

Speech of Nikos Lygeros
during the political event for the Day of
Memory of the genocide of Armenians from Turkey in 1915
Military Museum, Athens
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You may not recognize him in the photo you see, he is Soghomon Tehlirian. He is the one who executed Talaat Pasha (applause). So that those who will hear the following not be afraid, I remind you that this man was tried by the German court in Berlin and was acquitted within few hours. So, I want to clarify you that there are some things that is good to say and some things is good to be pointed out. This fact took place in 1921, when the notion of genocide was not even invented by Raphael Lemkin. We did not even know how to call it, even in Armenia we used to call it in a different way. What is the idea? The idea is that from the beginning there was what we call Operation Nemesis which had to do specially with those who helped the Greeks and the Armenians to be so close by decapitating them and placing their heads the one next to the other. For, what we forget, you know, I pay attention to what you say and as regards the previous speech, I observed that we say a lot about Armenia but few about Turkey. Whereas in substance if this event takes place, which some call it only commemoration day, we ourselves, you see, find it difficult, because we applaud. I have never seen to a funeral anyone applauding. Here, we have a funeral of 1.5 million people, who were not lost. They are human beings who were genocided. We have to systematically use the word. It is the only word which has a weight. All the others used; massacred, extinguished, eliminated, expelled, are ridiculous. We use them only for diplomatic reasons. Know that it is not disturbing to talk about the massacre of the Armenians. What disturbs her is the genocide of the Armenians. So you should use it in every verb you use to talk about our own, about those who were genocided by genocidists. I also wanted to show you Soghomon because we have the impression that the victims are sheep. We all say it. We even say it among us. For, we cannot realize how 1,000 humans were held by only three Turks and they accepted what was going on. We cannot understand it, we cannot think of it. In reality, it is too easy because the first crime in genocide is the deduction of the conception of the facts. They do not understand what is going on. They all think that they are simply removed. They do not conceive the work; they do not realize the action. However, there were humans like Soghomon who immediately realized what had happened and as early as 1921 was already a member of the action¹. I want to tell you: do not believe in what the wolves are saying to you especially when they are grey. The Armenians were not sheep. The Pontians were not sheep. All victims are not sheep. They simply do not expect it. There are only few people in this room who could expect that they may be extinguished. Should you expect that, you wouldn't sit like this. We should not believe that all those had realized what was going on. It was too difficult. For, they started all this process from the center, by the time they moved to the coasts. I want to show you a map; a map of "victimology", let's say, which belongs to an old Armenian book which currently is in the National Library of France, where you see the red spots. This is the size of the number of the victims. It is enough to see a map of the genocide. It is not necessary to be told about all this you are told. Just have a look at the figures. Try to see the area; to see that the figures; they are so

¹ Note of the translator. The speaker here means the Armenian Revolutionary Federation

