

La lettre ouverte au NewYork Times , de l'AGBU



Professor Samuel Train Dutton, Secretary of the Committee on Armenian Atrocities, made public yesterday a preliminary statement of the committee outlining the result of its investigation of the terrible conditions existing among the Armenians."

This is the first sentence in a *New York Times* article published on September 27, 1915, reflecting a time when journalism and integrity went hand in hand; a time when the Armenians living as a minority in the Ottoman Empire desperately needed allies to amplify their voice and expose to the world the unimaginable horrors of beheadings, killings and ethnic cleansings at the hand of the Ottoman Turks. The *New York Times*, a revered and trusted source of information, objective analysis and dissemination of truth, was unafraid to tell the world of these heinous acts perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks during the Armenian Genocide.

Where is that same commitment to accurate reporting now, when 105 years from the exact date of this article's publication, Azerbaijan launched a calculated, strategically engineered attack on Armenians living in the territory of Nagorno Karabakh? With ample proof and peer journalists reporting evidence of coordination and collaboration between Azerbaijan and Turkey, the purchase of weapons from multiple other parties in advance and the hiring of jihadist mercenaries from Syria, the *New York Times* instead decided to paint a picture almost exclusively from the unsubstantiated lens of the perpetrators, lacking any investigative support or objective analysis.

In multiple reports from *New York Times* reporter Carlotta Gall, who has been head of your bureau in Istanbul, Turkey for years, the pattern of victim blaming and glazing over important parts of the accurate narrative has not gone unnoticed by your loyal readership.

Curiously, not a single letter in response to any of Gall's articles has been made public.

By stating that the Armenian government "accused" Azerbaijan of mounting a planned offensive, Gall omits a critical fact: it has been categorically verified that Azerbaijan started this war. The coverage states that "both sides were poised and ready for more by September," failing to mention that Azerbaijan and Turkey stocked up on arms and brought in mercenaries from Syria weeks and months before its attack. This does not square with the assertion that both sides were prepared. Furthermore, stating that this war "threatens to draw in Turkey," blatantly ignores, again, factual evidence that Turkey is not "drawn in," but rather is driving this war.

The list of other unsubstantiated claims is long and cumulatively crafts a narrative in which an independent republic of 150,000 Armenians backed by a nation of three million would actively choose to ignite a war with a country of 10 million backed by a country of 85 million that also happens to be a NATO member. The logic is simply lacking with this chronicle.

To be sure, war is an ugly affair, with casualties on both sides. The truth, which only has one side, shouldn't be one of them.

On behalf of the world's largest Armenian non-profit organization with over a century of experience working to uplift the lives of Armenian people everywhere, we demand better from the *New York Times*. Equally important, your readers deserve better and many -

Armenian or not - have been poorly served by this consistent lack of investigative journalism that is necessary to distinguish fact from strategically designed disinformation. If the *New York Times* is committed to reporting the unvarnished reality as it did 105 years ago, we invite you to travel to Armenia for an extended period and embed a journalist in Nagorno Karabakh as you have in Azerbaijan. Report the truth from the front line, not only from the perspective of someone who, despite her impressive career as a war journalist, is only reporting what she sees from a distance.

As Americans, as Armenians, and as readers who value principled reporting, we expect a more thorough and accurate approach to covering this crisis in a very important region of the world. Restore the integrity of the *New York Times* before your credibility and reputation are tarnished beyond repair.

