

Armenian American concerns regarding the policies of the Obama/Biden Administration

1) Armenian Genocide

A) President Obama broke his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide

-- The President made his promise in crystal clear language:

"As President, I will recognize the Armenian Genocide."

"America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides. I intend to be that President."

-- The President made his pledge on numerous occasions:

From as early as January 19, 2008 up until four days before the election.

-- The President's pledge reflected his record as a U.S. Senator

He wrote twice to President Bush (April 2005 and April 2006) urging him to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide.

He wrote, in a letter to his Illinois constituents (June 2008), that President Bush's refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide was "inexcusable."

He publicly stated (January 2008) that he "strongly support(s) passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution."

-- The President broke his pledge despite knowing how this undermines U.S. diplomacy.

-- In a letter to Secretary Rice (July 2006) raising concerns about the firing of US Ambassador to Armenia, John Evans, the President wrote: "An official policy that calls on diplomats to distort the historical facts is an untenable policy."

-- During his questioning of Amb. Marie Yovanovitch to serve as US Ambassador to Armenia, he asked her to explain what steps she would take to encourage recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey.

B) Pressure on Armenia to accept Turkey's proposed "historical commission."

-- The State Department continues to press Armenia to accept this denial tactic.

-- This immoral approach seeks to secure Armenia's participation in Turkey's denial.

C) Administration not enforcing its “No preconditions/Reasonable time frame” policy.

-- The State Department is failing to enforce its condition, which it set forth in its April 22, 2009 statement welcoming the Armenia-Turkey “roadmap,” that Turkey normalize ties “without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe.”

Re: Preconditions: Despite U.S. policy, Turkey has openly restated its precondition that Azerbaijan approve normalization of Armenia-Turkey ties.

Re: Timeline: Assistant Secretary Phil Gordon has said that the timeline is up to Turkey and Armenia, giving Turkey an effective veto over the process and the prospect of dragging it out endlessly.

-- This new open-ended framework provided the President with an excuse not to honor his Armenian Genocide pledge and gives Turkey the ability to seek to defer international Armenian Genocide recognition due to its ongoing “dialogue” with Armenia.

D) Administration has not expressed support for the Armenian Genocide Resolution, H.Res.252.

-- As a candidate, President Obama said he strongly supported this legislation.

E) Near silence on Turkey’s Article 301 and other anti-Armenian/anti-free speech laws.

F) Lack of decisive action and absence of “unstinting resolve” to end Darfur Genocide.

2) Foreign Assistance

A) 38% proposed cut in economic aid to Armenia despite dual Turkey-Azerbaijan blockades

- President vowed to “maintain” aid and “foster Armenia’s growth and development.”
- Sharpest cut among 19 recipient states of Europe/Eurasia (15 increased; 4 reduced).
- Dual Turkish (since 1993) and Azerbaijani (since 1988) blockades choking Armenia.

B) Double standard being applied in allocating aid to the Caucasus

- 38% cut proposed for Armenia and public criticism of democracy/corruption issues.
- 20% increase proposed for Azerbaijan, despite serious democracy/corruption issues.
(Near silence in wake of Azerbaijani referendum extending rule of Aliyev family)
- 19% increase proposed for Georgia, despite ongoing democracy/corruption issues.
(Near silence regarding government attacks and arrests against opposition.)

C) Proposed break in military aid parity in favor of Azerbaijan.

- Breaks longstanding Congressional policy and undermines established precedent.
- Signals a dangerous military tilt toward Azerbaijan, even as Baku threatens Armenia.
- Hinders the role of the U.S. as an honest broker in the peace talks.

E) Effective cancellation of one third of MCC program to help farmers in rural Armenia.

F) No assistance to help offset the economic impact on Armenia of the Russia-Georgia war.

3) Nagorno Karabagh

A) Administration not prioritizing democracy/self-determination.

- State Department consistently cites territorial integrity as primary settlement principle.
- This undermines the President's pledge to work for "a lasting and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict that is agreeable to all parties, and based upon America's founding commitment to the principles of democracy and self determination."

B) Administration imposing unreasonable restrictions on U.S.-NK contacts/communications.

- Policy, imposed under pressure from Baku, limits nearly all official interaction.

C) Administration not supporting expansion of aid program to include development projects.

- Policy, imposed under pressure from Baku, blocks building of roads and hospitals.

4) U.S.-Armenia economic relations

No steps taken to broaden U.S.-Armenia economic and commercial ties.

- Double Tax Treaty
- Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
- Free Trade Agreement

5) Javakhk

A) Near silence on unfair arrests and intimidation of Armenian community.

B) Lack of sufficient U.S. support for economic development in the region.