huge that it this cannot be done without a systematic extinction, it cannot be done without a geopolitical and geostrategic thought, which does not consider them humans – survivors have said so- they were not considered as humans but they were simply considered as animals, disturbing to a situation; they ought to have been extinguished all of them; we should say this, because this will not change soon. Moreover we forget one thing. We hear a lot about 1915, this is right, this is good but it is symbolic and only that. It is not that on 24th April 1915 suddenly 1,5 million people were genocided. These massacres, the previous ones start as early as 1894. In the 1878 Berlin conference, you saw a reference, there had already been an Armenian delegation saying that they encountered problems with the Ottoman Empire. And this is good to signal, because if you noticed, we have the tendency to believe that Turkey changes. In our dreams! For, after Hamid the neo-Turks came and then Kemal. There is no change as regards the Armenian issue. They are all guided by a general tendency which resulted in cleansing, cleansing the area. They disturbed them. Yes it is correct, the Armenians are disturbing. They disturb even now and they will in the future because this is how the Armenians are, like the Greek, they are disturbing. In which sense? They produce a work, so they disturb, when you produce a work you disturb, because the other cannot say that you are insignificant. Someone like Charles Aznavour is disturbing, he continues disturbing. What do I mean by this? I mean that when you are in a human context and there are only social attacks against you, of course they end up in the end to these barbarities, because this is the only way (for the others) to encounter what you produce as work for the whole humanity. It is important to see - and I was glad to hear the Ambassador of Armenia talking in Armenian by reading his 1,600 year-old iron letters – that even though they are so few, so insignificant we would say in the general background, the Armenians are rare and they are still here. What we should understand is that it does not matter if we are few, what matters is to be rare, because few are many, very often. I want to say that what matters is not only the commemoration day, is not only to recall; the matter is what we do and we have to realize that the Armenian cause is only the spearhead as regards the genocide issue. You know that it was the biggest genocide not to have been recognized; all the others follow its steps, because they do not know how to do it; it's the same with genocides. Recognitions are very important, but I cannot stand in this event and hear that 'we have to simply wait for Turkey to recognize'. This does not happen. We on our own part have to do something. So, what I want to tell you, you know it very well, many of you will be here in the 100th commemoration and will hear the same by the politicians. Of course, not the same exactly because we may not have elections at that moment, but what matters, is that there are people who will deal with this issue, but the issue cannot stop here. Yes, yes, Greece has recognized the genocide of the Armenians in 1996, that's correct and Cyprus in '82. Hellenism has given its vote concerning the genocide of the Armenians and it is the right thing to do. We simply should not stop here. We have to have visions as well. Turkey is not going to recognize the genocide of the Armenians so easily for a simple reason, and yet double. Firstly, because for now, either you want it or not, Turkey is kemalist. As long as Turkey is Kemalist, she will worship Kemal. Kemal is a Hitler, he is nothing else. As long as we do not say this clearly and we give the impression that he is simply the one who created Turkey and we do not understand all the rest then he is exactly what Hitler did when he created Reich, nothing else. He does not differ neither from Hitler nor Stalin. The only difference is that the Turkish state is still based upon him. Germany has rejected Hitler, Russia has rejected Stalin; Turkey has not rejected Kemal. This is what we should pay attention at; it is not a comparable situation.

Moreover, what does matter when we see tendencies of neo-Ottomanism let's be clear on what this means. When you hear 'zero frictions with neighboring countries' it means that there are no neighboring countries, because, this is the only way to have zero frictions; and by talking only with big countries. Namely what they themselves already did in 1878 in Berlin. What matters is to realize that the policy of Turkey is not going to change soon; there is a big inertia, because the foundations of Turkey are built on the relics of the Armenians. This is the problem; she cannot get them out so easily; it is too difficult and even if she decides to put Kemal in a parenthesis and enter the neo-ottoman framework, we should not forget that these genocidal acts had started as early as 1893. The big massacres by Hamid were dated since then and they continued by 1923. This is the real period for the genocide of the Armenians and the other thing we should not forget- since we have representatives of Russia- is that we say that everything is ok. Is it ok? Is it ok in Armenia? Can I hear 'chat lav'? Can I? No, I cannot. 'Che' I cannot. Why can't I? For, the borders between Armenia and Turkey are protected by Russia. We should not forget this. We have the impression that Armenia has done many things. No, Armenia cannot do many things and you know it very well, because Armenia is a state and a state should ensure its own security; it has to survive. The whole work, the big work is done –you know it- always in these matters, is done by Diasporas. Why? Because diaspora has no need to ensure its own security, it already belongs to a framework which is democratic, do not expect from the state of Armenia to do what we here and worldwide should do. What is the situation? Have a look at the map. I show you the situation the theoretical one, the official and the real. So you see the state of the Armenia. First of all even if you do not know anything on geopolitics and geostrategic, it is enough to see that Armenia is next to Georgia – above-, I remind you 2008, Turkey is on the left, Iran is down here and it also has Nakhichevan– anyway we will continue about this issue as well- and from the other side is Azerbaijan. You see. How do you call this? This is called entrapped from both sides, because if you notice, some in Greece do not know Nakhichevan; in reality it is combined – I say combined, so as some not be disturbed- with Azerbaijan. Moreover, another thing that in Greece we find it difficult - because you know the issue of vocabulary; it has impoverished, we cannot say Turks anymore, we say neighbors. Ok, we have a problem with that. Here I want to tell you that the problem is not with the Turks, the problem is with Turkey, it is with the regime, it is institutional. The issue is that we should not be confused .The Armenians especially those who are in Artsakh – because this is another issue, I know that some of mine Armenians would say 'no don't say Artsakh, say Nagorno-Karabakh'. Well, no, we will not call it Nagorno-Karabakh, because Karabakh is how the Turks call it, Nagorno-Karabakh is how Russia calls it, but the real name, the Armenian one is Artsakh. I don't understand; everybody can say it, we don't have problem in pronunciation in Greece. What I want to tell you is that, when you go Artsakh, the Karabakhis don't say the Azeris; they say the Turks because they know what they are exactly. We have been confused and we still have Stalin's lessons. We have confused that Azeris are something totally different than the Turks. This is wrong. Do we tell a difference between the Armenians of Artsakh and the Armenians of Armenia? No one makes the mistake of the distinction and they call them Armenians, which is right. And here it is exactly the same. We have to understand that in this framework there is a big game on. Officially you see there where is written Nagorno-Karabakh and in reality let it be written Nagorno-Karabakh, since ours is bigger. Yes, because look what is yellow in reality it is already under control by the Armenians; now, this is Artsakh. When I went for the elections of 2007 to the area Lachine the yellow one

