of preserving the cultural heritage of both sides and launching common cultural projects.
- Establish consular cooperation in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963 in order to provide necessary assistance and protection to the citizens of the two countries.
- Take concrete measures in order to develop trade, tourism, and economic cooperation between the two countries.
- Engage in a dialogue and reinforce cooperation on environmental issues, and
- Implement a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations.¹⁴⁴

In Article 3 and the annex, which Ambuhl calls “diplomatic engineering,” the text specifically addressed the matter of who would do what, and when. It indicated that the signatories: “Agree on the establishment of an intergovernmental bilateral commission which shall comprise separate sub-commissions for the prompt implementation of the commitments mentioned in operational paragraph 2 above in this Protocol. To prepare the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions, a working group headed by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs shall be created 2 months after the day following the entry into force of this Protocol. Within 3 months after the entry into force of this Protocol, these modalities shall be approved at ministerial level. The intergovernmental commission shall meet for the first time immediately after the adoption of the said modalities. The sub-commissions shall start their work at the latest 1 month thereafter and

they shall work continuously until the completion of their mandates." The parties agreed to ratify the Protocols in their parliaments within a "reasonable time frame."

According to Ambuhl, "Both sides explained to the other the internal possibilities."¹⁴⁵ Yerevan got right to work on implementation. It appointed a committee of experts, including lawyers from France and the United States, to advise the government of Armenia on next steps. Yerevan saw the commission on historical issues as an opportunity for Turks to engage in a discussion about their own history. A structured dialogue affirming the genocide could provide political cover for Ankara to apologize, while the sub-commission on legal issues also opened the door to reparations. In exchange, the Armenian side was also prepared for the commission on historical issues to consider a broad sweep: events in the nineteenth century, the role of "righteous Turks" who saved Armenians, and ASALA's assassination of Turkish diplomats.

The Protocols themselves clearly described the commitments of both parties. But they did not take into account their different hopes and expectations. According to Apakan, "Reality has two shores."¹⁴⁶ Yerevan viewed the Protocols as a way to end the embargo by Turkey, boosting Armenia's economy and facilitating exports, such as electricity sales, to Turkey. By omitting reference to negotiations with Azerbaijan, Yerevan expected that the Protocols would give a new dynamic and sense of urgency to the Minsk Group. The historical commission would buttress the genocide's validity, boosting recognition. The Protocols also represented a legacy opportunity for Sarkisian, who saw the diplomatic breakthrough as a way of securing his place in history.

Sarkisian, however, suffered withering criticism in Armenia and from some elements in the Diaspora. Accusing the government of a diplomatic failure, the Dashnaks and its sixteen members of parliament withdrew from the governing coalition on April 27, 2009, after the Protocols were initialed. Dashnak Chairman Hrant Markarian blasted the deal for undermining Armenia's national interests by making major concessions to Ankara with nothing in return. Other opposition parties were also critical. Armen Martirosian, Parliamentary leader of the Heritage Party, called it "too vague" and a "cause for deep concern," which would undermine recognition of the genocide.¹⁴⁷ The Armenian National Congress (HAK) called the Protocols "very dangerous" and "defeatist." Stepan Demirchyan, Chairman of the People's Party, criticized the Protocols for giving Ankara a say in the NK negotiations and putting "unprecedented" international pressure on Yerevan to make further concessions. Demirchyan said, "We support the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations but not at the expense of our national dignity."¹⁴⁸

These critics lambasted the historical dialogue as a vehicle for questioning the veracity of the genocide. The Armenian government countered that the mandate of the historical commission was not defined, but even many of

those who supported opening the border believed that Turkey would manipulate the historical dialogue. Questioning the Armenian genocide was equated to betraying the Armenian state. According to Paragraph 11 of the 1990 Declaration of Independence, “The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.”

Ankara had different goals. It viewed the Protocols as a way of preempting international attempts at genocide recognition and envisioned that a historical commission would refute the conclusion that events in the early twentieth century constituted genocide. It anticipated that the Protocols would catalyze negotiations returning territories to Azerbaijan, ending the NK conflict, and laying to rest notions of a “Greater Armenia.” Rapprochement with Armenia would put Turkey in good stead with the EU. Davutoğlu reflected on the Protocols, “Yerevan has recognized the present borders of Turkey and does not have any territorial claims on us.”¹⁴⁹ Mehmet Kamis wrote in *Zaman*, “The status quo is changing in and around Turkey. The old order, based on antagonism, is being replaced by a brand new approach, based on friendship, cooperation and even fraternity.”¹⁵⁰ The public psychology was shifting, even though the Armenians had been demonized for so long.

The CHP’s Denis Baykal charged that Turkey’s backtracking damaged its credibility with the international community and questioned Davutoğlu’s strategy. By signing the Protocols, Baykal maintained, Turkey created a serious rift with Azerbaijan where no problem had existed before. The MHP’s Devlet Bahçeli called on the government to withdraw the Protocols from the TGNA. He also called on the government to apologize to the Turkish nation: “In this ruling, it has been understood once more that Armenia’s stance toward international law and its hostile approach toward Turkey has not changed. This situation is an embarrassing failure and fiasco for the AKP government and the foreign minister who signed the Protocols.”¹⁵¹

Both opposition parties saw rapprochement as “selling out” Turkish national interests, and sought to exploit the issue for their own domestic political purposes. According to Mehmet Ali Birand, “The opposition badly wants this Protocol destroyed. One issue where the CHP and MHP agree is the cancellation of this Protocol. But there is election politics behind this appeal. Their purpose is to force the administration into a corner.”¹⁵²

Signing the agreement made it possible for Sarkisian to join Gül in Bursa for the World Cup match on October 14, 2009. Police banned the display of Azerbaijani flags, and there were several scuffles with protesters outside the stadium before the match and in the stands. After white doves were ceremoniously released, the Armenian national anthem was booed before the start of play. Gül hosted an official reception for Sarkisian before his return to Yerevan that evening. Neither Gül nor Sarkisian issued any official statement, but Gül told the press: “We are not writing history, we are making history.”¹⁵³

For Azerbaijan, the Protocols were another chapter in its tragic history. Aliyev condemned the Protocols. Baku retaliated by taking down Turkish flags from Martyr's Alley near the national cemetery and other public places, banning Turkish movies and songs from Azerbaijani TV, and shutting down Turkish-financed mosques in Baku. Members of the Azerbaijani parliament visited Ankara, with their activities coordinated by the Azerbaijani Friends Group in the TGNA. Azerbaijani deputies appeared regularly on Turkish television and talk shows.

Aliyev threatened to stop natural gas sales to Turkey and to seek alternate routes via Russia, Iran, or Georgia. Four days after signing the Protocols, Azerbaijan agreed to sell Russia at least 500 million cubic meters of gas annually, starting in 2010.¹⁵⁴ In a blow to Europe's goal of diversifying energy sources, Aliyev announced support for Russia's South Stream energy project and, in a setback to Nabucco, postponed the development of the Shah-Deniz gas field until 2017.¹⁵⁵ Azerbaijan also increased the price of gas it sold to Turkey. Erdoğan tried to downplay the dispute: "Azerbaijan and Turkey share a long history of co-operation on the gas sector. . . . Prices are regularly reviewed. Therefore, it will not be right to link the issue with the newly emerging situation in the region."¹⁵⁶

Aliyev warned that an open border would destroy Azerbaijan's leverage and make an NK settlement impossible. "The Protocols were deeply offensive to the government and the public too," says Leila Alieva. The sequencing was wrong: "Turkey should have come to Baku before going to Armenia. It needed to consult with Baku and come up with a common strategy. Turkey was Azerbaijan's only strategic ally. We expected support and solidarity." Alieva explains that, "For Azeris, absence of economic relations was a bargaining tool. Close borders was a consequence of the conflict." The embargo sent an important message: "You have to respect certain rules in order to enjoy economic prosperity. You have to behave yourself."¹⁵⁷

It is not clear, however, what Aliyev knew and when he knew it. Azeris thought that Aliyev's claim of ignorance was, according to Alieva, "sort of a game." She thinks, "It was a performance. The government knew from the beginning but was pretending that it did not know."¹⁵⁸ U.S. officials tried to temper Aliyev's reaction. Bryza explained the relationship between the Turkey-Armenian normalization and NK. "As we make progress, let's say, on Nagorno-Karabakh, it's easier to make progress on Turkey-Armenia and as we make progress on Turkey-Armenia, it's easier to make progress on Nagorno-Karabakh."¹⁵⁹ He welcomed the "positive mood [which] gives a new energy to accelerate our work to help resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict."¹⁶⁰

A Partnership at Risk

Erdoğan met Obama in the White House on December 7, 2009. They discussed Turkey's role in top-tier foreign policy problems: government formation in Iraq, ISAF and Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear ambitions, the Russia-Georgia conflict, Middle East peace, relations between Israel and Syria, and Kosovo's independence. Erdoğan said after the meeting, "We have also discussed relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which are of great importance." He added, "We have discussed the Minsk Group and what the Minsk Group can do to add more impetus to that process. I can say that to have more impetus in the Minsk process is going to have a very positive impact on the overall process, because the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia is very much related to these issues. As the administration in Turkey, we are determined to move forward in this area."¹⁶¹

Erdoğan complained about lackluster efforts by the Obama administration to oppose congressional recognition of the Armenian genocide. The House International Affairs Committee had passed similar resolutions in 2000, 2005, and 2007. Unlike 2007, when the Bush and his national security advisers worked hard to block the resolution, the Obama administration did not clearly disclose its position on H Res. 252, pointing instead to ongoing efforts to normalize relations. Clinton told the House International Affairs Committee on February 25, 2010, "We are working very hard to assist Armenia and Turkey in their [reconciliation] efforts and we would like to continue to support that effort and not be diverted in any way at all."¹⁶² James Jeffrey tried to use the pending legislation as a way of leveraging Ankara's ratification of the Protocols. He warned TGNA deputies that the Congress would likely adopt the Armenian genocide bill if the Protocols were not adopted. Jeffrey emphasized, "The Turkey-Armenia Protocols were important to resolving this historical issue."¹⁶³

According to Turkey's newly appointed Ambassador to the United States, Namik Tan, "The greatest lobbyist in Washington is the administration. We have not seen them around enough on this." Şükrü Elekdağ confirmed, "My impression is that the administration is not fighting against it very effectively."¹⁶⁴ Even leading Jewish-American organizations, stalwart supporters of Turkey in the past, were less robust in opposing the resolution than in previous years. Tensions between Turkey and Israel came to the surface during a January 29, 2009 panel at the WEF in Davos on "Gaza: The Case for Middle East Peace." Erdoğan accused Israeli President Shimon Peres: "When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill."¹⁶⁵ Erdoğan was angered by Israel's attack on Gaza on December 27, 2008, just four days after he had met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to discuss Turkey's mediation efforts with Syria. Ankara gave tacit approval to the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla," which sailed from Turkey to break Israel's blockade of Hamas-controlled Gaza. The

Israel Defense Forces interdicted the ships in international waters, killing nine Turks on May 31, 2010.

Turkey rallied its supporters against the resolution. Former secretaries of state and defense wrote Chairman Howard Berman. Wexler and twenty-four members of Congress expressed their concern that further congressional action could jeopardize the fragile process of rapprochement between Yerevan and Ankara. On February 26, the chief executives of Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, United Technologies, and Northrop Grumman also wrote Berman, warning that passage could cause "a rupture in U.S.-Turkey relations" and put U.S. jobs at risk.¹⁶⁶ The letter stated that "alienating a significant NATO ally and trading partner would have negative repercussions for U.S. geopolitical interests and efforts to boost both exports and employments."¹⁶⁷

Clinton called Berman just before the vote to express the administration's opposition. Berman was, however, committed to the resolution. On March 4, 2010, the House International Affairs Committee approved H Res. 252 by 23 votes in favor to 22 against. The tally was closer than expected and was not decided until the final votes were cast. H Res. 106 in 2007 had passed by a much wider margin. Some members of Congress who had supported the 2007 measure voted against H Res. 252, citing ongoing efforts aimed at normalization. They were also motivated by political considerations. For example, Congressman James P. McGovern (D-MA) had accepted donations of \$42,200 from the Raytheon Corporation, a defense contractor doing a significant amount of business with Turkey, since 1989.

