SEASON OF RESOLUTIONS STARTED IN THE US

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It could be seen that usually in the spring, draft resolutions concerning Turkey are submitted to the US Congress. The primary reason for this is to make sure that to please the Armenian electors, one or more draft resolutions against Turkey are present in the Congress on or before 24 April; the date the Armenian genocide started.

This unwritten rule has also been followed this year and two draft resolutions have been submitted to the Senate; a draft resolution urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties numbered S.Res.392 and another on Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide numbered S.Res.399.

The Season of resolutions had started last year in March and four draft resolutions concerning Turkey were submitted to the Congress until July.

From these draft resolutions, the one numbered H.Res.304 is the same as S.Res.399 which we mentioned above that it was just recently submitted and which aims at the Armenian genocide allegations being recognized. This draft resolution was submitted to the Congress almost once every two years since 2000 and although the possibility for it being adopted emerged many times, upon Turkeys initiatives, US Governments, sometimes despite difficulties, have prevented their adoption. The main reason for insisting upon this draft resolution is some unrealistic thoughts that if the US recognizes the Armenian genocide allegations, then many other countries will do the same, that Turkey will be obliged to recognize the same allegations and that this will lead to Turkey paying compensation and if the conjuncture is appropriate, to giving some territory to Armenia.

Draft Resolution H.Res.306 on safeguarding Turkeys Christian Heritage and returning confiscated church properties which was submitted to the House of Representatives last year, had been adopted on 13 December 2011 after some statements in the text regarding the genocide allegations were eliminated from it. However, only three of the 435 members of the House of Representatives being present during the voting and the draft resolution being adopted with two of their votes had created a rather ridiculous situation. Apparently, it is hoped that a better result will be achieved from the same draft resolution submitted to the Senate with the number S.Res.392. However, many decisions taken recently by the Turkish Government in favor of the Christian minorities in Turkey

will make it difficult for this draft resolution to be adopted in the Senate.

Last year, two draft resolutions had been submitted to the US House of Representatives regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul. The one numbered H.Res.180 urged Turkey to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The second one numbered S.Res.196 was calling upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchates Theological School of Halki without condition or further delay. Neither of these draft resolutions has been addressed since last year. The chance for these texts being adopted is quite low when it could be observed that relations between the Patriarchate and the Government have developed today.

In conclusion, there are still five draft resolutions pertaining to Turkey that are present in the US Congress. Two of them concern the Armenian genocide allegations, where one of them is in the House of Representatives while the other is in the Senate. Moreover, there is one draft resolution in the Senate regarding the Christian heritage in Turkey. On the other hand, two draft resolutions relating to the Ecumenical Patriarchate are pending in the House of Representatives.

Although not only Presidential elections but also House of Representatives elections being held this year will cause these draft resolutions to gain significance, it is difficult for the US Government to give consent to their adoption at a time when it is highly dependent on Turkey to conduct its own foreign policy in the Middle East. It is also not easy to obtain a majority in the Senate or in the House of Representatives for the adoption of these draft resolutions. The only exception to this could be the one pending in the Senate on Christian heritage in Turkey. Since the same text was adopted last year in December in the House of Representatives, this time it could also be adopted in the Senate.

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