below, I deliberately asked to see the region which is yellow because we always have the impression that Artsakh is connected with Armenia only with a highway, which is wrong. We have sovereignty in the whole region. Why shouldn't we say it? Like we are afraid. The issue is who's afraid. It is the Azeris who are afraid, the Azeris are so much afraid in this area that they have left even from the region Agdam. But the issue is that we have to be careful. You have rightly talked about the Minsk group, you have rightly talked about the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), but I want to say, be careful, the Armenian state has not even recognized Artsakh, as it is (part of) the Minsk group and anyway some diplomatic things.

Another thing, when talking about strange things, which our two peoples should not do; I have the impression that I have heard that at a military level we do something in Greece as regards this country, which is, I'll say, neighboring to Artsakh. I imagine that this is only words and rumors. Because it's not possible on the one hand to be here to talk about the genocide of the Armenians and on the other hand to try to make an agreement with Azerbaijan as regards the military framework. It can't be it; one says this can't exist, right? So, if we want to be clear, since this does not exist and since we have no issue with this thing and we deal exclusively with culture, then it would be good to deal with culture seriously, because in the area Nakhichevan, the army of Turkey destroyed the cemetery, we have a video, we see it; this is organized, they hit the stone crosses the khatchkar, you know them, these here on banner. Each one of them is unique in the European Union and now we submit appeals in the Human Rights Court so that they are obliged to pay for every cross. You have to understand that each cross is estimated up to 150,000 Euros. Only when you talk to Turkey about money, she stops. Otherwise, she does not stop. And you have to realize that this is organized. This is from this region; we have the images from the Persian region, where Iran is written. Another thing which has to become clear is that in region of Artsakh there is still a conflict so that any element of Artsakh is eliminated.