Ankara's reaction was swift and predictable. The MFA immediately issued a statement condemning "this resolution which accuses the Turkish nation of a crime it has not committed" and withdrew its ambassador to Ankara for consultations.¹⁶⁸ Turks debated how to retaliate if the resolution went to the floor. Speculation ranged from Turkey's exclusion of U.S. companies from defense contracts, to shutting down the Incirlik air base, to withdrawing Turkish troops from Afghanistan. Davutoğlu did not rule out any of these options in his press conference, noting that the cabinet would consider all options.¹⁶⁹

Ankara complained about mixed messages from the Obama administration. An anonymous U.S. official who was not authorized to speak on the matter claimed, "There was an understanding with the Democratic leadership in Congress that the resolution would not go to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives." Gordon rejected this claim. "There is no deal with Democratic congressional leaders to block the resolution. Congress is an independent body, and they are going to do what they decide to do." He added, "As President Obama has said, our interest is in a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts related to the events of 1915. But the best way to do that, we believe, is for the Armenian and Turkish people themselves to

address this history as part of their efforts to build a future of shared peace and prosperity. Further congressional action could impede progress on the normalization of relations. For that reason, we oppose this resolution.”¹⁷⁰

Davutoğlu insisted that Ankara would not be “pressured” into establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia. He also revealed Turkey’s motivation. “We don’t want to go through this crisis every spring. That is why we introduced the normalization of the relationship with Armenia. We thought that this would begin to settle things, and we really did not expect this kind of backlash.” He saw rapprochement and genocide recognition as mutually exclusive options. “The question to America is simple: ‘Do you or do you not support the peace process between Turkey and Armenia?’ If you don’t, we can align our policy accordingly.”¹⁷¹

Sarkisian never viewed rapprochement and genocide recognition as mutually exclusive. He viewed rapprochement as part of a strategy that would create conditions culminating in recognition. “In my opinion,” Sarkisian said, “the eventual recognition of the genocide will help Turkish society break through. Its psychological complex must be overcome.”¹⁷²

The Constitutional Court

On November 17, 2009, the government of Armenia brought to its Constitutional Court “the Case on Determining the Issue of Conformity with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia of the Obligations Stipulated by the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey and by the Protocol on Development of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia Signed in Zurich on 10 October 2009.” Ankara decried the move, claiming it was an impediment to ratification. It is obligatory practice in Armenia, however, to get approval from the Constitutional Court before proceeding with parliamentary ratification of bilateral agreements.

On January 12, 2010, the Constitutional Court upheld the Protocols’ conformity with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia and a clause in the declaration of independence that stated, “The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.” The Court’s ruling indicated that the Protocols “cannot be interpreted or applied” in a way that would contradict the provisions of the preamble to Armenia’s constitution and the requirements of paragraph 11 of its Declaration of Independence. The Court also ruled that the Protocols placed no obligation on Armenia regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.”¹⁷³

Criticizing the Court, Dashnaks rejected the Protocols, insisting that they would be detrimental to recognition of the genocide. ANCA Chairman Ken Hachikian called it “a choice, very simply, between survival and surrender.” Blasting foreign pressure, he claimed that the Protocols were “being forced upon the Armenian nation, even though they clearly threaten Armenia’s security, abandon the rights of all Armenians, and cast doubt on the Armenian genocide. They would have us reduce the Armenian genocide from a crime against all humanity—one that must be recognized by the American government and resolved truthfully and justly by the international community and, of course, by Turkey—to a simple bilateral dispute to be negotiated between states, states of vastly unequal power.”¹⁷⁴ Dashnaks also criticized an element of the Court’s finding that committed Armenia to recognize its existing border with Turkey, despite having recognized the border themselves.

The Obama administration sought to neutralize the Diaspora’s criticism. In response to a letter from AAA Chairman Hrair Hovnanian, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and U.S. dioceses of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Obama wrote on November 20, “I agree that normalization between Turkey and Armenia should proceed without conditions and within a reasonable time frame.” He continued, “My interest remains a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts. I believe that the best way to advance that

goal is for the Armenian and Turkish people to address the facts of the past as part of their efforts to move forward.”¹⁷⁵

Clinton scheduled a meeting with leading members of the Diaspora. ANCA strongly objected to the composition of the group invited by the State Department. Hachikian wrote Clinton on January 11, 2010. “As presently configured, the meeting you have proposed will not serve the vital and worthwhile aim of healthy discourse and would, at this sensitive moment, be counter-productive.” He accused the administration of “selectively choosing to meet with a few organizations (whose) leaders represent a markedly minority viewpoint on the current course of U.S. diplomacy.”¹⁷⁶ The State Department rescheduled the meeting twice and then canceled it, meeting separately with AAA and ANCA.

The decision of Armenia’s Constitutional Court was also criticized in Turkey. “This decision contains preconditions and restrictive provisions that impair the objective and spirit of the Protocols,” said the Turkish MFA. “This approach cannot be accepted on our part.”¹⁷⁷ It was a “very serious setback.” The MFA knew that the Court’s review was standard operating procedure, but stated, “It was a political assessment influenced by the government to satisfy the Diaspora.”¹⁷⁸ Ankara specifically objected to Article 4, which stipulates that the mutual obligations established through the Protocols are exclusively of a bilateral interstate nature and cannot concern any third party. The MFA interpreted that provision as trying to formally de-link normalization with a solution to NK. Ankara also noted that Article 11 of the Armenian Declaration of Independence refers to Eastern Anatolia as Western Armenia, thereby asserting that it is part of Armenia. Since the Armenian constitution recognizes “national aspirations engraved in the Declaration of Independence of Armenia,” Ankara saw the characterization of Eastern Anatolia as Western Armenia as the basis for territorial claims.

Erdoğan warned Yerevan to “correct” damage done by the Constitutional Court. Davutoğlu voiced Turkey’s strong objections during a phone call with Nalbandian on January 15, 2010. Nalbandian expressed “bewilderment” over Ankara’s reaction. Davutoğlu reiterated his concerns on the sidelines of an international meeting on Afghanistan in London on January 26. Nalbandian dismissed them as “nonsense.” Rather than establishing pre-conditions, he explained that the Court’s ruling paved the way for ratification. Davutoğlu insisted that Turkey would not proceed with ratification unless problems with the Court’s ruling were addressed. Ankara was motivated to enter into the process in order to establish a joint commission of historians to function scientifically and impartially. Davutoğlu was adamant that this dimension of the process not be undermined. For Ankara, the Protocols were part of a process. To Davutoğlu, the process represented the goal in and of itself.¹⁷⁹ It is usually the greater power that wants to keep talking.

Davutoğlu called Clinton to relay concerns about the Court's reference to Western Armenia and its approach to the dialogue of historians. He reiterated that the commission of historians was "important to Turkey." He questioned the commission's usefulness if the Armenian side had already pre-determined the outcome.¹⁸⁰ Davutoğlu also expressed concerns to Calmy-Rey. Ankara prepared a legal brief arguing the Court's "non-conformity" with the Protocols. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, the MFA Undersecretary who succeeded Apakan, visited Ambuhl in Bern to present the brief on February 5, 2010. Emphasizing interdependence of the three pillars of the agreement and Ankara's view that the sub-commission on the historical dimension was on equal footing with the Protocols, Sinirlioğlu sought assurance that the commission of historians would undertake its work without prejudice about the final outcome. According to the MFA, "We have asked Switzerland (as a facilitator of the process and as a designated participant in the sub-commission on the historical dimension) to give us a written guarantee," that the Court's ruling does not impair an objective discussion about the events. "We will talk to Switzerland and the U.S. and try to find a solution on legal grounds."

The Obama administration essentially dismissed Turkey's concerns about the Constitutional Court's finding. According to Gordon, "We view the court decision as a positive step forward in the ratification process of the normalization Protocols between Turkey and Armenia. The court decision permits the Protocols, as they were negotiated and signed, to move forward towards parliamentary ratification, and does not appear to limit or qualify them in any way." He added, "We are confident that both Turkey and Armenia take their commitment to the Protocols seriously, and we urge timely ratification of the Protocols by both countries. Our position remains the same. We support the normalization process, which we believe contributes to peace and stability in the Caucasus. What is critical is to keep the parties focused on the vital importance of moving ahead."¹⁸¹

Ratification

Clinton extolled “patience and perseverance” during the ratification process.¹⁸² She understood, however, that the longer it took to ratify, the harder it would be to muster domestic political support in Turkey and Armenia. Sarkisian concurred, indicating that the longer the Protocols remained before the respective parliaments, the less likely their ratification. Vigen Sargsyan, Sarkisian’s deputy chief-of-staff at the time, emphasized that the process was not open-ended. During an address to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, he stated, “Deadlines are not good for diplomacy for it limits the flexibility of the countries.” But so far, progress on talks between Turkey and Armenia has been achieved only as a result of deadlines “such as the dates of the football games or the last April 24, which urged Turkey to finalize a road map just two days prior to Obama’s commemoration statement.”¹⁸³

James Steinberg visited Yerevan on February 3, 2010. The State Department understood the fragility of the Protocols and realized that the United States needed to be more actively involved. Moreover, the Obama administration was in search of a foreign policy success. Finalizing the Protocols would be its most positive and concrete accomplishment yet. After seeing Sarkisian in Yerevan, Steinberg met Davutoğlu and Nalbandian at the Munich Security Conference on February 6, 2010. He urged the parties not to waste time. “I very much hope that both Armenia and Turkey will move forward. I don’t think delay is in anybody’s interests.”¹⁸⁴

Armenian public opinion viewed Ankara’s delays as a lack of commitment to ratification. Armenians felt that the Turkish government was hiding behind its parliament, using its opposition as a way to avoid moving forward. Sarkisian wrote Gül on February 9, “We can achieve results only if there is trust, resolve, and an unfaltering stance.” He continued, “A situation when words are not supported by deeds gives rise to mistrust and skepticism, providing ample opportunities to those who oppose the process to act.”¹⁸⁵

Sarkisian tried to show good will, announcing on February 10, “The parliament of Armenia will vote on the Protocols if the Turkish parliament goes ahead with that.” He offered assurances: “As a leader of the political majority (in Armenia), I guarantee a positive vote in parliament if the Turkish side votes without preconditions and within the timeframe.”¹⁸⁶ He underscored the sequence of events, emphasizing that Turkey would have to ratify first. Sarkisian was wary of “a situation where the (Armenian) parliament will approve it and Turkey fails to do so.” On February 12, he sent the Protocols to parliament. Hedging its position, the government submitted amendments to the Law on International Agreements a few days before. The “exit strategy” established a parliamentary procedure for Armenia to revoke its signature on

bilateral agreements. The amendments were approved by a vote of 70 to 4 on February 25, and signed into law by Sarkisian on March 6.

Erdoğan viewed the Constitutional Court's involvement as an act of bad faith. On March 16, he roiled tensions by threatening to expel Armenians working illegally in Turkey. "We are turning a blind eye to 100,000 Armenians living [illegally in Turkey]," he said. "Tomorrow I may tell these 100,000 to go back to their country, if it becomes necessary."¹⁸⁷ To Armenians, his threat evoked memories of death marches in 1915. Nalbandian reacted, "This statement was a shock for everyone and not only in Armenia. The Armenian Genocide started with exactly such statements in 1914–1915. Later in the end of the twentieth century, massacres and deportations of the Armenian population of Azerbaijan were accompanied by such kind of racist statements."¹⁸⁸ He continued, "It is regrettable that some leaders in modern Turkey have not given up the Ottoman period discriminatory and racist approaches."

