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Dear Mr. Hamilton:

On behalf of the membership of the American Hellenic Institute, I am writing to express our strong displeasure with the Woodrow Wilson International Center (WWC) for Scholars's recent announcement to honor Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu with the WWC Public Service Award next month in Turkey. We strongly contend that Minister Davutoğlu is undeserving of the honor based upon the spirit of the award and the ideals President Woodrow Wilson championed.

President Woodrow Wilson held a steadfast belief in "the free and open exchange of ideas." He also demonstrated a commitment to "examin[ing] the historical background and long-term implications of issues confronting society." Moreover, recipients of the WWC Public Service Award share our late president's "steadfast belief in public discourse, scholarship, and the extension of the benefits of knowledge in the United States and around the world. Rather than basing policies and ideas on political or professional expediency, these leaders devote themselves to examining the historical background and long-term implications of important public policy issues."

When it was announced that Minister Davutoğlu would receive the Public Service Award you stated that the foreign minister "personifies the attributes of the Woodrow Wilson Center" and his policies have "catalyzed" Turkish policy. We adamantly disagree.

Under Minister Davutoğlu's foreign policy oversight, leadership, and direction, Turkey continues to illegally occupy another sovereign nation in the Republic of Cyprus, an EU member, continues to violate international law in the Aegean Sea, suppress religious freedom and minority rights, has taken policy positions regarding Iran, Sudan, and Israel in opposition to the U.S., and fails to accept responsibility for the

genocide of Armenians, Greek and Assyrian Christians in the 20th century.

Mr. Hamilton, as a former chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and in your current position as president and director of the Woodrow Wilson Center, we respect your extensive background of these issues. However, a brief examination of each egregious issue listed above since the time Foreign Minister Davutoğlu took office on May 1, 2009 will prove our strenuous objection to his selection of this award.

- Turkey holds a significant key in the search for a solution to the Cyprus problem, and must play a supportive role and constructive role if a solution is to be reached. Ankara exerts extensive influence over the Turkish Cypriot community in occupied-northern Cyprus. Turkey has shown no progress in this regard.
- In October 2009, Turkey squandered an opportunity to accept a more constructive role in the Cyprus peace process when President of the Republic of Cyprus Demetris Christofias proposed to meet directly with Prime Minister Erdoğan to discuss the Cyprus problem in his speech to the UN General Assembly on September 24, 2009.
- Instead, Ankara thus far has chosen to continue to advance policies that further solidify the division of Cyprus, keeping over 40,000 illegal troops on the island, in addition to 180,000 illegal Turkish settlers, and wanting the right to intervene in Cyprus. These detrimental policies are not in concert with the international community and conflict greatly with President Wilson's beliefs.
- To provide an example of the excessive violations of Greek airspace by Turkey, on November 9, 2009, a total of 16 Turkish fighters made a total of 20 violations in the northern and central Aegean on this day alone. There was also one mock engagement.¹
- Regarding Iran, Turkey has publicly supported the Iranian dictator, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader and its fraudulent election returning Ahmadinejad to the presidency and has denounced the Iranian opposition party and the mass demonstrations over legitimacy of the election results. The lead story in the April 13, 2010 *Washington Post* carried the headline: "Obama presses for unity on Iran." Prime Minister Erdogan in an interview with CNN's Christine Amanpour rebuffed Obama by refusing to support Obama's call for tough new sanctions against Iran.
- In Sudan, Turkey has publicly supported the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, who is under indictment by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur and is under further inquiry for genocide. Erdogan has stated al-Bashir is a friend and that no Muslim can be guilty of genocide.

¹ "Airspace violations heating up." <http://hellenicdefencenews.blogspot.com/2009/11/air-space-violations-heating-up.html>

- Regarding Israel, Prime Minister Erdogan has attacked Israel on many occasions for its actions in Gaza and generally. He publicly attacked former Israeli President Shimon Peres at the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 29, 2009. And he recently excluded Israel from an annual NATO air force exercise in Turkey, Anatolian Eagle. The U.S. and others then refused to participate and the exercise was canceled.
- With respect to suppression of religious freedom, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom for the first time placed Turkey on its “Watch List” in May 2009. In its 2010 Annual Report, the commission again placed Turkey on its “Watch List.”
- Amnesty International in its 2009 Annual Report reaffirmed Turkey’s poor record on human rights. According to the report, human rights suffer due to the state of political tension and instability which is further heightened by weak legal enforcement and existent military clashes.
- In a December 20, 2009 interview with *60 Minutes*, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew states that he personally feels “crucified.” Foreign Minister Davutoğlu said in response that he wished those remarks had been an “undesirable slip of the tongue.”
- The reaction of Foreign Minister Davutoğlu underscores the intolerant attitude by the Turkish government toward His All Holiness and the general lack of respect for religious freedom and human rights in Turkey that has gone unchanged since the foreign minister has come to office.

Finally, with respect to Turkey’s dealing with the Armenian Genocide, and the genocide of Greek and Assyrian Christians of the 20th century, we echo the statement of the Armenian National Committee of America which wrote: *“Far from supporting [President Wilson’s] open inquiry, Mr. Davutoğlu has devoted his own personal energies and the resources of his Ministry to silencing discourse within Turkey and the United States on the Armenian Genocide, one of the most prominent human rights issues that Woodrow Wilson himself actively pursued.”* Furthermore, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu openly criticized the Obama Administration for unsuccessfully preventing the March 4, 2010 vote on the Armenian Genocide Resolution in the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He also called President Obama’s statement on the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide “unacceptable” even though the president did not use the term genocide.

Further, Turkey was in the 20th century and is today a leading anti-Semitic country.

Mr. Hamilton, we provide a series of facts that demonstrate Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s seven-year career in public service is unworthy of the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Public Service Award, and even more importantly, in stark contrast to the ideals and principles championed by President Wilson. As a result, we strongly protest Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s selection as the 2010 recipient and we request the Woodrow Wilson Center rescind its decision to present him with the award. In addition, because the Center

receives one-third of its funding from Congress, we will also be requesting members of Congress to investigate this decision.

Respectfully,



Aleco Haralambides
President



Nick Larigakis
Executive Director

cc: Members of Congress