**An Ex-Leader in Congress Is Now Turkey’s Man in the Lobbies of Capitol Hill**

By MARILYN W. THOMPSON

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 — Since leaving Capitol Hill in 1999, former Representative [Robert L. Livingston](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/l/robert_l_livingston/index.html?inline=nyt-per) has been the main lobbyist for Turkey in blocking Congressional efforts to pass an [Armenian genocide](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/turkey/armenian_genocide/index.html?inline=nyt-classifier) resolution.

[Skip to next paragraph](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/17/washington/17lobby.html?_r=1&ref=us&oref=slogin#secondParagraph)



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Lawrence Jackson/Associated Press

Turkey has paid former Representative Robert L. Livingston, top, more than $12 million to lobby against Armenian genocide resolutions. Former Representative Richard A. Gephardt, who was the House majority leader, has also received payments.



The New York Times

After succeeding twice before — and collecting more than $12 million in fees for his firm, the Livingston Group — he is pushing once again for his client.

In recent months, Mr. Livingston, a Louisiana Republican who was once speaker-designate of the House, has consulted with Vice President [Dick Cheney](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/dick_cheney/index.html?inline=nyt-per) and with [Karl Rove](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/karl_rove/index.html?inline=nyt-per), when he was still the top White House political strategist. He escorted Turkish dignitaries to Capitol Hill to warn that the resolution threatened to destroy a strong Iraq war alliance.

He made a phone call that helped persuade a Louisiana member to change his position and got other Republicans to remove their names from a growing list of co-sponsors. And he courted a powerful Democrat, Representative [John P. Murtha](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/john_p_murtha/index.html?inline=nyt-per) of Pennsylvania, who earlier this year asked Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/p/nancy_pelosi/index.html?inline=nyt-per), a fellow Democrat, not to bring the measure up for a House vote.

Mr. Livingston has also showered money on House and Senate members, the National Republican Congressional Committee and other political causes. He and his firm gave more than $200,000 in campaign donations in the last election cycle, records show.

Last week, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed a nonbinding resolution condemning as genocide the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks beginning in 1915. Ms. Pelosi, a strong supporter, promised Sunday to bring the matter up for a floor vote before Congress recesses in mid-November.

But this week, a surge of defections by members who backed the resolution showed that Mr. Livingston’s high-powered effort was gaining momentum.

As Turkey reacted angrily to the House committee action in the last few days, members began responding to arguments that the resolution posed a national security threat. Those arguments were put forth by the Bush administration, Mr. Livingston and another prominent lobbyist, [Richard A. Gephardt](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/g/richard_a_gephardt/index.html?inline=nyt-per), of Missouri, the former House majority leader and a Democrat.

The issue has pitted Turkey’s money and high-placed connections against a persistent and emotional campaign by Armenian-American citizens’ groups.

“The Turks have done everything they possibly could,” said former Representative Stephen J. Solarz, whose firm got $165,000 this summer lobbying for Turkey under an arrangement with Mr. Livingston. Representative Adam B. Schiff, Democrat of California, a resolution sponsor, called Turkey’s lobbying “the most intense I’ve ever seen.”

Both Mr. Livingston, who opposed a genocide resolution while in Congress, and Mr. Gephardt declined to discuss their work for Turkey, referring questions to the Turkish Embassy.

But records filed at the Justice Department show Turkish expenditures since August 2006 of about $3.2 million for lobbyists and public relations firms. In Mr. Livingston’s case, the reports offer details of his lobbying efforts.

Mr. Gephardt, a senior counsel at the law firm of DLA Piper who retired from Congress in 2005, began working for Turkey in March under a yearlong contract worth $1.2 million. He has been criticized by Armenian-Americans because he previously supported Armenia and co-sponsored an earlier genocide resolution.

Mr. Gephardt now has concerns related to national security, said Michael Messman, a lobbying colleague of Mr. Gephardt.

Turkey has never mustered the intense grass-roots support in the United States that has been Armenia’s strength, with constituents pressing lawmakers to back the measure. Records show that Armenia has spent far less money on lobbying. Its largest expenditure went to the public relations firm of Burson-Marsteller, which earned about $300,000 from August 2006 to April 2007.

After Mr. Livingston resigned from the House in 1999 amid disclosures about an extramarital affair, Turkey retained the Livingston Group, his new bipartisan firm. It has built a large foreign practice, representing among others the governments of Azerbaijan, the Congo Republic and the Cayman Islands. More than a quarter of the firm’s income, which has totaled more than $71 million, has come from foreign clients, records show.

Mr. Livingston earned Turkey’s gratitude by helping stop two resolutions in 2000 and 2004. When Democrats took control of the House last year, Turkey continued to rely on him as its principal lobbyist, though it eventually brought in Mr. Gephardt’s firm. Reports on Mr. Gephardt’s activities have not been filed.