Erdoğan tried to clarify, indicating that his comments pertained only to Armenians residing illegally in Turkey. Davutoğlu also tried to deflect attention from Erdoğan's statement by blaming it on Armenia's Constitutional Court. "Unfortunately, the Constitutional Court of Armenia made a decision to tell these 100,000 to go back to their country if it becomes necessary."¹⁸⁹

Most of the Armenians working in Turkey have low-skilled jobs as house cleaners, child-minders, and the like. Egeman Bağış, State Minister and Chief Negotiator with the EU, explained: "About 70,000 Armenian citizens are illegally working in Turkey. We are shutting our eyes to it. A majority of them are working as baby sitters. We trust our treasure—our children—to Armenian women. If we were filled with hatred, there would be no such attitude."¹⁹⁰

Doğu Ergil notes that "blaming the Armenians was reminiscent of the injustice done in history. Blaming them for the failure of the Protocols is like blaming them for the genocide."¹⁹¹ Incendiary comments turned Turkish public opinion against ratification. The July 2010 German Marshall Fund survey found that 55 percent of Turks opposed ratification of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols, while 29 percent supported restoring relations with Armenia and opening the border.¹⁹²

War—A Bad Option

Aliyev made the case for linking Turkish-Armenian normalization with NK during his address at the WEF on January 28, 2010: “There is a common understanding in the region that there should be a first step by Armenia to start the liberation of the occupied territories.”¹⁹³ Steinberg pledged intensified efforts by the Minsk Group when he met Aliyev on February 6. He also urged Aliyev to tone down his bellicose rhetoric. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair warned the Senate Intelligence Committee, “Although there has been progress in the past year toward Turkey-Armenia rapprochement, this has affected the delicate relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and increases the risk of a renewed conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.”¹⁹⁴ Thomas de Waal called for a “rhetoric cease-fire.”¹⁹⁵

Demanding “decisive” discussions, Aliyev asserted that Baku had the right to retake NK by force if ongoing peace talks failed to produce results. “If negotiations will be exhausted then we are left with no other option,” he said. “Azerbaijan is spending billions on buying new weapons, hardware, strengthening its position on the line of contact.”¹⁹⁶ Pipeline security was the primary consideration keeping Azerbaijan from going to war.

Sarkisian criticized the Azerbaijani leadership for its “war calls.” Sarkisian said, “We have to be ready for war as history taught us.” He continued, “The best way to prevent war is to be ready for it. If there is any time that Azerbaijanis feel that we are not ready for war, nothing will stop them from breaking the peace.”¹⁹⁷ On January 28, 2010—the eighteenth anniversary of the war with Azerbaijan—Sarkisian visited the Yerablur military cemetery to honor Armenians killed in the war of 1991–1994. Sarkisian’s statement on Army Day read, “Today the Armenian army is the iron guarantee that ensures our survival and development and is a sobering deterrent against any hot-headed adventure. The author of any provocation must definitely expect serious counterattacks and big surprises from the Armenian army.”¹⁹⁸ Armenia also readied a diplomatic response, preparing to recognize the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state in the event of military action.

Baku counted on Turkey’s intervention in the event of a military confrontation with Armenia. It welcomed the appointment of Işık Koşaner as Chief of Turkey’s General Staff in July 2010. Koşaner was on record as sympathetic to Azerbaijan, and supported Turkey’s training of the Azerbaijani military and the sale of military equipment to Azerbaijan. Signed on August 25, 2010, the strategic partnership agreement between Turkey and Azerbaijan committed Turkey to deploy military forces to Azerbaijan and establish military bases. Despite these signals of support, Ankara was wary of getting militarily involved. Not only would a renewal of conflict in NK damage Caspian Sea oil and gas pipelines, but it also risked igniting conflict in

Nakhichevan, a landlocked territory in Armenia populated by ethnic Azeris on Turkey's border. To calm tensions, Turkish officials openly discussed the five-year security plan of the TGS, which omitted Armenia from the list of potential threats. Yerevan believed that public release of the security strategy was a propaganda ploy. Armenia had never been classified as a security threat to Turkey.

The 2008 Russia-Georgia War highlighted the danger of conflict escalation in the Caucasus, spurring the acquisition of new, sophisticated weapons by Baku. "Russia warned Azerbaijan many times," observes Leila Alieva. "After the war in Georgia, nobody gets involved in war without Russia sanctioning it."¹⁹⁹ According to Fried, "The [August 2008] war in Georgia reminded everyone in this region how terrible war is." Fried warned, "War is no joke. It's a bad option."²⁰⁰

The war's negative impact on Armenia's transport and communications systems underscored the importance of relations with Turkey.²⁰¹ War between Armenia and Azerbaijan would strengthen Russia's position in the South Caucasus to Turkey's detriment. According to EU Enlargement Commissioner Ollie Rehn, "The crisis in Georgia has underlined the importance of good neighborly relations in the region, including Turkish-Armenian relations."²⁰² U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch warned that Armenia's heavy dependence on Georgian transit routes carried an "enormous risk." With transit through Georgia blocked, Iran was Armenia's only path to the outside world. Iran played no public role and offered no public reaction to the Protocols, but Ruben Safrastyan believes that "Iran is clearly against Turkish-Armenian rapprochement." Safrastyan elaborates, "Iranian officials in Yerevan told me they oppose the Protocols. They warned: Turks are liars, this is a trick and dangerous for Armenia."²⁰³

Nuclear Summit

Obama convened the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington on April 12–13, 2010. The meeting focused on safeguarding weapons-grade plutonium and uranium to prevent nuclear terrorism. With forty-seven governments attending, it was the largest gathering of world leaders ever to convene in the nation's capital. Azerbaijan was not invited.

Upset over the genocide resolution, Erdoğan announced that he would not attend the summit. Clinton called Davutoğlu on March 28 and, in a lengthy phone conversation, reiterated Obama's invitation to Erdoğan and urged that Ambassador Namik Tan return to his post at the Turkish embassy. On April 2, Erdoğan reconsidered his boycott and announced that he would join the summit. Turkey needed to be well represented, given its desire to play a leading role in nuclear non-proliferation and to advocate for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Turkey was a member of the UN Security Council and wanted a voice in discussions on potential sanctions to deter Iran's nuclear program. Armenian issues also factored into Erdoğan's decision. With the summit just days before April 24, a no-show risked influencing Obama's reference to the genocide. When Sarkisian announced that he would attend, plans were made for a bilateral meeting with Erdoğan to try and salvage the Protocols.

Erdoğan denounced the genocide resolution during his speech at the summit on April 12. "We are against a one-sided interpretation of history," Erdoğan said. "History cannot be written in a parliament or judged by a parliament."²⁰⁴ Erdoğan and Sarkisian met later for about eighty minutes. In addition to Davutoğlu and Nalbandian, Sinirlioğlu and Sargsyan attended. Sarkisian rejected an open-ended process that could lead "nowhere." There was no progress. Neither Sarkisian nor Erdoğan spoke to the press after the meeting.

Obama held bilateral discussions with both leaders on April 13. He urged them to complete the normalization process by working toward ratification.²⁰⁵ According to Tan, Obama assured Erdoğan he would try to block the resolution. Tan also expressed hope that Obama would refrain from using the word "genocide" on the ninety-fifth anniversary of the events. Tan said, "We received some satisfactory messages."²⁰⁶

Sarkisian was less satisfied. The White House issued a statement to mollify him. "The President commended President Sarkisian for his courageous efforts to achieve the normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey and encouraged him to fulfill the promise of normalization for the benefit of the Armenian people." Sarkisian posted on his website, "We are ready to have normal relations with all our neighbors but we will not tolerate someone dictating conditions to us."²⁰⁷

Sarkisian gave a defiant address to the Diaspora at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. He rejected any preconditions to normalizing relations with Turkey. "We are not prepared in any way to question the issue of the genocide or to pretend that Turkey may play any positive role in the negotiating process for resolving the Karabakh question." Sarkisian also accused Turkey of trying to divide Armenia from the Armenian Diaspora, while reiterating there was a common Armenian position on genocide recognition and no daylight between the two.²⁰⁸

Speaking to the Turkish press on his way back to Turkey, Erdoğan indicated some flexibility on NK. He argued that if Armenia could return "at least two of the occupied Azeri rayons (i.e. districts) initially," it would create an atmosphere of trust for future talks between Baku and Yerevan.²⁰⁹ Yerevan did not respond to his suggestion. The districts he proposed were the two most strategically important ones. Because Azerbaijan was not invited to the Nuclear Security Summit, Turkish columnists concluded that the Obama administration was trying to exclude Baku from discussions on Turkish-Armenian relations. Davutoğlu visited Baku a few days later to brief Aliyev on discussions in Washington.²¹⁰

Aliyev was annoyed that Azerbaijan was not invited to the Nuclear Security Summit. He believed that Azerbaijan's exclusion was a deliberate effort by the Obama administration to undermine Azerbaijan's interests by delinking the process from NK. Washington, however, was engaging Ankara and Baku at the highest levels. Obama met Gül on the margins of the Alliance of Civilizations dinner on April 6. He urged Gül "to complete an agreement with dispatch." Gül suggested that Obama call Aliyev to re-affirm the strong relationship between the United States and Azerbaijan and U.S. support for resolving the NK conflict. While the White House statement referred to their "good conversation," Aliyev's spokesman called it "frank."²¹¹

Suspension

Sarkisian decided that Armenia could not continue the normalization process past April 24, with domestic pressure intensifying and opposition parties calling on the government to formally withdraw its signature. “The ball cannot remain in one court indefinitely,” said Sarkisian. “Every football game has time limits.”²¹²

In his national address on April 22, Sarkisian indicated that:

- Turkey was not ready to continue the process that was started and to move forward without preconditions in line with the letter of the Protocols.
- The reasonable timeframes had, in our opinion, elapsed. The Turkish practice of passing the 24th of April (Genocide Remembrance Day) at any cost (without further international recognition of the genocide) is simply unacceptable.
- We consider unacceptable the pointless efforts of making the dialogue between Armenia and Turkey an end in itself; from this moment on, we consider the current phase of normalization exhausted.
- During this period (since signing of the Protocols), I have discussed and continue discussing the future of the process launched with Turkey with Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy of France, Barack Obama of the United States, Dmitry Medvedev of Russia, as well as our colleagues in a number of European organizations. We are grateful to them for supporting our initiative, encouraging the process, and exerting efforts to secure progress.
- Our partners have urged us to continue the process, rather than to discontinue it. Out of respect for them, their efforts, and their sincere aspirations, we have decided after consulting our Coalition partners and the National Security Council not to exit the process for the time being, but rather, to suspend the procedure of ratifying the Protocols. We believe this to be in the best interests of our nation.
- Armenia shall retain her signature under the Protocols, because we desire to maintain the existing momentum for normalizing relations, because we desire peace. We shall consider moving forward when we are convinced that there is a proper environment in Turkey and there is a leadership in Ankara ready to re-engage in the normalization process.

He paid tribute to Gül. “While announcing to the world the end of the current phase of the process, I express gratitude to President Abdullah Gül of Turkey for political correctness displayed throughout the period and the positive relationship that developed between us.”²¹³

Ankara’s response was measured. “It is not a surprise for us,” said Davutoğlu. “Armenia made a one-sided decision as a result of its domestic process. But the positive element is that they have confirmed to continue the process.” Erdoğan said, “It is up to them to decide how they want to move

with the ratification process. I have expressed our loyalty to the Protocols on numerous occasions. We will press ahead with the process on the principle that treaties are binding."²¹⁴ Some Turks cynically viewed the timing of Sarkisian's announcement as a mere ploy to get Obama to mention the genocide.

