

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 19, 2008

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
State and Foreign Operations  
Room HB-26, The Capitol  
Building Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
State and Foreign Operations  
1016 Longworth House Office  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Wolf:

As you prepare the fiscal year 2009 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations bill, we write in strong support of U.S. assistance to Armenia. We respectfully request that you consider the items described below in your bill.

These requests are in priority order:

**1) No Military Aid to Azerbaijan**

We were disappointed to see the President's fiscal year 2009 budget request included more military funding for Azerbaijan than Armenia. After years of bipartisan Congressional support for military parity between the two countries, the President continues to request larger increases for Azerbaijan. We commend the Subcommittee's work in the past to ensure military parity between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

We are deeply troubled by the recent vitriolic statements by the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, regarding war with Armenia over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has been issuing threats to use its growing arsenal in renewed aggression against Armenia. In one case Azeri officials even stated that the war with Armenia is not over and only the first stage is complete. Azerbaijan has been threatening war with Armenia for years. However, these recent public comments made by high-ranking government officials prove that their rhetoric has turned into a very real and dangerous threat.

The United States, Armenia, and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh agree that a peaceful resolution to this conflict can come to fruition. The government of the United States should not condone the actions of President Aliyev by continuing to waive Section 907 of the *Freedom Support Act* and fund Azerbaijan's military. ***We urge the Subcommittee to zero out funding for Azerbaijan in the Foreign Military Financing account as well as the International Military Education and Training account.***

**2) Military Aid to Armenia: \$5 million**

Armenia continues to face threats from Turkey and Azerbaijan. Further, their neighbor to the south, Iran, continues to be a de-stabilizing force in the region. For these reasons, it is imperative that the United States continue to aid Armenia's military. ***We respectfully request that you include \$4 million in FMF and \$1 million in IMET funding for Armenia in fiscal year 2009.***

### **3) Continuation of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act**

As you know, the *Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2002* provided a limited and conditional waiver to Section 907 of the *FREEDOM Support Act* in order for the United States to effectively combat terrorism. At the time, former Secretary of State Colin Powell specifically asked for flexibility to counter terrorist elements and organizations operating within Azerbaijan. ***In light of this conditional waiver authority, we wish to express our strong support of Section 907 and request that you oppose any changes to this law.***

### **4) Economic Assistance to Armenia: \$70 million**

Sadly, the people of Armenia are still faced with the devastating impact of Turkey and Azerbaijan's illegal dual blockade, costing Armenians an estimated \$720 million annually. Despite these obstacles, Armenia continues to successfully implement economic and democratic reforms. As a result of these reforms, supported by U.S. economic development programs, Armenia's economy has grown by more than 10 percent in each of the past 6 years.

Unfortunately, however, the Administration's budget yet again calls for drastic cuts in economic assistance to Armenia. This reduction to Armenia, a nation economically blockaded, takes place against the backdrop of assistance proposals to other Independent States of the Former Soviet Union that are either remaining constant or experiencing Increases.

Developmental assistance and investment is essential to Armenia's democratic stability and economic reform --goals aligned with U.S. foreign policy in the South Caucasus region. ***Therefore, we respectfully request that you include language ensuring that not less than \$70 million in Economic Support Funds is appropriated for Armenia in fiscal year 2009.***

### **5) Assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh: \$10 million**

We thank you for your continued support for assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh which has been tremendously helpful in alleviating humanitarian crises. Nagorno-Karabakh is a budding democracy that needs further U.S. support to expand its free market economy and sustain economic development. By creating strong democratic and economic governance, we help to greater stabilize the region.

We are thus urging a shift in U.S. aid to Nagorno-Karabakh from humanitarian to developmental programs. *We respectfully request you include language directing USAID to spend \$10 million in fiscal year 2009 for programs in Nagorno-Karabakh, but we are hopeful that these funds be allowed for use in developmental assistance.*

**6) Restore Diplomatic Relations with Nagorno-Karabakh**

We strongly believe that renewed ties between the United States and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh would increase the likelihood of peace and stability in the South Caucasus region. Nagorno-Karabakh continues to be threatened by Azerbaijan and a diplomatic freeze between the U.S. and N-K only serves to squander an opportunity for peace. Therefore, we respectfully request that the following report language regarding renewed diplomatic ties with Nagorno-Karabakh be included in the bill.

