

Rep. Frank Pallone and the "Armenian Genocide Resolution"

The following article by Lincoln McCurdy, President of the Turkish Coalition of America was published on NJ.com, the online version of the New Jersey Star Ledger, on March 2, 2009. The article can be viewed online [here](#).

Recently, a letter seeking cosponsors for a renewed drive to secure the adoption of an "**Armenian Genocide Resolution**" was circulated on Capitol Hill. The lead authors of the proposed legislation included four members of congress from districts with sizable Armenian constituents. They included Armenian Caucus Co-Chairman **Frank Pallone** (D-NJ).

Rep. Pallone has turned his office in the U.S. Congress, home also to tens of thousands of New Jerseyans of Turkish descent, into an anti-Turkey nerve center.

Incidentally, one of the Armenian groups that showers Pallone with praise and support, the **Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)**, this week has been accused by the **Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)**, an ethics watchdog, for violating campaign finance and lobbying laws.

Among other things, **CREW** argues that ANCA is closely related with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), which is part of the ruling coalition government in the Republic of Armenia , but fails to disclose this. A few years ago the then ANCA chairman, Mourad Topalian, was convicted on charges relating to Armenian terrorist attacks against Turkish diplomatic mission in the United States back in the 1970's and early '80s and served three years in federal prison.

None of this seems to bother Pallone. To roaring cheers at an ANCA rally in Times Square back in 2005, he pronounced that the United States should not only recognize an "Armenian Genocide" but that it should pressure modern Turkey to pay reparations for the near century-old alleged crime. This alone should lay to rest the claims that the perennial Armenian resolutions are pursued for emotional reasons by its lead proponents and the Armenian lobby.

In fact, a congressional recognition is but a first step in the Armenian lobby's irredentist agenda against Turkey and, if Pallone will have it his way, it will be advanced by U.S. Congressional fiat.

The so-called "Armenian Genocide Resolution" is a textbook example of ethnic lobby pandering at the expense of America 's national interests. Once enough members sign on, with the all too well-known time and attention that lawmakers will be giving to sift through its history lesson, this "non-binding" resolution will gather such international storm that it required presidential interventions in the past to prevent a diplomatic fall-out with Turkey .

The latest resolution will certainly be no different and pose a significant stumbling block to President Obama's efforts to improve international cooperation on the many challenges he faces and foster better U.S. standing abroad. In his zeal to please his supporters, Pallone has and continues to

undermine U.S. foreign policy, under either Democratic or Republican administrations, toward a balanced U.S. foreign policy in the Southern Caucasus and toward Turkey .

To add insult to injury, Pallone frequently admonishes opponents of this resolution by pointing to a "moral obligation" of the Congress to "pronounce" that the now-defunct Ottoman Empire , committed "genocide" against Armenians nearly 100 years ago. In doing so, he chooses to ignore the many well-regarded Ottoman historians who dispute the genocide claim.

Moreover, if Congress owes such moral obligation to America and the world, it ought to compile a list of all the crimes that appall us, beginning here at home, and start writing commemorative resolutions for all.

In fact, selective morality is no morality at all and Armenian resolutions persist year after year, not on moral grounds but on the efforts of an organized lobby that has turned hating Turkey into an existential cause and that keeps greasing the wheels of Washington .

Singling out Turkey and its history for political expediency and as payback for domestic election support is far from moral. Doing so at a time when Turkey's Prime Minister has invited Armenians and all interested parties to form an international commission of historians and experts to establish the facts and pave the way for reconciliation-- a proposal rejected by frontrunners of the "Armenian Genocide Resolution" in Congress and the Armenian lobby-- and when Turkey and Armenia are actively negotiating ways to overcome their differences, is outright hypocritical.

The U.S. faces a devastating economic crisis and two wars abroad. Members of Congress should be held accountable for spending time and resources on addressing a nearly century-old event with no foreseeable policy benefits for the United States , but the potential of a great public relations and foreign policy disaster involving our ally Turkey .

In reality, this will remain behind closed doors in Washington until too much damage has already been done. Members of Congress, like Pallone, will not answer to anyone unless the larger American public demands an answer. It is high time to demand an answer.