Withdrawing the signature would have played well domestically. Therefore, Sarkisian's decision to suspend rather than withdraw from the Protocols was welcomed by the United States and the international community. Clinton praised Sarkisian's decision to suspend rather than withdraw Armenia's signature as "very statesmanlike and very impressive."²¹⁵ Gordon indicated, "President Sarkisian's announcement makes clear that Armenia has not ended the process but has suspended it until the Turkish side is ready to move forward," he said. "We applaud President Sarkisian's decision to continue to work towards a vision of peace, stability, and reconciliation. We continue to urge both sides to keep the door open to pursuing efforts at reconciliation and normalization."²¹⁶

Sarkozy echoed the U.S. reaction. The French embassy in Yerevan issued a statement indicating, "President Sarkozy welcomes the Armenian president's readiness to adhere to the process of normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations, despite difficulties which the two sides have encountered in the process of ratifying the Protocols signed in Zurich on October 10." The statement urged Armenia and Turkey to "maintain the dialogue" and "multiply efforts" to implement the Protocols.²¹⁷

Armenians are distrustful of Turks, yet 75 percent of Armenians surveyed approved of Sarkisian's decision to suspend the Protocols rather than withdraw Armenia's signature. Armenians also strongly supported normalization, with 78 percent indicating that Armenian would gain economically as a result of the Protocols, 61 percent thinking it would open greater opportunities for Armenia's foreign policy, and 63 percent saying that the Protocols would advance Armenia's relations with Europe.²¹⁸

Sarkisian's critics used the suspension to try and score political points. Vartan Oskanian always maintained that the Protocols represented a diplomatic defeat. He also criticized the suspension: "I am astonished by two things. First, the government is openly acknowledging that for one whole year they watched as Turkey placed preconditions before them, Turkey exploited the process for its own benefit, and they not only tolerated this, but continuously insisted that this is not happening and that this whole process is a big success and an unprecedented diplomatic victory. Second, if there were half a dozen possible exit strategies from this situation—from doing nothing to revoking Armenia's signature—the government has chosen the option least beneficial to us. Turkey no longer has an obligation to open the border before the Karabakh conflict is resolved, which is what Turkey had wanted all along. The Armenian side did that which is most desirable for Turkey: neither ratified the

Protocols, nor revoked them, thus giving Turkey the opportunity to continue to remain actively engaged in the Karabakh process.”²¹⁹

Clinton visited Armenia on July 4, 2010. Her trip, which included a visit to the Genocide Memorial, was seen as a signal of support for Sarkisian. According to Clinton, “And now, as they say in sports, the ball is in the other court.”²²⁰ Clinton’s statement made clear the Obama administration’s view that progress on Turkish-Armenian relations would require a different approach by Ankara.

Silent Diplomacy?

A period of finger-pointing ensued between Ankara and Yerevan. There were also charges and counter-charges between the governments and opposition parties in both countries. In addition, tensions increased between Turkey and the United States. Not only did Ankara broker an ill-conceived fuel swap deal with Tehran, but it also incurred the Obama administration's ire by voting against new sanctions on Iran at the UNSC. As Turkey continued its war of words with Israel over the Gaza flotilla incident, members of Congress called for a vote on H Res. 252 in the House of Representatives.

It was rumored that Turkey would temporarily open its border for a joint NATO exercise, which was scheduled for September 10. The joint civil emergency exercise focused on managing a natural disaster in Armenia within the framework of the Partnership for Peace. The governor of Kars, a province in Turkey bordering Armenia, was instructed to report on infrastructure upgrades required for Turkey's participation. The border, however, was not opened.

Switzerland continued its discreet diplomacy in an effort to revive the Protocols. Calmy-Rey said, "Switzerland is determined to achieve a breakthrough in the process."²²¹ The Armenian press reported small steps toward reviving the Protocols: "The idea is not to open the border but to open crossing points between Turkey and Armenia. This is the subject of third party mediation, secret diplomacy."²²² According to a senior Armenian official, "The Swiss keep telling us they are talking about opening the railroad."²²³ Opening the Kars-Gyumri railway line between Turkey and Armenia would be far less expensive than the plan to build a line via Tbilisi. It would also establish Armenia as a hub connecting the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Swiss president Doris Leuthard fueled speculation, stating, "Behind the curtains you always have contact. It depends on the political will of both sides." She continued, "It is sometimes not important to be fast. It is more important that you have an agreement based on quality and mutual understanding."²²⁴ Bern spoke with Turkish and Armenian officials about reviving negotiations in early October 2010. Ambuhl confirms, "We tried to revitalize the process in the beginning," but three months later he left to become state secretary of the finance ministry and these efforts languished.²²⁵

Despite Switzerland's efforts, the level of distrust was high and domestic political considerations prohibitive. The Turkish MFA indicated that "the atmosphere of mutual trust has not yet been created for real contacts."²²⁶ Davutoğlu described it as a "quiet stage."²²⁷ Yerevan's view was that "we have nothing to discuss. We have the Protocols."²²⁸ Turkey demolished the "Statue of Humanity," a thirty-meter statue in Kars depicting a divided person as a symbol of Turkish-Armenian friendship. Destroying the statue was an affront to Armenians. Adding insult to injury, the flags of Azerbaijan

and Turkey were raised at the site during a ceremony on the twentieth anniversary of Azerbaijan's independence, which was organized by the Azerbaijani Consulate in Kars and the International Center for the Azerbaijani Diaspora.²²⁹

In London on November 8, Gül was presented with an award by Chatham House for his efforts to advance Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. He stated, "Some progress is achieved in silence."²³⁰ Nalbandian refuted his suggestion, insisting there was no "silent diplomacy" or "Zurich stage two." According to Nalbandian, "The only step to be made is to ratify the Turkey-Armenia Protocols and implement them without delay. Armenia will be ready to move forward if Turkey is ready to move forward without preconditions."²³¹ A senior Armenian official says, "We feel betrayed by the international community. We are outraged that a country can be blockaded by its neighbors in the twenty-first century. It is terrible that Europe stays silent."²³²

Nalbandian addressed the Institute for International Security Studies in London on July 13, 2011. Ünal Çeviköz, Turkey's new Ambassador to the United Kingdom, was seated in the front row. Nalbandian explained his views, blaming the Turkish side for failing to deliver on its promises and breaking the deal. He reiterated accusations that Turkey established preconditions, scuttling the process. Çeviköz politely queried whether insisting that Turkey ratify the Protocols first was not itself a pre-condition.

Civil Society at Work

Armenian and Turkish civil society representatives continued their collaborative work, despite lack of contact at the official level. After Wexler wrote Clinton citing American University's Track Two Program on Turkey and the Caucasus as a model for success, the State Department made additional funds available for cross-border projects between Turks and Armenians. In 2010, the U.S. government provided financing for track two activities via the embassies in Yerevan and Ankara.

The U.S. AID Mission in Yerevan provided \$2.4 million to a consortium of Armenian and Turkish organizations. The project—"Support to Turkey-Armenia Rapprochement"—involved the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF), Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia, the Yerevan Press Club, and the International Center for Human Development. EPF served as the project manager vis-à-vis U.S. AID. Turkish partners included Anadolu Kultur, GAYA Research Institute, Global Political Trends Center, Toplum Gönüllüleri, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, the Izmir University of Economics, and the Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council. The project engaged media, opinion leaders, and youth on issues of human rights, arts, and culture. It sought to promote new business links and commercial cooperation whether the border is open or closed. It also tried to engage state actors as a catalyst for diplomacy, showing the benefits to improved relations.

That same year, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara budgeted \$2.3 million for cross-border activities where Turkish and Armenian organizations partnered with U.S. institutions. The University of Florida, Dokuz Eylül University, and the Armenian State University of Economics worked together to promote travel and tourism, as well as education. The Academy for Educational Development in Washington, Youth for Understanding in Ankara, and the Civic Development and Partnership Foundation in Yerevan worked on training and empowerment of grass-roots youth leaders. A Youth Lab was established by the Youth Leadership Project with offices in Vermont and Armenia, in conjunction with the ARI Movement based in Istanbul. The International Center for Journalists trained Turkish and Armenian journalists in best practices and journalistic freedom. And a Turkey-Armenia Summer Teaching Institute brought Turkish and Armenian secondary school English teachers to the United States for a six-week professional development program.

Funding with complementary objectives was provided by other governments. For example, Sweden's International Development Agency sponsored consortium partners to meet at the Swedish Palace in Istanbul to discuss a strategic approach for the consortium and ways of achieving synergies between consortium working groups. The Swiss authorities financed the Paris-based Academie Diplomatique Internationale to convene prominent

Turks and Armenians in Paris (November 2010) and Tbilisi (December 2011). The group prepared a list of CBMs, which was submitted to the Turkish and Armenian governments.

U.S. grants were significant for their ample funding, as well as the decision to shift overall responsibility to groups in the region. Promoting cross-border activities in the fields of education, journalism, business, and youth activities are worthy objectives, but the grants were ill-timed. Funds were made available only after the Protocols were suspended, thereby limiting the potential of civil society for building popular support for normalization. Instead of galvanizing public opinion and building a constituency to support their ratification, U.S.-sponsored track two activities served as a safety net, sustaining civil society contacts when intergovernmental contact was at a standstill.

U.S. AID's grant to the consortium of Armenian organizations also had design flaws. Despite the professionalism of the principal partners, there were rivalries and a lack of coordination among Armenian groups, lack of coordination among Turkish groups, and lack of coordination between Turkish and Armenian groups. Turks were brought into the consortium late in the process and, as sub-contractors, did not assume full ownership of the project. The cash flow from EPF to consortium members and then to Turkish NGOs subordinated the Turkish groups, making them feel like less than equal partners.

The U.S. Embassy in Ankara's assistance for cross-border activities was also flawed. Too much activity was based in the United States, which limits the impact of assistance on capacity-building in the region. There was also a lack of coordination between the embassies in Yerevan and Ankara, limiting synergies between the two grants. For example, both grants targeted media cooperation, but the Yerevan Press Club was not even aware that the U.S. Embassy in Ankara was providing assistance for collaborative media work. U.S. AID-funded NGOs in Armenia have unsuccessfully sought meetings with Turkish groups funded by the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. Given the broad range of regional interests in Turkey, engaging Turkish NGOs in Turkish-Armenian activities was also a challenge.

Track two does not occur in a vacuum. U.S. assistance struggled to engage politically influential Turks and Armenians. According to a U.S. official involved in the projects, "Track two efforts continue at a subdued pace due to lack of progress in track one. We are having more difficulties getting both sides to continue attending the summer camps for students and teachers, for instance. We are also, I believe, suffering from the fact that Turkish attention is turned elsewhere right now, to the Middle East and to the PKK. That said, I don't want to convey that there is some new animosity afoot. It's more of a resignation that things don't seem to be moving, and things are bubbling up elsewhere."²³³

In January 2012, the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) published a report, "Reflecting on the Two Decades of Bridging the

Divide: Taking Stock of Turkish-Armenian Civil Society Activities.” The report was prepared by TEPAV’s Senior Foreign Policy Analyst, Burcu Gültekin Punsmann, and Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science in Bilkent University, Esra Çuhadar Gürkaynak. It aims to encourage practitioners to reflect on their activities, considering lessons learned and best practices to meet the challenges ahead with special emphasis on transferring insights to policy-makers in order to revitalize inter-governmental contact.

Recent Developments

Turkey

Turkey has always been a strong and steadfast ally of the United States, playing a critical role in world affairs. According to Erdoğan, “Turkey is at the epicenter of the Middle East. It plays a strategic role in the future of the world.”²³⁴ Davutoğlu maintains, “(We are) at the center of everything.”²³⁵ Namik Tan issued a statement in October 2011 underscoring “(Turkey’s) crucial importance to U.S. foreign policy, including NATO missile defense, ‘the Arab Spring,’ and the fight against terrorism.”

