

From: [redacted]
Sent: 05 April 2012 11:40
To: [redacted]
Subject: TURKEY/ARMENIA

[redacted]

Could we possibly pick-up our postponed meeting next week sometime? We were discussing amongst the team yesterday, the recent flurry of activity on Armenia and that it might be an opportune time to provide ministers with some updated analysis of the issues, covering 2 main themes, as follows:

- The global campaign for recognition of the Armenian genocide, beyond the US and France in the run-up to the 2015 anniversary
- Re-visiting our current policy on the issue and whether this is still tenable up to 2015

There may be other themes we could include in a submission, that we can discuss during the meeting. I think it would be useful to include Ankara/Yerevan as well in our discussions. What do you think and when shall we arrange to meet?

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 28 March 2012 17:38
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: TURKEY/ARMENIA

Historically our stance was pretty tough – we attempted to bring several of the Young Turks to trial over this in the 1920s, much outrage expressed in Parliament at the time etc. Our justification for not using the term genocide is based on the lack of a court with legal competence to apply the term genocide retrospectively to the events of 1915. It is not a judgement of what did or did not happen, [redacted]

Background:

1. 32 of 60 Welsh Assembly Members, across all four parties, have signed a Statement of Opinion as follows: “*The National Assembly of Wales believes that the 24th April should be officially denoted in Wales as Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.*” We understand from the First Minister’s office that this has no binding force. It will remain purely a record of the opinion on the listed members of the Welsh Assembly.

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 27 March 2012 12:13
To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: TURKEY/ARMENIA

As requested, here are our lines on Turkey and Armenia

Do let us know if you need more

Best wishes

[redacted]

What is the UK's view on the events of 1915?

- The terrible suffering that was inflicted on Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century should not be forgotten. But while we remember the victims of the past, our priority today should be to promote reconciliation between the peoples and Governments of Turkey and Armenia.

How does the events of 1915 and the UK's position, affect the relationship between Turkey and the UK?

- The UK's excellent relationship with Turkey is long-standing and based on a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues. Turkey is a key strategic ally in the region on a number of international issues, such as Syria, Cyprus and the EU. But the UK government position on this issue is based on our assessment of what is best for the stability and security of the entire region, including both Armenia and Turkey.

Turkey has made a linkage between the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh unresolved conflict and progress on normalisation of relations with Armenia. Is this is unhelpful?

- The UK supports the position that there can be no formal link between the resolution of Nagorno Karabakh and progress on normalisation of relations. We believe that improved relations between Armenia and Turkey can have a positive impact for the whole region.

Our position is unchanged. We acknowledge the strength of feeling about this terrible episode of history and recognise the events of 1915-16 as a tragedy. We would encourage both Armenia and Turkey to build on their progress, despite the challenges, to address these issues together.

Background

- **[redacted]** The UK position is that we do not recognise the massacres as "genocide" – this issue is one for Turkey and Armenia to resolve between themselves.

- Progress towards normalisation of bilateral relations between Turkey and Armenia was halted in April 2010 as a result of Turkey linking ratification of the relevant protocols with progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Normalisation could bring long term benefits for the peace and stability of the whole region.
- The UK has supported a number of projects designed to promote normalisation of Turkey-Armenia relations. These have included a Turkish film festival in Yerevan, a touring theatre production about the Turkish/Armenian relationship and bringing together activists in both countries to discuss EU integration.