The issue is whether you know of these issues. You have to understand that sometimes we think that even the military and the religious levels are totally differentiated. I would like to repeat an example for you to remember. When the Azeris stroke a monastery in Artsakh, you will all understand which I am talking about, commandos were there too. In the beginning they threw bombs. The Armenians have a very good habit as regards the temples, they make them too sharp, God is great, they thought of it, because this makes the bombing harder. And in the end the monastery has not undergone the damage which Azeri wanted. They came afterwards with Mig-27 and started shooting; you have to know that Artsakh's commandos stood in front of the temple and in the height of human body there is no bullet on the temple. All bullets are higher where people couldn't die for the temple. Unless you realize this thing and understand what they have done to liberate Artsakh then you don't understand how they behave in relation to us. But you have to realize that the Armenians in Artsakh in no case do they are sheep. Their model from Greece is Sparta, nothing else, nothing else; even if they had been 300! And yet an Armenian friend told me: You were only 300, we are few thousands. Yes. The Azeris are 7,000,000. When they were throwing things over villages, over Sushi, while the Armenians were throwing at them stones and the others were bombing them, our people would ask those who stayed 'what do you want' and they (the Armenians) would say 'roofs'. No one left, they only wanted to rebuild roofs. The siege taken place in Sushi is not exemplary. On the contrary even in the military schools where we teach we have to give it as an example. They were expected from one point they came from the other and they climbed a thing that you consider that there is no man

able to climb it. And yet the commandos did it. So I want to tell you let's not mess ourselves. What does matter, if you want, is to have a vision as well. It would be good for Greece to be a leader in the issue of the recognition in another sector as well; to recognize Artsakh as an Armenian state. This is very important. Another thing we have to really think of is, if you want, to be the leaders as Hellenism. Of course is much more difficult, because you will see it is related with free expression. In Greece we like to talk about everything, even if we don't have any idea what we are talking about. We all do it. The issue is that as regards the genocide we have to be more serious. Here normally you are an audience, you saw two schizophrenic things. You saw the people who were sitting here (floor) and the people who were here (video). They were two different people. Good, it's logic. They are not victims (floor), they were victims (video). I am not blaming the people who are here (floor), because I sit here as well. So, which is the idea? The idea is that they (video) are saying the truth, we are talking for them. It is little different. Now, if suddenly here in the room, let's say a representative of Turkey, stands up and says 'what he is talking about here are lies'. All of us here will say 'he has the right', since this is free expression in Greece. We say 'okay, not exactly'. And I am trying to tell you that the issue of genocide is not simply a crime, it is a crime against humanity. To realize how delayed we are at the international level, we haven't established yet the Rights of the Humanity, but we talk about the human rights and be careful instead of talking about human rights now more and more we talk about humanitarian efforts. We love it, from little man, in the end we will say 'effort' and I want to tell you that what has great importance is the Humanity and the Time. In this framework there are rights. The issue of the genocide is, if you want, reversed. Namely, we consider that this is a crime against humanity and we haven't the right to commit a crime against humanity. It is not deleted it is not set under statutory limitations. There are many of you who believe that by the time, we are waiting 97 years, we will forget it slowly. No, they are wrong, because if it was a crime we might have forgotten it. Right! But as it as a crime against humanity, time is with us. The longer Turkey waits, the worse her situation becomes, the more the recognitions we have on the genocide of the Armenians, the more the states informed are and this continues and I think young people will talk afterwards and you will see there is a continuation – because ok we are all old- but the issue is that we have to see how it continues. What should be continued and we should give the example in the issue of penalization of the negation. I am not saying we do it tomorrow, we are not at all prepared in Greece for such matters, but we have to realize that first, we know what barbarity is, secondly we know what genocide is; you can't caress yourself and laugh at the genocide. We know that too, but we don't see it. Switzerland has penalized the negation of the genocide of the Armenians so as Slovakia. Now Bosnia has started talking about this issue through the Serbs. So, you see that in this sector – because the genocide of the Armenians really is the spearhead as regards the issues of the genocidology- we have to see that the recognition is the first stage and only that and that there is a process of correction. Recognition, penalization, writing books of history, restitutions, compensations. This here is a process. If we stop only at the first level and we consider, I for example theoretically say that in Greece since the recognition has taken place since 1996, we only commemorate from now on. But things are not like this, for Hellenism has always been offering to the Humanity. It always displays, gives, and doesn't hold back. So it's important to see that this process would be good to think of because we have experienced this abroad. When the monument for the genocide of the Armenians was erected in France in Lyon, the French for the first time in their life they saw 3, 000