Turkey asserted its role during the so-called Arab Spring after popular movements overthrew Tunisia’s Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak. Erdoğan welcomed the “struggle for freedom” during his visit to Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya in September 2011. In Cairo, he called on Egypt to preserve its secular democracy. Rather than serving as a model for secular governance, however, activists in the Arab world find inspiration in Turkey as a culturally conservative country led by a party founded on Islamic principles. Ismail Haniya, the Hamas prime minister of Gaza proclaimed in Ankara on an official visit, “The Arab Spring is turning into an Islamic spring.”²³⁶

While Turkey’s importance is indisputable, Turkey has become less predictable in foreign affairs. The tiff between Erdoğan and Peres in Davos turned off many of Turkey’s supporters in Washington. Erdoğan welcomed Sudan’s President Omar Al-Bashir to Ankara several times, overlooking Bashir’s indictment by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and genocide in Darfur. Dismissing Iran’s brutal crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators, Erdoğan was the first world leader to congratulate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after Iran’s contested presidential election. Beginning with Khaled Meshal’s official visit to Ankara in February 2006, there was regular contact between Ankara and Hamas representatives.

Erdoğan accepted the Al-Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights on December 1, 2010, and then ignored demands by Turkish civil society to return the award three months later, as Libya’s security forces cracked down on anti-government protesters. Erdoğan was reluctant to support NATO’s action in Libya, but quick to assert Turkey’s economic interests once it became clear that the Gaddafi regime would be overthrown.

As the Libya Contact Group convened in Istanbul on July 17, 2011, Syria’s opposition movement met across town to organize activities aimed at the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad. Davutoğlu visited Damascus more than forty times to cultivate close ties with Assad. As Assad’s security forces intensified their oppression, Ankara initially resisted international calls for sanctions against the Syrian regime, but eventually joined the international chorus of condemnation; Turkey became one of the most strident critics of the Assad regime. On November 22, Erdoğan called on Assad to step down.

Davutoğlu's peripatetic foreign policy achieved no breakthroughs and solved no problems with neighbors. Not only have Turkey's relations with Syria deteriorated, but also tensions with Iran spiked when Ankara agreed to host a U.S. missile defense system. Egyptian parties have warned Turkey not to interfere in the writing of their constitution. On September 19, Erdoğan threatened military action against Cyprus if it went ahead with off-shore energy exploration over Ankara's objections.²³⁷

In addition, Turkey's relations with Israel have collapsed. Ankara dismissed the UN panel's report finding that Israel's naval blockade of Gaza was legitimate but its raid on the flotilla was "excessive and unreasonable." On September 8, Erdoğan indicated that Turkish warships would escort Turkish vessels delivering aid to Palestinians in Gaza. On September 30, two Israeli F-15 jets overflew a Turkish seismic research ship which was exploring for gas off the north coast of Cyprus. Turkey sent two F-16 jets to the area to track the Israeli jets, which then returned to Israel. Erdoğan warned that relations with Israel may "never be normal again."²³⁸

Washington is also concerned about the AKP's troubling authoritarian tendencies. The AKP and Erdoğan won a third term in parliamentary elections on June 12, 2011. With 49.7 percent of the vote, Erdoğan became the only prime minister in Turkish history to win three general elections in a row with an increasing share of the votes in each election. While the AKP has successfully consolidated its domestic political base, it has failed to address the country's democracy gap.

After the Libya Contact Group meeting, Clinton held a joint press conference with Davutoğlu during which she voiced U.S. concerns about problems with Turkey's democracy. She criticized the crackdown on independent media, which included efforts to silence the Doğan Group, a media and business conglomerate, by fining it \$3.5 billion in back taxes and penalties. Article 301 continues to be used as justification for arresting journalists and banning Internet access. Systematic attacks on press freedom indicate an underlying illiberal penchant.²³⁹

Erdoğan came into office pledging that a Turkish solution to the PKK problem would be based on Turkey's continued democratization and development. He announced the so-called "Kurdish Opening" with great fanfare in 2009. Hopes were high when Erdoğan inaugurated full-time Kurdish language broadcasts on TRT-6 by speaking in Kurdish. Since then, little has happened. The AKP has failed to implement promised political and cultural reforms. Articles 215, 216, 217, 220, and 301 of the Penal Code are still used to limit freedom of expression. Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law allows too broad a definition of terrorism, stifling freedom of speech. The Turkish Freedom for Journalists Platform reports that sixty-seven journalists are currently in jail for challenging the government's policies. On October 19, 2011, twenty-four Turkish soldiers were killed in Hakkari province; hundreds of

political activists were then rounded up. For expressing general support for the rights of Kurds, thirty-eight journalists, intellectuals, and academics were arrested on December 21, 2011.²⁴⁰

The Ergenekon investigation has run amok. The AKP has used its struggle against the deep state to eliminate opponents and consolidate its power. More than four hundred people have been arrested since 2008, including one out of every ten high-ranking officers. Lawyers are denied access to evidence. It takes months for an indictment and years before a proper trial. There has not been a single conviction. When twenty-two former military officials were arrested, the TGS chairman and three commanders resigned in protest on July 28, 2011. İlker Başbuğ, a highly decorated former Turkish military chief, was arrested for allegedly plotting revolt through an Internet campaign on January 6, 2012.

Erdoğan could use his electoral mandate and consolidated power to push for ratification of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols. Erdoğan, however, gains little from focusing on Armenian issues. He also risks distraction from his primary agenda, which is drafting and adopting Turkey's proposed "civil constitution." The envisioned constitution would establish a strong presidency as a platform for Erdoğan's future political involvement. No steps have been taken toward constitutional reform, however, as of early 2012.

Armenia

Armenia may not have succeeded in normalizing relations with Turkey, yet government officials feel that their overall foreign policy objectives were advanced through the process of diplomatic engagement. The negotiations put Armenia on the map, elevating its status in international diplomacy. It showed the world that Armenia was prepared to play a positive role and move forward. It renewed the Diaspora's engagement in Armenia's future. Tevan Poghosyan, Director of the International Center for Human Development, says: "As a small nation, being right is worth a lot. Symbolic victories are important to us."²⁴¹

The enthusiasm that existed during the period of "football diplomacy" has evaporated. Even if the Protocols had been ratified, most Armenians doubt whether Turkey would have implemented them. And even if implemented, many Armenians believe that Turkey would have manipulated events to set back Armenia's interests. Armenians are used to being embargoed by their neighbors to the east and west. Nothing has changed, except that now Armenians attach less value to the involvement of the international community. They are not surprised that Turkey failed to live up to its end of the deal. Arzuomanian describes a widely held popular perception: "Those terrible Turks tricked us again."²⁴²

Armenians are far more concerned with Armenia's economic woes and future prospects. Young people feel they have limited opportunities. Their

sense of limitation is compounded by Armenia's geography, closed borders, and stagnant economy. Many want to leave the country to study or to work. At first, the government did not acknowledge that Armenia was affected by the global economic crisis in 2009, but it owned up to the country's serious problems when the treasury was depleted and salaries to local government officials went unpaid. Revenue from customs and tax collection dramatically declined. Foreign direct investment collapsed. Remittances were estimated at \$3 billion in 2008; they declined by 50 percent the following year. The construction boom ended in 2009, with projects at a standstill. Levels of education, health, child mortality, and gender equality lag behind the Millennium Development Goals. Environmental sustainability remains a concern. Old-age pensioners have seen their savings evaporate. Soviet-era nuclear reactors built near fault lines represent a real hazard. Natural disasters are an ever-present risk.

Armenia's problems are compounded by the challenge of transitioning from a command to a free market economy. Corruption has a corrosive effect on economic development. Privatization after independence gave rise to Armenian oligarchs, who control essential industries and services such as cement production and sugar imports. These oligarchs have undermined democratization through their disregard for the rule of law and blatant refusal to abide by transparent and accountable business practices. No Armenian government has confronted the oligarchs. Political declarations and laws are not properly implemented. Investigations and prosecutions of corruption are limited.

From its low point in 2009, Armenia is experiencing a modest recovery. Russia provided \$500 million to Armenia's Central Bank in 2009, helping the banking sector survive the crisis. Germany's federally-owned banking group, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau or Reconstruction Credit Institute, evaluated and provided financing to export-oriented companies at a favorable rate of 12 percent over five years. While Kocharian's government was based on an economic model relying on imports paid by remittances, Sarkisian is emphasizing a more export-oriented economy and taking steps to revive local industries, such as food processing and bottling of mineral water. It is supporting manufacturing of furniture and car batteries, for example, for export to Georgia and Turkey. The mining and minerals sector is producing income and jobs. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has financed rural road construction. The road from Yerevan to Iran is being upgraded. Plans are underway to upgrade the highway to Batumi, Georgia. A new, modern Armenia International Airport was recently opened in Yerevan. As described in Transparency International's Corruption Index, Armenia is taking steps to improve its anti-corruption policies, legislation, and institutions.²⁴³ Data for Armenia from the World Bank's *Doing Business* showed a slight improvement in 2011.

Younger technocrats are more entrepreneurial, liberal, and modern. Empowered by greater access to information via the Internet, the younger generation is demanding change. Youth activists are using YouTube for social mobilization. While there were 15,000 Armenians on Facebook in 2009, more than 250,000 are on Facebook in 2012. In April 2010, popular protests succeeded in blocking the license for a hydropower plant that would have destroyed pristine waterfalls; preventing clear-cutting in the Teghut old growth forest; and blocking the demolition of historic buildings in Yerevan. Young people increasingly feel that they can make a difference. The Sarkisian government has been responsive to their concerns. Parliamentary elections are scheduled for May 2012, and presidential elections for 2013.

Azerbaijan

Thomas de Waal notes, "Whatever Ankara's intentions, by first moving forward and then hitting the brakes on the Protocols, it managed to tie the outcome of a difficult process (Armenia/Turkey) to an even more difficult process (Nagorno-Karabakh) and both suffered. Armenian President Serge Sarkisian had used up much of his already modest domestic political capital on the Turkey process and had nothing new to put on the table in the Karabakh talks. This was a major reason why 2010 was a particularly bad year for the Karabakh peace talks, with only three meetings between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, no progress in the substance of the negotiations, an increase in bellicose rhetoric, and a rise in violence on the ceasefire line between the two armies."²⁴⁴

In August 2010, Gül disparaged regional visits of the Minsk Group's co-chairs, calling them "tourist trips."²⁴⁵ Medvedev tried to revitalize the mediation by meeting with Sarkisian and Aliyev in Kazan, Tatarstan on June 24, 2011. Medvedev expected the parties to agree to a "Document on Basic Principles," enumerating the withdrawal of Armenian troops from regions around NK, conditions enabling the return of internally displaced persons, clearer definition of the Lachin corridor and security arrangements, and an interim agreement on the status of NK. During the Kazan meeting, both Obama and Sarkozy called the Armenian and Azerbaijani negotiators to express their support. While Sarkisian accepted the draft pending consent from the Karabakh Armenian leadership, Azerbaijan blocked the deal by adding last-minute amendments. Baku objected that the document did not set the limits of the Lachin corridor, and did not provide for the return of internally displaced persons to villages in the Lachin district.

Rejecting the document was a rebuke to both Medvedev and Lavrov. The mediators placed some blame for the debacle on Ankara for failing to exert strong enough pressure on Baku, but it was mostly Russia's failure and an embarrassment for Medvedev. Boris Makarenko asked in *Kommersant*, "What does this mean for Russia? Still the same: it has to understand that there is

no monopoly in the post-Soviet area, even if we talk about an ally such as Armenia, which has no other alternative.”²⁴⁶ Anastasiya Novikova wrote in *Gazeta*, “Russia might now get a competitor for the role of mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.”²⁴⁷

Aliyev is in no hurry. On July 13, 2011, he said, “The financial capabilities and political weight of Azerbaijan is growing, its regional position is growing, its army is getting stronger, and its demographic indicators are rising. Our population is growing and [Armenia’s] is shrinking. In five or ten years, our population will be eleven million and theirs will be one million. Everyone understands full well what this means. In this way, we can resolve the issue in our favor.”

