

Armenia, Armenia

By Ara Chutjian

From *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2008

Summary:

To the Editor:

In "The Old Turks' Revolt" (November/December 2007), Ömer Taspinar states, "Unlike the Ottoman elites, the Kemalists rejected multiethnic and multinational cosmopolitanism and banned Armenians, Greeks, and Jews from holding government jobs." On the night of April 24, 1915, the Ottoman police rounded up over 200 Armenian intellectuals, poets, politicians, writers, journalists, and translators from their homes in Istanbul; sent them to remote holding places; and murdered them. This began the systematic genocide of approximately 1.5 million Armenians, with another 2-2.5 million uprooted from their millennia-old homeland in central and eastern Turkey. To say that the Kemalists later banned the Armenians from government jobs is somewhat of a moot point. Qualified applicants had been assassinated earlier.

I am surprised that this oversight was allowed to enter *Foreign Affairs*. The Ottoman Empire was to the Armenians what the Third Reich was to the Jews. If another article had referred to the Third Reich as a regime that encouraged "multiethnic and multinational cosmopolitanism," would the editors have questioned the author? Of course they would have. Then how was Taspinar's comment allowed to enter unchallenged?

The article also comes at a time when there is a heated debate on House Resolution 106 going on in Washington. Historical oversights such as Taspinar's could mislead the magazine's numerous U.S. readers, including decision-makers in Washington. It could also further embolden Turkey to threaten a Bush administration already weakened in its negotiations over the developments on the Iraqi-Turkish border.

ARA CHUTJIAN

Group Supervisor, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology

Copyright 2002--2008 by the Council on Foreign Relations. All rights reserved.