Turks with flags to hang about in the city center- because, of course, we had chosen to place the monument in the center of the city, this is very important; to place the monuments at the city centers, because the monuments are not only for the Armenians but for the whole humanity and yet this monument was in Lyon it was dedicated to all victims of the genocides- so you should now that the Turks tried to destroy the monument. Why? Because there is no penalization and by chance there was a strike, because the French know of strikes as well, on another matter, and there were French in the monument. And they remained in the monument to protect it. As simple as that. Had it not been for that strike, French wouldn't have been there, the Turks would have destroyed it and what accusation to follow? That they simply destroyed it; it is free will, free expression. Thus, we have to be very careful on this issue, because by the time if we don't pass to the stage of the penalization, you will not have state enemies in Turkey only but in all countries. This is something you have to pay attention at, because the measurement will be multiplied, because Turkey -either she wants it or not- she is trying to eliminate any Armenian element. You can tell this from the documents, you saw it by the survivors. But be careful the survivors die as well. After them there would be others saying you this and you would ask "how do you know?" There must be records. These records are not only for our own use; it is for the others as well. Every recognition of the genocide helps. It helps the other genocides and we must enter this framework, otherwise we will have problems. I would like to signal something at this point; you see here this is Wilson, we in Greece know very well the Lausanne Treaty, don't we? But why don't we all Greeks know that the Lausanne Treaty was not signed by America (US) and it (US) has only signed the Sevres Treaty? Because in the Sevres Treaty there is Western Armenia, as we see it on the map; there is what we call Armenia now, which is more or less similar with what we have; and you see, including Artsakh as well. Why have we made all this disappear? I am trying to tell you that even at the international level even with the Sevres Treaty, - which was - to get serious- since we have experts in geopolitics also, was a play with words- no one believed that it would be realized. We simply pretended to have believed it. While the Sevres Treaty was under way, battles were still taking place and we ended up to the Lausanne Treaty. In the Lausanne Treaty Armenia doesn't exist. Not only is there no Armenia, but there is not even the word Armenian. In Greece we say that we should follow the Lausanne Treaty as regards the rights. Good, does Turkey do the same thing? No, there are violations since the day it (the Treaty) exists. I will say it even roughly, is there any treaty signed by Turkey and not violated by her? One? Not two, one. Well, what I am trying to tell you is that on the one hand we have the Armenians not even existing in the Lausanne Treaty and on the other hand we have the Greeks who have to suffer it. They consider that it is important, since it took place at an international level. On the other hand we have the Turks who have totally ignored it. We have to think of it, if we want, in a strategic manner, to exert pressure on the articles violated by Turkey so that she will say in the end that 'the Lausanne Treaty is not enough for me'.

I wanted to tell you another thing. It may seem to you as a vision even utopian. Armenians in France still struggle for this Armenia (map). It is not something theoretical. It is something that may be not known here, because we haven't given this direction, however, the notion of Western Armenia, which is the one hit the most, is very important. In which sense; the whole of it is now part of Turkey as regards Artsakh related to Azerbaijan. We have more regions Djavak which is now in Georgia. All these regions are Armenian. Now I would like to address only to the Greeks. Would it be possible to feel comfortable if you were told that Greece would

be Greece and Olympus would belong to Turkey? So how do you expect Armenians to be satisfied since Ararat belongs to Turkey? The symbol of Armenia in relation to which we talk about the ark. Even in religion – because we didn't talk too much about religion and I wanted to signal this as well - why aren't we saying clearly that the genocide was against all non-Muslim peoples of the region?