He believes that Azerbaijan’s strategic position as an energy hub trumps other considerations. Turkey and Azerbaijan have deepened their cooperation in the energy area, and are pursuing a coordinated strategy toward markets in Europe. In a slap in the face to Russia, on November 21, 2011, Turkey announced it would support a proposed pipeline of Socar, Azerbaijan’s state oil and gas company, to transport gas from the second phase of development of Azerbaijan’s Shah-Deniz gas field to Europe. Ankara is hedging its bets. The proposed pipeline is in direct competition with Nabucco.²⁴⁸

Azerbaijan suffers an “oil curse.” Its small ruling circle benefits from energy extraction by overseeing contracts with foreign companies. Oil wealth ends up in their pockets, rather than as investment in social spending. Many youth are leaving the country, disaffected with Azerbaijan’s kleptocracy, corruption, bureaucracy, and lack of freedoms. According to Leila Alieva, “Azerbaijan is not free. There is no opposition, only struggle within the oligarchic structure.”²⁴⁹

Aliyev sustains the NK conflict to distract his polity from the country’s serious problems. He uses the NK conflict to justify his illiberal rule. According to Freedom House, a U.S.-based NGO that publishes an annual survey of civil liberties around the world, “No election in Azerbaijan has been assessed as free and fair since the adoption of the country’s constitution in 1995. Irregularities have included the abuse of administrative resources, intimidation and harassment of the opposition, and voting irregularities. The March 2009 referendum (abolishing presidential term limits and restricting press freedom) were deeply flawed. No opposition parties are represented in election commissions at any level. The lack of media independence has undermined the fairness of Azerbaijani polls and thwarted public debate. Municipal elections held in December 2009 were perceived to be marred by violations and fraud.” The report continues, “There was significant pressure against human rights defenders, independent media outlets, and watchdog organizations during the year.”²⁵⁰

Aliyev is stubbornly independent, even of Ankara. Turkish officials worry that Baku and Yerevan could reach a deal on NK, which would cause it to

lose control of its diplomacy with Armenia, allowing Baku to normalize relations with Yerevan on terms that are unfavorable to Turkey. Leila Alieva believes that a growing number of Azeris do not oppose diplomatic relations or people-to-people relations. "Since embargo did not lead to the desired result, why not lift the embargo and try an inclusive policy? Relations between Turkey and Armenia will get Armenia out of Russia's influence, increasing its reliance on Turkey."²⁵¹

Centennial

The one-hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide is in 2015. Outstanding issues between Turkey and Armenia are not going away. Leading up to the anniversary, political and moral pressures on Turkey are intensifying. The Israeli Knesset held its first public debate on the Armenian genocide on December 26, 2011.²⁵² As a follow-up to France's 2001 law recognizing the killing of Armenians as genocide, the French Senate approved legislation making it a crime to deny officially recognized genocides on January 23, 2012. As of early 2012, nineteen countries and the European Parliament have recognized the Armenian genocide; Switzerland and Slovenia treat denial of genocide as a crime.

Ankara insists it never acts under duress, but the possibility of genocide recognition was always a factor. Like Reagan, some future U.S. president may again choose to recognize the events as genocide. In any event, recognition should not be an item for negotiations. It should not be traded for political concessions. Not only does negotiating recognition dishonor past victims, but it also sends a signal to future perpetrators that they can act with impunity when great powers find it politically expedient.

Congressional activities on genocide recognition continue, with new initiatives every year. In 2010, Pelosi pushed to bring the H. Res. 252 to a vote before the congressional session ended. According to Ali Birand, "The clock ran out before the resolution could be brought to the floor." He called it a "near miss" and warned, "This will go on until 2015. The only way to halt this process is the ratification of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols."²⁵³

H. Res 304 was introduced by Congressmen Robert Dold (R-IL) and Adam Schiff, along with Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone and Edward Royce, on June 14, 2011. It is modeled after H Res. 106, which passed the House Committee on Foreign Affairs during the 110th Congress, and H Res. 252, which passed the House Committee on Foreign Affairs during the 111th Congress. H. Res. 306, the so-called "alternate Armenian Genocide Resolution," was introduced by Congressman Royce on June 15. It calls for "the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties."²⁵⁴ The findings section of this resolution states, "Whereas the Ottoman Empire's oppression and intentional destruction of much of its ancient Christian populations, including over 2,000,000 Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Pontians, and Syriacs, has left only a small fraction of these populations to care for their vast religious heritage within modern Turkey."

Namik Tan issued a statement outlining Turkey's treatment of religious minorities: "As a founding member of the Council of Europe, and as an accession country to the European Union, Turkey is continuously reviewing and enhancing the rights of religious minorities. Turkey has undertaken

comprehensive reforms which aim to provide higher standards for all Turkish citizens, irrespective of their ethnic or religious backgrounds. The EU recognized these specific improvements in its 2010 Progress Report."²⁵⁵ On August 28, the Turkish government agreed to return hundreds of properties confiscated from religious minorities since 1936. (These properties are different from those referred to in H. Res 306.) The decree was issued in response to EU demands that Turkey provide redress for non-Muslim religious groups affected by discriminatory policies.

When the House Committee on Foreign Affairs marked up the annual "Foreign Operations Authorization Act" (HR 2583) on July 20, 2011, Berman and Royce indicated that they would introduce H. Res. 306 as an amendment to the authorization act. The amendment that was actually introduced, and passed 43-1, was not identical to H Res. 306. It included only the resolved clauses dealing with religious freedom, dropping the condemnatory language. Namik Tan sent a letter to several members of Congress thanking them for opposing the "cloaked Armenian Genocide Resolution."²⁵⁶ On December 13, however, H Res. 306 passed the House in a voice vote. The "simple resolution" expresses the sense of the House of Representatives on this issue. No action is required by the U.S. Senate.

Erdoğan publicly apologized for the killing of Kurds in Dersim between 1936 and 1939. "If it is necessary to apologize on behalf of the state, I will apologize and I am apologizing," said Erdoğan.²⁵⁷ His motives have been questioned because Erdoğan apologized for actions committed by the CHP. Criticizing Atatürk's government was part of a campaign to chip away at his exalted secular status. Also, the apology occurred at a time when Turkey is intensifying its crackdown against the Kurds.

Mehmet Ali Birand wrote, "All countries, sooner or later, should encounter the dark parts of their past. They cannot avoid that. We, up to now, have always been shy about our past. We were not able to discuss with modesty and courage our past mistakes. There is no way out but to face the mistakes we have made in our history and discuss our responsibilities." Ali Birand continued, "The Armenian issue falls into that category. When a horrific incident stands there in the open, we cannot ignore it. By denying it, we can only fool ourselves."²⁵⁸ Respected columnist Yusuf Kanli lauds Erdoğan for his "courageous action." According to Kanli, sincerely apologizing "elevate(s) our society to a better level of civilization."²⁵⁹ Sebnem Arsu, the *New York Times* correspondent in Istanbul, believes: "The apology will start a debate about state history. The door has been opened to question whether the state's version of history is true."²⁶⁰ This debate was joined by Ishak Alaton, the maverick and influential president of Alarko, who sent a letter to the Foundation for Economic and Social Research in Turkey (TESEV) in January 2012 calling on efforts to acknowledge the Armenian genocide: "Dear friends, there are still 3 years left until 2015, but those years pass without any

change. April 24, 2015, approaches so let us change our denial policy. It is a shame—I am tired of the fear of facing the past. Let us be loud. Our duty to our coming generation is to provide for them respect towards our country and society.”²⁶¹

Epilogue

The terms “rapprochement” and “reconciliation” are often used interchangeably, but they have very different meanings. Signing of the Protocols was an event that occurred on a specific date, while reconciliation is a process that occurs over time. Reconciliation between Turks and Armenians has advanced dramatically over the past ten years. There was no contact between Turkish and Armenian officials or civil society ten years ago. Today civil society interacts extensively, working together to advance shared interests. While rapprochement is stalled for now, interaction continues. Each new step builds on the last step. Reconciliation is a lot like riding a bicycle. You fall off the moment you stop pedaling.

A historic opportunity was missed by failing to ratify the Protocols. It is a blow to Turkey’s EU aspirations, which are diminishing. Armenia is still embargoed. Normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia would have focused Armenians westward and been a catalyst for compromise on all sides of the NK conflict. Instead of acting as an impetus for diplomacy, failure to ratify the Protocols has hardened the negotiating positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan. With talks at an impasse, the viability of the Minsk Group is in question.

Ankara has had ample time to act on the Protocols since the AKP won a near majority of the popular vote on June 12, 2011. By failing to act, it has closed the chapter on this phase of diplomacy. Withdrawing the Protocols from consideration by the TGNA was a mere formality. The Protocols are dormant. With consideration to domestic politics in both countries, it is unlikely that they can be revived in their present form, but dialogue must continue. Apakan insists, “The Protocols are a positive instrument giving a perspective to the future, not only for Turkish-Armenian relations but for the region as a whole.”²⁶²

Politicians are primarily responsible for squandering the historic opportunity. Treaties embody commitments, not wishful thinking. Ankara hoped that signing the Protocols would fast-track a deal on NK. It also hoped that Armenians would stop their campaign for genocide recognition. Anyone who thinks that Armenians will give up their efforts at genocide recognition simply does not understand Armenians or is willfully ignorant. Yerevan will not agree on a joint history commission now that Ankara has declared that the commission is a mechanism to determine the validity of the genocide.

The Protocols included no pre-conditions or linkage to NK. Erdoğan, however, established a pre-condition when he went to Baku and stated that the Protocols would not be ratified unless Azerbaijan’s sovereignty was restored. Anyone who thinks that the Turks will abandon their Azeri brothers does not appreciate the profound ties between Turks and Azeris.

In any negotiation, pre-conditions are always a detriment to diplomacy. They are a poison pill to successful negotiations. Michael Ambuhl maintains, "I'm no friend of pre-conditions in negotiations." Just sitting down at the table does not constitute a pre-condition; "Talking is not a condition."²⁶³

Aliyev was a critical factor. While Turkish officials reached out to their Azerbaijani counterparts, they did not succeed in convincing Aliyev that their negotiations with Yerevan were serious. They did not gauge the intensity of Baku's obstructionism to normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations, or progress on NK. They also misread Aliyev's willingness to vent his displeasure by manipulating energy costs and supplies. In addition, Turkish officials failed to gauge the impact of the Azerbaijani lobby in Turkey. De Waal writes, "In my view, the major flaw in the Protocols process was that none of the international players involved—and the United States was best placed to play this role—made the case sufficiently strongly to Azerbaijan that it should not fear Armenia-Turkey normalization and talked to Baku on that basis. Had U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the South Caucasus not in July 2010, but in January and publicly stood in Baku and told the Azerbaijani president and public, 'We support this process but we also support you and we think that this process will be good for you.' She would not have deflected all the criticism, but she could have blunted the aggrieved (and successful) Azerbaijani campaign to halt the Protocols."²⁶⁴

Senior officials in Turkey's MFA are savvy diplomats who should be commended for their professionalism throughout the negotiations. Reflecting on the annual rite to pass a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide, Fried believes "the MFA was genuinely worried about U.S.-Turkey relations." He notes, "Normalization was an MFA initiative. Turkish diplomats have a real sense of responsibility for the nation. They got the political class to do it, but couldn't deliver."²⁶⁵

Gül displayed vision and statesmanship. Even after the process broke down, Gül insisted on a visit to Germany: "I am the president of Germans, Christians, Jews and Armenians living in Turkey. I celebrate their holidays and visit their sanctuaries. As ethnic minorities they are sometimes forgotten, but not by me."²⁶⁶ Gül and Erdoğan played different roles. Fried maintains, "Turkish society was ready, but Erdoğan didn't lead. Turkey is the greater power and should have shown greater wisdom."²⁶⁷ If Erdoğan was truly committed to the Protocols, he could have proceeded over Baku's objections.