*"The Committee directs the Department to move in the direction of diplomatic relations with Nagorno-Karabakh. An open dialogue between the United States and the people of Nagorno-Karabakh will serve to alleviate international threats to Nagorno-Karabakh and aid in a peaceful resolution to regional conflicts."*

Thank you for your leadership on the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations and Related Programs. We are extremely grateful for your role in strengthening the relationship between the U.S. and Armenia.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

  
FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

  
JOE KNOLLENBERG  
Member of Congress

  
GEORGE RADANOVICH  
Member of Congress

  
ANNA ESHOO  
Member of Congress

  
DIANE WATSON  
Member of Congress

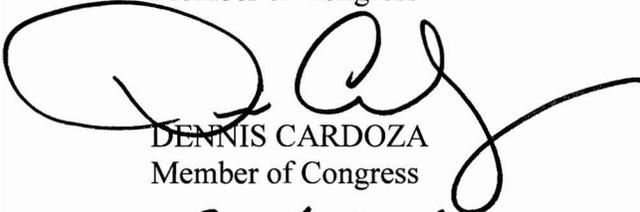
  
MIKE ROGERS  
Member of Congress



JAMES LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress



CANDICE MILLER  
Member of Congress



DENNIS CARDOZA  
Member of Congress



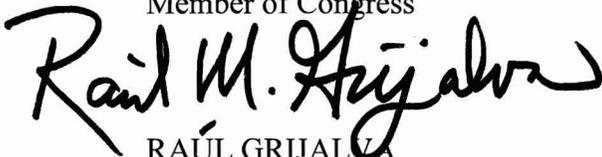
RUSH HOLT  
Member of Congress



ANTHONY WEINER  
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress



RAÚL GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress



TIMOTHY WALZ  
Member of Congress



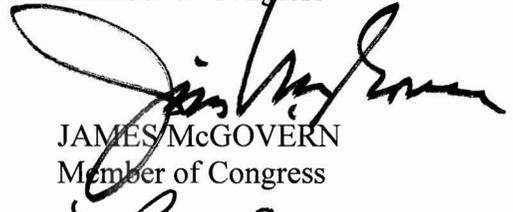
GRACE NAPOLITANO  
Member of Congress



HENRY WAXMAN  
Member of Congress



JOHN SARBANES  
Member of Congress



JAMES McGOVERN  
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS  
Member of Congress



SANDER LEVIN  
Member of Congress



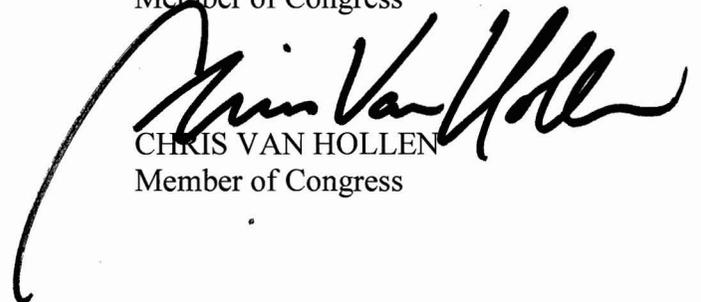
SCOTT GARRETT  
Member of Congress



JOE BACA  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL CAPUANO  
Member of Congress



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
Member of Congress



DALE KILDEE  
Member of Congress



STEPHEN LYNCH  
Member of Congress



COLLIN PETERSON  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



ELTON GALLEGLY  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



LYNN WOOLSEY  
Member of Congress



MARK STEVEN KIRK  
Member of Congress



ED MARKEY  
Member of Congress



MICHAEL McNULTY  
Member of Congress



MARK SOUDER  
Member of Congress



CHAKA FATTAH  
Member of Congress



CAROLYN MALONEY  
Member of Congress



FRANK LoBIONDO  
Member of Congress



BRAD SHERMAN  
Member of Congress