

October 15, 2007

Turk Warns Against House Genocide Motion

By SEBNEM ARSU

ISTANBUL, Oct. 14 — The chief of the Turkish armed forces has warned that military relations with the United States would take a negative turn if Congress approved the Armenian genocide resolution that was passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee last week.

Gen. Yasar Buyukanit, the armed forces chief, was quoted by the newspaper Milliyet on Sunday as saying that the resolution, which condemns the killings of 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks beginning in 1915 as an act of genocide, has caused considerable disappointment in Turkey. He called the passage of the resolution by the committee “sad and sorrowful,” in light of the strong links the two [NATO](#) allies have shared.

Further, if it were to be passed by the full House of Representatives, “our military relations with the U.S. would never be as they were in the past,” he said. “We could not explain this to our public,” he said. “The U.S., in that respect, has shot itself in the foot.”

In another situation that is increasing tension between Turkey and the United States, Turkey’s military on Sunday fired dozens of artillery shells across Iraq’s northern border, hitting villages in Kurdistan, said Col. Hussein Rashid of the Iraqi Border Protection Forces. Colonel Hussein said the Turkish strikes damaged structures in several villages in the northern reaches of Dohuk Province in Iraq, which borders Turkey, but caused no casualties.

General Buyukanit said he had conveyed his disappointment to Gen. [Peter Pace](#), who stepped down earlier this month as chairman of the [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#).

The Bush administration is continuing intensified efforts to prevent passage of the resolution, which [Nancy Pelosi](#), the House speaker, is promising to bring to the floor.

Eric Edelman, an under secretary of defense, and Daniel Fried, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, arrived in Ankara, the capital, on Saturday in an effort at damage control. “We have to be realistic about the difficulties of defeating this resolution but we intend to keep fighting it and make our points as clear and strong as we can,” Mr. Fried said in a telephone interview.

Some political analysts here say that irreversible damage has been done to the already strained relations between Turkey and the United States. In a random-sample survey of more than 1,000 adults conducted in Turkey early this year by Terror Free Tomorrow, a Washington-based nonprofit group, 73 percent of Turks surveyed said that if the House passed the resolution, their opinion of the United States would decline, while 83 percent said that they would oppose Turkish assistance to the United States in Iraq. The poll had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Incirlık Air Base in eastern Turkey, a NATO installation, is a strategic logistics and transfer center for the American military operations in Iraq, and Turkish trucks carrying supplies for allied forces pass into Iraq daily. Analysts say they expect such activity will be slowed, if not halted completely, should relations between the countries worsen.

Violent attacks in southeastern Turkey by separatist Kurdish rebels operating from bases in northern Iraq have intensified in recent months, increasing the tension and the pressure on the United States from Turkey.

Mr. Fried refused to talk about whether there were any plans to curb the rebel activity but said Mr. Edelman, who was en route to Baghdad at the time of the interview, would strongly convey the sense of Turkish outrage to the Iraqi authorities.

An Iraqi employee of The New York Times contributed reporting from Kirkuk, Iraq.

[Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)

--