Yerevan also bears some blame. While Armenia's diplomats skillfully negotiated the Protocols, its public diplomacy failed. Yerevan should not have allowed the Protocols to be announced on the eve of Genocide Remembrance Day. The timing of the announcement galvanized opposition among a broad cross-section of Armenian society, which believed that the Protocols would be manipulated by Ankara to undermine genocide recognition. As a result, more moderate opposition parties were radicalized. Dashnaks publicly insist

on pre-conditions to normalization. There can be no progress until Ankara acknowledges the genocide, pays compensation, and returns territories.

Both sides failed to adopt a public diplomacy strategy, preparing public opinion for compromise. Yerevan's decision to wait until 130 days after the Protocols were signed to disclose details of the Protocols was a mistake. The lack of transparency fueled speculation and opposition. Yerevan's public diplomacy should also have included strategies to neutralize opposition in Turkey. For example, the Armenian government could have made a clear and unambiguous statement that it recognized the Turkish-Armenian border, as Kocharian had done. Sarkisian never made any claims on Turkish territory, but his unwillingness to underscore Armenia's respect for Turkey's territorial integrity, especially after the Constitutional Court's finding, fueled opposition by Turkish nationalists in political circles and the security establishment.

Some Turkish MFA officials blame Nalbandian's hard line. They point to Nalbandian's tenure as Armenia's ambassador to France when the French Senate recognized the genocide. They believe that Yerevan's approach changed when Nalbandian became foreign minister. "Sarkisian and Nalbandian were not on the same wave length," points out an anonymous Turkish official. "Had we been dealing with Sarkisian directly, we would have been better off. He was much more sincere." The Turkish official continues, "Nalbandian was acting on his own under the influence of the Diaspora."²⁶⁸

The United States is also at fault. The Obama administration missed an opportunity to reaffirm de-linkage of the Protocols with negotiations over NK when Obama visited Turkey in April 2009. U.S. officials did not accurately assess the level of opposition to ratification in Turkey. There was also a failure to communicate between the U.S. embassies in Ankara and Yerevan. As late as the Nuclear Security Summit, U.S. officials maintained they had a "plan B" in case Ankara failed to ratify.²⁶⁹ No fallback plan was apparent other than convincing Sarkisian to suspend rather than withdraw his signature. U.S. policy should be based on an understanding of Turkey as it is, not as it was or as the United States wishes it to be.

Clinton invested her personal prestige during the mediation in Zurich. While U.S. influence was essential to signing of the Protocols, the Obama administration bureaucratized the follow-up. It should have appointed a "Special Envoy for Ratification of the Turkey-Armenia Protocols." The Special Envoy could have played a useful role in maintaining momentum, working the system in Washington, and keeping the parties focused on next steps rather than pre-conditions. The Special Envoy could also have reached out to Baku, offering assurances and neutralizing opposition.

It is generally understood in diplomacy that negotiations have a greater likelihood of success without deadlines. This is not always the case. For example, George Mitchell imposed a deadline during his negotiations in Northern Ireland that resulted in the last-minute Good Friday Agreement.

Deadlines were also indispensable in the Turkey-Armenia negotiations. Remembrance Day was an action-causing event that pushed the parties to announce the Protocols. The Bursa World Cup rematch caused them to sign. And Yerevan's decision to suspend its signature came just before April 24.

In 2012, the psychological barriers to normalizing people-to-people relations have been overcome. Turks and Armenians meet, exchange views, and work together. There are many books on Armenian issues in Istanbul's bookstores. Talking about Turkish-Armenian relations and what happened to the Armenians is no longer strictly taboo. Normalizing government relations, however, has proved far more difficult. Forces against normalization remain strong. There is no intergovernmental contact. Armenian officials assert there is no silent diplomacy underway. They insist there is nothing to discuss until Turkey acts on the Protocols. Biden highlighted the importance of the Protocols during a visit to Ankara on December 2, 2011. "Biden applauded the fact that the Protocols for normalization with Armenia were back on the agenda of the parliament. And he expressed his hope that the parliament will be able to act on those Protocols in the months ahead."²⁷⁰

The Way Forward

The Protocols contain elements that provide the way forward to normalize relations between Turkey and Armenia. Given current conditions, measures are still possible that enhance the quality of life for Turks and Armenians, build popular support for normalization, and target core issues that undermine the normalization process.

Intensify Civil Society Activities

Track two activities can build on gains and help to consolidate an agreement. Alternatively, they may serve as a safety net in the event of an impasse between officials. Absent progress at the intergovernmental level, Turkish and Armenian civil society representatives should continue their interaction, widening the circle of participants and expanding activities.

Civil society initiatives are difficult enough without delays arising from the need to raise funds for collaborative activities. The EU should establish a “Turkey-Armenia Opportunity Fund” as a rapid-response grant mechanism. To enhance project development and help to ensure a more strategic approach, the Opportunity Fund should be administered by an EU official with regional expertise and knowledge of conflict resolution. Funds would be spent on activities in the region, not on Western consultants.

U.S. AID should renew funding for the consortium project, “Support for Turkey-Armenia Rapprochement,” in 2012. The U.S. Embassy in Ankara should also continue to support cross-border activities. Given budget cuts to the State Department, however, U.S. embassies in Ankara and Yerevan need to be smarter and more strategic about their assistance. A strategy and master plan for NGO assistance should be developed by the U.S. embassies in Ankara and Yerevan. The plan should be approved at the ambassadorial level. To assist coordination between the embassies, a facilitator with regional expertise and knowledge about conflict resolution should work with the embassies to identify shared goals and opportunities for parallel support of joint or complementary activities. The facilitator would work on behalf of the State Department’s Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs, reporting to the Assistant Secretary and liaising directly with the U.S. ambassadors in Ankara and Yerevan.

The Swedish International Development Agency funded track two implementation review and strategy meetings in 2010 and 2011. These meetings represent an invaluable forum for NGO partners to integrate activities and ensure their political relevance. Building on its track record, Stockholm should consider annual funding of a “Track Two Implementation Review Conference.”

Symbols and monuments can be a catalyst for reconciliation. The Ani Bridge across the Akhurian River is historically significant for connecting the southern Caucasus to the Anatolian plains, and as a symbol of Armenian

cultural presence in modern-day Turkey. It should be restored and opened, at least for tourism. According to Burcu Gültekin Punsmann of TEPAV, Gül has endorsed a notional plan to restore the Ani Bridge, and has asked TEPAV to conduct a feasibility study on rebuilding it.²⁷¹

Erdoğan exacerbated tensions by calling the Statue of Humanity, a symbol of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, “a freak” and ordering its dismantling.²⁷² Raising Turkish and Azerbaijani flags on its ruins further fueled tensions. A version of the statue could be rebuilt with input from joint teams of Turkish and Armenian artists. This could be in the form of a design contest.

Civil society representatives could prepare a “Friendship Treaty” enumerating principles of good neighborly relations between governments and identifying areas of common endeavor among civil society. Regional and bilateral cooperation between educational institutions could also be expanded following the example of Bosphorus, Trakya, and Nevsehir Universities, which opened Armenian language departments.

“Centers of excellence” in fields such as cancer research could be established in Armenia as a magnet for Turks and other international experts to visit for conferences and research. Armenia should relax visa processing for Turks who are visiting for academic meetings.

Think tanks could conduct a public opinion survey on social attitudes of Armenians toward Turks and of Turks toward Armenians. Respondents would provide their views on opportunities for cooperation. The data and recommendations would be used to inform future track two activities, shape public policy, and encourage intergovernmental contact.

The ICTJ-facilitated study on the applicability of the Genocide Convention represents a win-win that both sides can use to enhance their positions. The legal finding should be repositioned as a tool for future dialogue and as a roadmap for reconciliation.

Emphasize Commercial Cooperation

More can be done beyond the symbolic steps of restoring churches and cultural artifacts. Both people-to-people and commercial contact can be expanded through new charter flights between the eastern Turkish city of Van and Yerevan. Turkish Airlines could open an office in Yerevan to promote travel and facilitate arrangements. Ankara should provide special dispensation for Armenian tourist buses to cross the border to destinations in Turkey, with pilgrim groups and cultural tours allowed to travel overland on an exceptional basis.

BSEC allows two hundred Armenian trucks annually to travel through Turkey via Georgia to other countries. Rather than treat Turkey as a transit country, the procedure could be amended to allow those trucks to off-load in Turkey. Likewise, Turkish trucks should be allowed to deliver goods to customers in Armenia. Turkish products should be allowed to have Armenia as

their official destination in the export registry, and Armenian products should be treated similarly.

Great prospects for cooperation exist in the energy sector. Armenia's Energy Minister and the Belgian UNIT Company, which handles electricity imports and exports for Turkey, signed an agreement for Armenian electricity sales on September 4, 2008.²⁷³ The transaction is still pending. Electricity supplies have practical value by helping to power Turkey's economic development, especially in its provinces bordering Armenia. Opening transmission lines could represent a windfall. The potential for electricity exports will encourage the government of Armenia to upgrade the performance and safety of power plants in Yerevan and Hrazdan.

A Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) could be established in Kazakh, an area in Armenia that borders Turkey. A QIZ is an industrial park and a free-trade zone, which is linked to a free-trade agreement with the United States. Goods would qualify because both Turkish and Armenian concerns benefit by virtue of their contributions of raw material, labor, or manufacturing. Qualifying goods would have access to U.S. markets without tariffs or quotas, as established by the U.S. Congress. Textile and piece goods are potential products for export. Food processing of apple and peach products may also be viable.

Turkey has a state-of-the-art fiber optic cable that terminates in Kars. Armenia needs access to a fiber optic cable to address growing demand for Internet and related services. Funds should be provided to a qualified Armenian group to conduct a feasibility study on the benefits, market, procedures, and costs of extending Turkey's fiber-optic cable to markets in Armenia.

Turkish and Armenian partners are compiling a useful database profiling business opportunities and potential business partners. Linkages should also be established between local chambers of commerce and mayors with the goal of establishing sister-city relationships and fostering trade and investment.

Revive Intergovernmental Contacts

Throughout the rapprochement process between Turkey and Armenia, progress was undermined because political leaders did not sustain public opinion in light of challenges. Track two activities cannot substitute for government-to-government contact. They can, however, pave the way for bilateral activity, facilitating contact between officials as well as civil society.

Ankara and Yerevan should recognize and open the Turkey-Armenia border. The exchange of diplomatic notes reaffirming commitments in the 1921 Treaty of Moscow and the 1922 Treaty of Kars would set the stage. Signed by the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey, the Kars Treaty demarcated the boundary and committed both sides to friendly relations. Armenia relinquished territorial claims and committed to uphold the territorial integrity of Turkey as of January 28, 1920. In addition, the Kars Treaty

guaranteed free transit for commodities and all materials with privileges to both signatories. An exchange of diplomatic notes does not require parliamentary authorization or court decisions.

Natural disaster mitigation represents another field for intergovernmental cooperation. When Van was devastated by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake on October 23, 2011, Armenia's Emergency Situations Ministry transferred forty tons of tents, sleeping bags, blankets, and other aid to the Turkish Red Crescent Society. Van's tragedy reinforces the potential for Turkish-Armenian cooperation in the field of emergency preparedness as well as humanitarian assistance.²⁷⁴ NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center is a well-placed platform for expanding cross-border exercises enhancing emergency preparedness, with the ancillary benefit of building confidence.

Ankara can make a goodwill gesture by offering Turkish citizenship to the descendants of deported Armenians. Few may accept the offer, but offering will allow histories to re-converge and will stimulate a debate on humanitarian terms. The offer will have the added benefit of restoring a memory of Armenians in Turkey whose contribution has been minimized in the state's official version of history.

