

# No Good Time to Condone Genocide

By **Bill Press** - WorldNetDaily.com (October 19, 2007)

In August 1939, Hitler gave a military order to exterminate the Jews. His goal was “the physical destruction of the enemy.” And they should be sent to their death, he stated, “mercilessly and without compassion.” Then Hitler added: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

Those chilling words alone are sufficient reason for characterizing the slaughter of Armenians as genocide – and condemning it as such.

And make no mistake, that’s what it was. During World War I, the leaders of the Ottoman Empire, while siding with the Central Powers against Allied Forces, ordered the deportation and massacre of anywhere from 500,000 to 1.5 million Armenians. Like Hitler several decades later, their goal was the deliberate, systematic elimination of an entire population.

For President Teddy Roosevelt, it was “the greatest crime of the war.” Winston Churchill called it an “administrative holocaust.” Twenty-two nations so far have labeled it genocide. Indeed, how could it be considered anything but? Yet the Bush administration opposes a congressional resolution condemning the Armenian genocide and a divided Congress refuses to act.

Why? Because, they argue, the timing isn’t right. And besides, we can’t upset the Turkish government, our important ally in Iraq. What a moral cop-out.

The timing isn’t right? That’s ridiculous. Please, tell me: When is it a bad time to condone genocide? And when is it a good time to condone it? In Turkey, it’s actually against the law even to mention the Armenian genocide. Last year’s Nobel Prize winner, Orhan Pamuk, faced criminal prosecution just for writing, “A million Armenians died in these lands.” Now we’ve let the Turks muzzle us, too.

As the example of Hitler proves, the problem with remaining silent is that every time genocide happens and we turn our heads the other way, some other evil leader is encouraged to commit the same atrocities – believing he, too, can get away with it. We looked the other way in Rwanda, and look what’s happening now in Darfur.

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In the end, there's only one reason we wouldn't declare the mass murder of Armenians to be genocide: because modern-day Turkey doesn't want us to. In retaliation, they might kick us out of Incirlik Air Base or shut down the supply routes to U.S. forces in Iraq. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice even warns that offending Turkey might "harm American troops in the field."

Did anyone ask her how? It's hard to imagine how our taking a stand against mass murder could possibly harm our troops in the field. As for possible Turkish retaliation, the truth is that Turkey wouldn't dare sabotage our conduct of the war in Iraq for one simple reason: If everything blows up, neighboring Turkey would be the first country to suffer.

And besides, Turkey doth protest too much. Nobody's blaming today's leaders for what happened. Condemning genocide conducted by their grandfathers is no more serious than condemning slavery practiced by our great-grandfathers. But when Turkey demands that we abandon our values and condone mass killing as the price of their cooperation in Iraq, we should draw the line. Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, torturing prisoners. And now genocide, too? That's too high a price to pay. Better to lose the war than lose our soul.

The irony, of course, is that while weak-kneed members of Congress balk at offending Turkey, they did not hesitate to offend China by awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The only difference is that Turkey hired better lobbyists. How much more honorable it would have been to ignore criticism and do the right thing in both cases: condemn genocide and honor the Dalai Lama.

In the end, the battle over the Armenian genocide transcends politics. It's a classic moral dilemma. There's no doubt that genocide occurred. There's no doubt that the right thing to do is to condemn it. And there's no doubt we will upset the Turks if we do.

Our choice is clear: Do the right thing, or bend over for the Turks. Sadly, it looks like we're about to bend over.

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