



Ambassador

*Embassy of Turkey
Washington, D. C.*

June 30, 2008

Professor Mervat HATEM
President
Middle East Studies Association
Tucson
ARIZONA

Dear Professor Hatem,

With your letter addressed to H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, dated May 27, 2008, you insinuate that I, as the Honorary Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Turkish Studies (ITS), may have improperly influenced Professor Donald Quataert to resign from the board's Chair on December 13, 2006. I regret to observe that you apparently felt no need to consult or contact me before writing this letter, which would have permitted me to correct some of your grave misperceptions. The quantity of half truths contained in your letter also suggests that the ITS Board of Governors had not been contacted either.

I provide the following corrections so that you can fully appreciate whether allusions to any influence I may have exerted over Prof. Quataert to urge his resignation from the ITS board's Chair and from the board itself are substantiated or not.

The ITS was founded in 1983. According to its By-Laws, the primary objective of the Institute is to increase knowledge of Turkey, its people, culture and history among the people of the United States by supporting educational research, scholarship and publications in the field of Turkish studies. The efforts and works of the ITS have positively contributed to the development of relations between Turkey and the United States primarily in the academic field.

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The ITS's affairs are managed by its Board of Governors. The Board of Governors is composed of Turkish and American academics and businessmen known for their expertise in their fields. The Board of Governors meets periodically and acts by a simple majority. All decisions, including electing of the Chairman are taken by the Board accordingly. As befits a purely academic institution, the ITS and its Board of Governors seek to operate transparently and objectively. It would be a clear violation of academic freedom for the Turkish Government to seek to influence members of the Board to act in a certain way, and equally for members of the Board to bow to such pressure.

As the Honorary Chairman of the ITS Board, my one and only right is to attend the meetings of the Board of Governors and to offer, if need be, my views on matters related to its governance. I lack the prerogative to vote and have no authority to appoint or remove any board member or approve or reject any grant requests.

Contrary to recent assertions, I did not call Prof. Quataert to condemn him for a book review he had written in which he opined on the events of 1915. Rather, following the publication of that book review I called Prof. Quataert to enquire into the reason for his change of opinion on that historical dispute, as Mr. Quataert had previously not considered that the events of 1915 constituted genocide. Prof. Quataert replied that the book review was being misunderstood and that his opinion had not changed. I then suggested to Prof. Quataert that if he was being misunderstood, then he should naturally correct this misunderstanding in writing. I expressly added that whatever decision Prof. Quataert would make, both on correcting the misunderstanding and on his interpretation of history, I would respect it. Professor Quataert did not act on my suggestion.

I add that, contrary to what has been claimed, during my conversation with Prof. Quataert, absolutely no mention either of the ITS' funding or of the subject of Prof. Quataert's continued service on the ITS board was made.

With a letter dated December 13, 2006, the then Chairman of the Board of Directors, Prof. Donald Quataert informed the members of the Board of Governors, including me as Honorary Chairman, of his decision to resign from the ITS Chairmanship.

With the attached copy of the letter addressed to Prof. Quataert, dated January 18, 2007, I expressed my regret regarding his decision, underlined his important contributions to the ITS and mentioned my sincere wish to maintain our close friendship in the future.

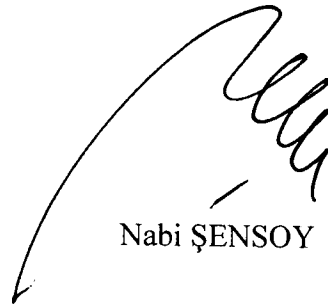
Following Prof. Quataert's resignation, Mr. Kenan Şahin, a prominent Turkish-American academic and businessman, and then Ambassador Robert Pearson, a former US Ambassador to Turkey, were elected to Chair the ITS by the Board of Governors. Any future Chairman will be independently elected by the Board as well.

It is obvious that claims contained in your letter insinuating that my actions had forced Professor Quataert to resign from the Chair of the ITS are not only unfounded and misleading, but they also run contrary to the facts. Neither the Turkish Government nor I have ever placed any pressure upon the ITS, for such interference would violate the principle of academic freedom, which we earnestly uphold. The Turkish Government and I will be the first to defend ITS from any such pressure. Our past practice stands in testimony to this fact.

I hope this helps you gain a better understanding of the matter.

Finally, as you have published Prof. Quataert's letter on your website, fairness would demand that my letter also be given an equal public forum.

Sincerely,



Nabi ŞENSOY

ITS



Ambassador

*Embassy of Turkey
Washington, D. C.*

January 18, 2007

Professor Donald Quataert
Department of History
Binghamton University, State University of New York
Binghamton, NY 13902 6000

Dear Professor,

Thank you for your letter of December 13, 2006.

I am sorry to learn about your decision to resign as Chairman of the Board of Governors and as Member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Turkish Studies.

It is indeed very hard on us to lose a distinguished member of the ITS who has been a major intellectual force in support of a better understanding of Turkey.

I believe that the Institute, under your chairmanship has played an important role and maintained its position as a distinguished institution.

Your friendship over the years has been a great asset. It will be an honor to maintain this close friendship.

I look forward to welcoming you here at the Turkish Embassy on future occasions.

With my best wishes, I remain.

Yours sincerely,

Best wishes for the new year!

Nabi Şensoy