

The Armenian International Policy Research Group (AIPRG) has learned that the conference it organized on “The Economic and Social Impacts of Opening the Armenia-Turkey Border” that was held in January 2007 is being cited as part of an effort to persuade members of the United States Congress to avoid consideration of H.Res.106. H.Res.106 calls upon President Bush to "ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide."

The conference is mentioned in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi signed by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, urging the defeat of H.Res.106, whose passage by the U.S. Congress would constitute an official recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States Government. The letter cites the conference as an example of how an Armenian-Turkish reconciliation process is currently taking place, and states that passage of H.Res.106 will harm this process.

AIPRG is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical association that researches and encourages the discussion of public policy issues in Armenia and the Diaspora. We deeply regret that this conference has been cited misguidedly in the Gates-Rice letter. The conference focused solely on facilitating the discussion of potential economic and social impacts of opening the Armenia-Turkey border. With the full agreement and insistence of the U.S. government donor supporting it (USAID), all political issues were intentionally kept off of the conference agenda, and the proceedings were run in a manner to maintain an exclusive focus on non-political issues. Therefore, as an apolitical academic event that deliberately avoided the topic of Genocide recognition, the conference cannot legitimately be described as a component of a process of reconciliation. That process must fundamentally address a number of political issues for which the conference was not designed.

The Armenian Genocide has been documented clearly by historians and must be addressed by politicians. As a nonpartisan, nonpolitical global organization of professionals focusing on public policy issues, AIPRG has been inappropriately drawn into a political discussion, and regrets that our scholarly conference has been misrepresented by the distorted reference to it in the Gates-Rice letter.

Sincerely,

The AIPRG Executive Board

*AIPRG and its activities are described in detail at [www.aiprg.net](http://www.aiprg.net)*

*The agenda and full texts of all presentations made at the above mentioned conference are available at <http://www.aiprg.net/en/rcontent/7/>*

*The text of H.Res. 106 can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.RES.106>:*

*The text of the Gates-Rice letter can be found at [http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/Rice\\_Gates\\_7Mar07.pdf](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/Rice_Gates_7Mar07.pdf)*