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Armenian National Committee of America  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

March 8, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing, on behalf of Armenian American voters, friends of the Armenian American community, and genocide-prevention advocates from across our nation, to share our profound disappointment over your recently launched campaign to block Congressional recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Your Administration's efforts to undermine the adoption of the Armenian Genocide Resolution, coming, as they do, in the wake of both your broken pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide and your abandoned promise to "strongly support" the Armenian Genocide Resolution, represent a stark departure from the commitments you made to the American people during your campaign for office. Rather than honoring your words, you are, today, using the full force of your Administration to attempt to block Members of Congress from doing exactly that which you yourself promised, namely properly commemorating this crime against humanity.

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As you recall, as a U.S. Senator, you sharply criticized President Bush's policy of non-recognition and opposition to Congressional commemoration as "inexcusable." In fact, while in Congress you were joined by then-Senators Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton in formally calling on President Bush to properly mark this crime against humanity, noting that full U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide serves "the best interest of our nation and the entire global community." While running for the presidency, as early as January of 2008 and as late as four days before the 2008 election, when the "soccer diplomacy" between Armenia and Turkey had already begun, you assured voters that you both strongly supported passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution and would, as President, recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Compounding your betrayal of your campaign promise to call upon Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide – which you explained was "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" - is the intense pressure that your Administration has applied to the impoverished, blockaded, and land-locked country of Armenia to accepting one-sided, pro-Turkish Protocols that call this very crime into question. Your Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who pledged to recognize the Armenian Genocide during her own campaign for the White House, has, in a statement that is both profoundly offensive and lacking in any moral or historical basis – publicly put your Administration on record as supporting the Turkish government's long held position that third party nations should not speak about the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. President, in attempting to enforce Ankara's gag rule on U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide – both within your Administration and now in Congress – you have, very sadly, signaled to all the world that our silence on genocide can be bought in exchange for perceived geopolitical advantage or compromised under threat from a foreign power. Your policy is now fully complicit in Turkey's campaign of Genocide denial.

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In promising American voters a principled course of action as a candidate and then, under foreign pressure, pursuing exactly the opposite course as President, you have transformed the broad support you enjoyed during your campaign among Armenian American voters into outrage and anger toward both you and also, fairly or unfairly, the party that you are leading into the November elections.

I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to encourage you to honor your as-yet unfulfilled pledge to remain actively engaged with Armenian American leaders. As it stands now, more than a year into your Administration, despite the considerable personal attention you have devoted to Armenian issues and your multiple discussions with Turkey's leaders about the Armenian Genocide, you have not even once met with the American citizens descended from the survivors of this crime. As a first step toward addressing this imbalance, I would respectfully recommend that you call a meeting, at your first opportunity, with our broad-based community leadership.

Sincerely,



Kenneth V. Hachikian  
Chairman