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CALIFORNIA, ARMENIA & ARTSAKH
MUTUAL TRADE, ART, AND
CULTURAL EXCHANGE
CHAIR

October 20, 2020

Hon. Fabian Núñez
Partner
Mercury Public Affairs
800 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 750
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dear Fabian,

It has come to my attention that Mercury Public Affairs is under contract with the Turkish Government for the purposes of conducting public relations on its behalf. As the architect of the first Genocide of the 20th Century, the Ottoman and Young Turk rulers were responsible for the horrific massacre of 1.5 million Armenians. The Republic of Turkey has denied the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide and is coordinating with Azerbaijan on an unprovoked deadly campaign against the ethnic Armenian nation of Artsakh. I strongly urge Mercury to cut all ties with Turkey and to meet with representatives of the Armenian Community to hear their tragic stories and historical accounts of the Genocide and why this contract is of particular concern.

As the Chair of the State Senate Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade Art and Cultural Exchange, my condemnation of the Turkish and Azeri attacks on the peaceful people of Artsakh is based on firsthand experiences in the country. I have been to the countryside community of Hadrout where one person with whom I broke bread has been killed and two others have been wounded. I have visited the wonderful and historic Ghazanchetsots Cathedral on three occasions, including one where I met a bride and groom on their wedding day, and now it has been bombed. I have walked on the promenade in Stepanakert with families hoping to live in peace and I have visited brave troops on the boarder in Agdam facing a constant sniper threat to keep that tenuous thirty-year peace. Many more innocent lives will be lost if the hostility does not immediately seize.

It is untenable that Mercury would be employed in Washington to smooth over these inexcusable actions by two aggressive countries toward the peaceful Armenian people. Mercury should not take money from a Government with a 120-year history of Genocide, death and destruction on its hands. Today, Turkey has replaced mass executions and desert marches with drones and mercenaries. If we collectively fail to act it will lead to further destruction of the Armenian people.

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I implore you as a person who has traditionally had close ties to the Armenian community to exercise your complete influence to cancel this contract. California has a long and positive relationship with Armenia and Artsakh. We are home to a proud Armenian American community with sister city relations with several cities in Artsakh and California has passed Resolutions commemorating the Armenian Genocide and recognizing Artsakh independence. This is the time for Mercury to act appropriately and immediately sever its ties with Turkey.

Respectfully,

Hon. Anthony J. Portantino
State Senator, District 25