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PRESIDENT OBAMA AND SARKISIAN'S STATEMENTS

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President Obama did not pronounce the word genocide in his statement delivered for the Armenian Remembrance Day, instead, just as last year, he used the Armenian words Metz Yegern. This way, even if indirectly, he recognized the 1915 events as genocide. This play on words pleased the Turkish public opinion. On the other hand, objections within the Diaspora towards the President for not keeping his promise made while he was candidate to qualify the 1915 events as genocide still continues. Presumably, to make up for this, half of the Presidents statement was reserved to praise the American Armenians by mentioning the Armenians contributions to the US economy, their strengthening of American democracy etc. It is difficult to believe that a small Armenian community would significantly contribute to the US. The 24 April statements of the American Presidents are documents of domestic politics and do not discretely address Turkey, but American citizens of Armenian origin. Looking at it from this point of view, these statements lose importance for Turkey; however, regardless of what it is, since a biased approach is taken towards a specific historical event, this statement is in no way acceptable for Turkey. Examining the statement from a foreign affairs view, it could be said that it does not create any new problems for Turkey-US relations during a period where some difference of views already exist between them. In the speech delivered by Armenian President Serge Sarkisan on April 24, the point which has drawn the most attention is the statement that the Ottoman Empire has fulfilled its program of annihilation of Armenians. These words have been used in order to determine that in conformity with international law, genocide has taken place. The positive side of this statement is that is has drawn no linkages between the 1915 events and todays Turkey in contrast to the previous years. Meanwhile, expressing gratitude to all those, including Turkey, who have supported the Armenians in their struggle means that as the Turkish Governments and public opinion will not accept the genocide allegations, the only hope left to the Armenians is Turkish liberal intellectuals. As can be seen from the number of those participating in the demonstrations held in Istanbul on April 24, this group is very small. Not only do they fail to convince the Turkish public opinion, but they also cannot go beyond creating negative reactions for themselves and for the Armenian allegations. Both President Obama and President Sarkisian did not touch upon the protocols and their future, which in fact constitutes the most important issue of Turkey-Armenia relations. This shows that at least in a short term, no progress can be achieved towards the protocols and since Turkey has linked the ratification of the protocols to the Karabakh conflict, it can also signify that no progress is expected for this conflict either.

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