It was against the Armenians, the Assyro-Chaldeans, the Pontians, the Jews. We suddenly discovered it, because after 2007 when Israel changed vis-à-vis Turkey documents started to appear about other genocides at this level. I am trying to tell you that when you look how the issue of Turkey one way or another functions is always interesting. Turkey has tact when choosing names, it is a special technique, when she wants to wage a peaceful operation in Cyprus she names it Attila. When Turkey names what? When she names Armenia in a way that is derogatory; when the issue of penalization has not yet been invented in democratic countries, you should realize what? That the simple reference to the genocide of the Armenians is punished with 10-year imprisonment. This is stated in the penal code. Why aren't we signal this clearly, why aren't we saying now that it would be good for Turkey to remove this article from the penal code? We have to insist on this point and not have Turks intellectuals who believe that they help in fact the issue of recognition of genocide and are condemned due to this article. Who has submitted official demand to remove this article from the penal code? So, I am trying to show you that in all this frameworks we have to be concrete. In which sense? Genocide does not belong only to the past, you have to think of the genocide in a different way.

There is the genocide of the future for only future can put the blame for a genocide. When a genocide takes place, people do not know it, when it finishes, they still haven't realized what exactly is going on; only in the end. Turkey's technique is to accomplish the genocide of the future. Because, be careful, if they she manages to commit the genocide of the future, this means that no one will be there to condemn you for what has been done; so in law if there is no one to condemn you, you haven't committed a crime. It goes the other way around. And this is the process we see when we do the Stanton's analysis, according to whom we have the eight phases of genocide. In these 8 phases of genocide, within the same genocide the deleting of archives, traces all this that could constitute, if you want, proof.

However, there is now proof on the genocide of the Armenians; we are no longer in this level. So, what is very important is to see how we really protect the Armenian element not only the one entrapped in the state, which exists over the last 21 years. For, Mr. Ambassador, -to get serious- it is exactly because there is an Armenian state over the last 21 years that the Armenian cause has reached this level, it is the other way around, because otherwise we would have had some reluctance. They are logic, this is doesn't bother me, Greece has reluctance too. You know the Greeks of diaspora do the same. They do more work, because Greece sometimes wants to keep some balance. In the issue of genocide there is no balance to keep. There is no negotiation; we are not playing with genocide. Genocide exists full stop. What do we do afterwards, since there is a process? This is: recognition, then penalization, then writing book of history which are really serious, because we have here another issue. Namely by doing the whole thing so democratic, we don't know in the end what we are talking about. Because if we can't with accuracy use the words in the issues in reference, namely if we can't use the word genocide, if we can't say crimes against humanity, to talk of the Armenians, the Turks, the Greeks- and not the neighbors, because in the end we won't know who is neighboring with whom and we have the

impression that the whole issue is a local problem. So, we have to be serious at our level and the one we claim. I have the impression that here we have to pass to the next stage so that the young here have a vision, something to materialize, something to achieve. There isn't to achieve the recognition simply. Recognition was done by the old. Good, it was done in '96. '87 was also very important in the European Parliament, but we continue it. What should be continued is the issue of penalization and we should be very careful about Artsakh. For Artsakh each Armenian in this room has a responsibility if the Greeks don't know much about this situation, because there is the danger, when you go the region of Agdam to have snipers. There are now Armenian victims, there are because it is an area which is dangerous. So, simply to conclude, it is written (haiku on the screen) in the Armenian of both Eastern and Western and you will understand it each one in his own (language), with Latin letters, with iron letters, so Mr. Ambassador can read it in his so beautiful language and of course in Greek too to understand it, because this haiku is somewhat strange. The idea is that you should know that there is a Vishap, it is the dragon. The dragon protects Armenia hundred years now. What you should understand is what we name 'Hay Djampa', the Armenian path. In the beginning the Armenian was innocent with the Armenian blood shed by the genocide. By the time he will become a dragon. The idea is that Turkey is not going to avoid us; we will be here constantly with new conquests, with other challenges and other achievements and of course always disturbing. Take care.