NEW DRAFT RESOLUTIONS IN THE U.S.A

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Right after the elections in Turkey, draft resolutions against Turkey have started coming to the agenda in the US House of Representatives. The first draft carries the heading Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide. The resolution has been introduced on 24 June 2011 by Robert J. Dold, member of the House of Representatives from Illinois, who is a relatively new figure in Armenian partisanship, and 57 members have become co-sponsors. (The House of Representatives has 435 members) The draft has been granted number H.Res.304. This draft resolution is the same as H.Res.252 which was submitted in the last session of the House of Representatives. In the last ten years or more, this draft has been submitted in all sessions. As known, none of them have been adopted, but the possibility that they could be adopted has sometimes led to tensions in Turkey-US relations. In the end, with the intervention of US Governments (and sometimes of the US President himself), the draft resolutions have not been put to vote. The purpose of these draft resolutions is to make the US Congress and Administration officially recognize the Armenian genocide. In the justification section of the draft whose text is quite lengthy, many explanations are given in order to prove the genocide allegations. Some of these entail errors of facts. Although for over ten years these mistakes have been raised in the House of Representatives by various Turkish institutions and individuals, they have not been taken into consideration. It could be seen that rather than addressing the facts, for some political considerations, the purpose of this draft resolution is to please the Armenian community in the US. There are two points in the timing of the last draft resolution which draws attention. The first is that it has been submitted right after the elections in Turkey. It is actually quite difficult to find a connection between Turkish elections and this draft resolution. At the most, it could have been thought that if the draft was submitted before or during the elections, this could have increased American hostility which already exists in Turkey. A more realistic prediction concerning the timing is that some ships, with the encouragement of Turkey, will carry humanitarian aid to Gaza at the end of this month and there is the possibility of this turning into a second Blue Marmara crisis. With this draft, a warning could have been issued to Turkey. More than half the Jewish members in the House of Representatives being co-sponsors of this draft bring to mind that the issue also relates to Israel. Regarding whether the draft resolution will be adopted or not by the House of Representatives, this does not seem quite likely considering the low number of co-sponsors at the moment. However, the Armenians will attempt to increase the co-sponsors. If this is achieved, the draft will have to be adopted by the Committee on

Foreign Affairs and then be put to vote in the Full House. As mentioned above, by using their influence, US Governments or Presidents have prevented this until now. It is possible that this will be the case once again and that it might not even be voted in the Committee on Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, the Republicans, having the majority in the House of Representatives, generally remain distant from the Armenian draft resolutions. In fact, only 10 of the 57 co-sponsors are Republicans. In conclusion, the possibility of the draft resolution being adopted is low, but if serious disagreements and tensions occur between Turkey and the US, there could be a chance for this draft to be adopted. In our next article, we will address another draft resolution concerning the protection of Christian heritage in Turkey and the returning of the confiscated church properties.

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