Turkish-Armenian relations should be seen in a broader European context. Integration of Turkey and Armenia into the EU may ultimately prove to be the best structure for normalizing relations between Ankara and Yerevan.

Address Historical Issues

It is significant that Erdoğan publicly apologized for the killing of Kurds in Dersim between 1936 and 1939. He may be learning to apologize. Or he may simply have learned that apologizing is politically expedient. Erdoğan relies extensively on public opinion polls. Economic interests are a central consideration for his foreign policy. Erdoğan gains little politically for apologizing to the Armenians, and risks economic losses if Azerbaijan retaliates. Depending on the timing and circumstances, however, he may find it is in Turkey's national interest to apologize for the suffering of Armenians that occurred during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

Before considering a joint historical commission at either the public or private levels, other collaborative activities are possible in the field of history. A research committee of Turkish, Armenian, and international historians could be established to focus on methodology. Its mandate would be to identify, assess, and explore arrangements for accessing all archives. The committee's impartial reputation would be enhanced by naming a prominent public figure to head it and recruiting distinguished scholars to participate. All activities of the research committee must be transparent. In addition, a joint committee of Turkish and Armenian restoration experts could identify monuments and cultural sites for rehabilitation.

An exhibition in London on the centennial of the 1912 Olympics held in Stockholm could profile Armenian athletes who were part of the Ottoman Olympic team. An Armenian ran in the 1,200-meter race, and another took fourth place in the discus competition.

Armenians served in the Ottoman Army from the sixteenth century through the Balkan Wars of the early twentieth century. According to Erdoğan, “All ethnic groups, all religious groups, Christian and Jewish citizens have joined their fortunes to defend their (common) lands.”²⁷⁵ To recognize the contribution of Armenians to the defense of the Ottoman Empire, an exhibit on the role of Armenians in the Ottoman Army could be included in displays commemorating the Battle of Gallipoli.

A display at the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan could profile “Righteous Turks” who, at the risk of hanging, sheltered and saved Armenians from deportation and death. For example, Shaikh al-Islam Khairi resigned as minister of pious foundations in 1916 to protest treatment of the Armenians.²⁷⁶ The exhibit could include the story of Shaikh al-Islam Khairi, profiles and names of other Righteous Turks, photos, hand-written memoirs, and oral histories.

Maximize Stakeholder Influence

Globalization in the twenty-first century makes national borders less important as countries co-mingle their commercial and security interests while establishing regional structures for cooperation. Both the EU’s Eastern Partnership Initiative and negotiations with Ankara over Turkey’s candidacy to join the EU can help propel the forces of integration. Creating a web of shared interests is conducive to normalizing relations.

The United States has an indispensable role working with Russia and the EU to incentivize cooperation between Ankara and Yerevan, as well as between Turks and Armenians. The Obama administration should conduct a policy review exploring innovative approaches co-mingling Turkish and Armenian interests. U.S.-based and international experts should be involved, so that the policy review can benefit from their entrepreneurial and innovative ideas. The discussion could consider whether U.S. reaffirmation of its genocide recognition would remove recognition as a bargaining chip, thereby creating conditions more conducive to reconciliation.

Turkish and Armenian negotiators, as well as international mediators who worked on the Protocols, can convene to discuss their experience. Publishing the diplomatic history of the Protocols may serve as a convening tool. Their meeting will not only rebuild old contacts, but it will also provide an opportunity to take stock, consider current conditions, and explore strategies for revitalizing the process.

The Protocols had no formal pre-conditions, but Baku proved that normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia are linked to resolution

of the NK conflict. After nearly two decades of diplomatic travail, the Minsk Group should consider a bold approach. The co-chairs should address Aliyev's specific objections raised at the meeting in Kazan. If Baku shows that it lacks the political will to make progress, the Minsk Group co-chairs should publicly acknowledge Azerbaijan's obstructionism, announce that their mediation capacity has been exhausted, and suspend negotiations.²⁷⁷

Prosecution or threats of prosecution in Turkey of anyone who acknowledges the Armenian genocide should cease, and Article 301 should be abolished. Turks should be able to discuss their history freely. In addition, Turks and Armenians can advance understanding of their shared history by interacting at the human level.

Erdoğan can make history by issuing an executive order to open the border and normalize travel and trade as a step toward diplomatic relations. Bolder yet, he could submit the Protocols for ratification by the TGNA with his personal endorsement. These steps would be taken "in the name of humanity." Magnanimity is in accordance with Islamic principles which enshrine the sanctity of life. Magnanimity can define Erdoğan's legacy, helping to realize Atatürk's cherished ideal: "Peace at home, peace abroad."

Appendix A: Acronyms

AAA	Armenian Assembly of America
AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANCA	Armenian National Committee of America
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
AU	American University
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation Council
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
CBMs	Confidence-Building Measures
CHP	Republican People's Party
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSCP	Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
HAK	Armenian National Congress
HIRC	House International Relations Committee
H Res.	House Resolution
ICHHD	International Center for Human Development
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan
MFA	Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NK	Nagorno-Karabakh
NSC	National Security Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zone
TABDC	Turkish-Armenian Business Development Council
TARC	Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission
TEPAV	Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TGS	Turkish General Staff
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WATS	Workshop in Armenian-Turkish Scholarship
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
YSU	Yerevan State University

Appendix B: Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey

The Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey,

Desiring to establish good neighbourly relations and to develop bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and other fields for the benefit of their peoples, as envisaged in the Protocol on the development of relations signed on the same day,

Referring to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe,

Reconfirming their commitment, in their bilateral and international relations, to respect and ensure respect for the principles of equality, sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs of other states, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers,

Bearing in mind the importance of the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere of trust and confidence between the two countries that will contribute to the strengthening of peace, security and stability of the whole region, as well as being determined to refrain from the threat or the use of force, to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Confirming the mutual recognition of the existing border between the two countries as defined by the relevant treaties of international law,

Emphasizing their decision to open the common border,

Reiterating their commitment to refrain from pursuing any policy incompatible with the spirit of good neighbourly relations,

Condemning all forms of terrorism, violence and extremism irrespective of their cause, pledging to refrain from encouraging and tolerating such acts and to cooperate in combating against them,

Affirming their willingness to chart a new pattern and course for their relations on the basis of common interests, goodwill and in pursuit of peace, mutual understanding and harmony,

Agree to establish diplomatic relations as of the date of the entry into force of this Protocol in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and to exchange Diplomatic Missions.

This Protocol and the Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia shall enter into force on the same day, i.e., on the first day of the first month following the exchange of instruments of ratification.

Signed in (place) on (date) in Armenian, Turkish and English authentic copies in duplicate. In case of divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA FOR THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Appendix C: Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia

The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia,

Guided by the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia signed on the same day,

Considering the perspectives of developing their bilateral relations, based on confidence and respect to their mutual interests,

Determining to develop and enhance their bilateral relations, in the political, economic, energy, transport, scientific, technical, cultural issues and other fields, based on common interests of both countries,

Supporting the promotion of the cooperation between the two countries in the international and regional organisations, especially within the framework of the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the BSEC,

Taking into account the common purpose of both States to cooperate for enhancing regional stability and security for ensuring the democratic and sustainable development of the region,

Reiterating their commitment to the peaceful settlement of regional and international disputes and conflicts on the basis of the norms and principles of international law,

Reaffirming their readiness to actively support the actions of the international community in addressing common security threats to the region and world security and stability, such as terrorism, transnational organised crimes, illicit trafficking of drugs and arms,

1. *Agree* to open the common border within 2 months after the entry into force of this Protocol,
2. *Agree* to conduct regular political consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries;

implement a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations;

make the best possible use of existing transport, communications and energy infrastructure and networks between the two countries, and to undertake measures in this regard;

develop the bilateral legal framework in order to foster cooperation between the two countries;

cooperate in the fields of science and education by encouraging relations between the appropriate institutions as well as promoting the exchange of specialists and students, and act with the aim of preserving the cultural heritage of both sides and launching common cultural projects;

establish consular cooperation in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963 in order to provide necessary assistance and protection to the citizens of the two countries;

take concrete measures in order to develop trade, tourism and economic cooperation between the two countries; engage in a dialogue and reinforce their cooperation on environmental issues.

3. *Agree* on the establishment of an intergovernmental bilateral commission which shall comprise separate sub-commissions for the prompt implementation of the commitments mentioned in operational paragraph 2 above in this Protocol. To prepare the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions, a working group headed by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs shall be created 2 months after the day following the entry into force of this Protocol. Within 3 months after the entry into force of this Protocol, these modalities shall be approved at ministerial level. The intergovernmental commission shall meet for the first time immediately after the adoption of the said modalities. The sub-commissions shall start their work at the latest 1 month thereafter and they shall work continuously until the completion of their mandates.

Where appropriate, international experts shall take part in the sub-commissions.

The timetable and elements agreed by both sides for the implementation of this Protocol are mentioned in the annexed document, which is an integral part of this Protocol.

This Protocol and the Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia shall enter into force on the same day, i.e., on the first day of the first month following the exchange of instruments of ratification.

Signed in (date, place) in Turkish, Armenian and English authentic copies in duplicate. In case of divergence of interpretation, the English text shall prevail.

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY FOR THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Appendix D: Timetable and Elements for the Implementation of the Protocol on Development of Relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia

Steps to Be Undertaken	Timing
1. to open the common border	within 2 months after the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
2. to establish a working group headed by the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs to prepare the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions	2 months after the day following the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
3. to approve the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions at ministerial level	within 3 months after the entry into force of the Protocol on the development of relations between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia
4. to organize the first meeting of the intergovernmental commission	immediately after the adoption of the working modalities of the intergovernmental commission and its sub-commissions at ministerial level
5. to operate the following sub-commissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the sub-commission on political consultations; • the sub-commission on transport, communications and energy infrastructure and networks; • the sub-commission on legal matters; • the sub-commission on science and education; • the sub-commission on trade, tourism and economic cooperation; • the sub-commission on environmental issues; and • the sub-commission on the historical dimension to implement a dialogue with the aim to restore mutual confidence between the two nations, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations, in which Turkish, Armenian as well as Swiss and other international experts shall take part. 	at the latest 1 month after the first meeting of the intergovernmental commission

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David L. Phillips is Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. Phillips has served as Senior Adviser to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (09/2011–present), Bureau for Near Eastern Affairs (03/2003–09/2003), and Bureau for European and Canadian Affairs (01/1999–02/2003) at the U.S. Department of State, and as Senior Adviser to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (11/1999–11/2000). He has worked at academic institutions as Executive Director of Columbia University's International Conflict Resolution Program, Director of American University's Program on Conflict Prevention and Peace-building, Fellow at Harvard University's Project on the Future of Diplomacy, Visiting Scholar at Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies, Professor at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, and Adjunct Associate Professor at New York University's Department of Politics. He has worked at think tanks as Deputy Director of the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations, Senior Fellow at the Preventive Diplomacy Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, and Project Director at the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo. Phillips has also been a foundation executive, serving as President of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation, Executive Director of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, and Director of the European Centre for Common Ground. He has been a consultant to NBC News and the British Broadcasting Company, and serves as a member of the board of directors of non-profit organizations such as the International Rescue Committee. He has extensive experience working on Turkish-Armenian issues, having served as Chairman of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission. He is author of *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation* (Berghahn Books, 2005), as well as *Liberating Kosovo: Coercive Diplomacy and U.S. Intervention* (MIT Press, 2012), *From Bullets to Ballots: Violent Muslim Movements in Transition* (Transaction Press, 2008), and *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco* (Perseus Books, 2005). Phillips has authored many policy reports, as well as more than one hundred articles in leading publications such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, and *Foreign Affairs*.

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