Mr. Livingston contacted Mr. Rove on Nov. 28, 2006, just after a Livingston Group lobbyist attended a weekend retreat at the Greenbrier resort in West Virginia for key Congressional supporters of Turkey. In January, Mr. Livingston talked with a Cheney aide and prepared for Capitol Hill visits by Ambassador Nabi Sensoy of Turkey and other officials.

Mr. Schiff, the California Democrat, introduced the resolution on Jan. 30, with 160 co-sponsors.

The next day, the records show, Mr. Livingston called Representative Bobby Jindal, Republican of Louisiana, a backer. Mr. Jindal promptly withdrew his name.

In December 2006, Mr. Livingston and an associate contributed $10,000 to Mr. Jindal’s campaign for governor of Louisiana. Mr. Jindal’s office did not respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Livingston’s courtship of Mr. Murtha began in February. After a meeting with Mr. Livingston and another lobbyist from the firm, Mr. Murtha was among a group of members who met with Mr. Livingston, Mr. Sensoy and the Turkish foreign minister, [Abdullah Gul](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/g/abdullah_gul/index.html?inline=nyt-per). Long opposed to a genocide resolution, Mr. Murtha wrote Ms. Pelosi on Feb. 8 asking her not to allow a floor vote.

Mr. Livingston contributed $3,000 to Mr. Murtha’s campaign in February. A Murtha aide said the contribution reflects support for his record on the issue.

On April 24, the annual observance of the Armenian genocide, President Bush made a brief tribute to the dead, avoiding the term genocide. In Congress, attention focused on the Iraq war.

The resolution soon rebounded. Mr. Livingston made a concerted, though unsuccessful, effort to win over Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat of California, a Holocaust survivor and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Lantos had opposed a similar resolution in 2000.

Mr. Livingston took Turkish officials to meet Mr. Lantos, then met with him again on May 18. A Livingston associate gave $500 to his campaign in March.

Mr. Livingston met with Mr. Cheney on May 4, and an associate consulted a Cheney aide four times from July 10 to July 20.

Mr. Livingston continued to push lawmakers to change their positions. Representative Roger Wicker, a Mississippi Republican, signed up as a co-sponsor on June 26, then changed his mind two days later after a call from the lobbyist.

Representative [Tom Tancredo](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/t/tom_tancredo/index.html?inline=nyt-per), a Colorado Republican, withdrew his support on June 27 after meeting with Mr. Livingston, Mr. Jindal and a member of the Turkish Parliament.

Mr. Livingston’s logs end at July 31. His firm will file another report detailing activities up to and including the House committee vote in favor of the resolution. Since then, a Republican and a group of Democrats have dropped their backing.

Kitty Bennett contributed reporting.

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**Pentagon Sees One Authority Over Contractors**



Ivan Sekretarev/Associated Press

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Moscow on Friday. They have yet to meet on how to supervise the guards used by American officials in Iraq.

By [ERIC SCHMITT](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/eric_schmitt/index.html?inline=nyt-per) and [THOM SHANKER](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/thom_shanker/index.html?inline=nyt-per)

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 — Defense Secretary [Robert M. Gates](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/g/robert_m_gates/index.html?inline=nyt-per) is pressing for the nearly 10,000 armed security contractors now working for the United States government in [Iraq](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/index.html?inline=nyt-geo) to fall under a single authority, most likely the American military, in an effort to bring [Blackwater USA](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/business/companies/blackwater_usa/index.html?inline=nyt-org) under tighter control, senior administration officials and Pentagon advisers say.

That idea is facing resistance from the State Department, which relies heavily for protection in Iraq on some 2,500 private guards, including more than 800 Blackwater contractors, to provide security for American diplomats in Baghdad. The State Department has said it should retain control over those guards, despite Blackwater’s role in a September shooting in Baghdad that exposed problems in the current oversight arrangements.

In practical terms, placing the private security guards who now work for the military, the State Department and other government agencies under a single authority would mean that those armed civilians would no longer have different bosses and different rules. Pentagon advisers say it would also allow better coordination between the security contractors and American military commanders, who have long complained that the contractors often operate independently.

Mr. Gates has not publicly stated his final position on any reorganization, but his thinking on how to manage security contractors was described by administration officials, military officers and outside advisers to the Defense Department, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The officials said it was not clear whether Mr. Gates would also recommend changes that would make Blackwater contractors in Iraq subject to military law. Whether Blackwater guards now in Iraq are subject to any kind of legal jeopardy remains unclear, even as the [F.B.I.](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/f/federal_bureau_of_investigation/index.html?inline=nyt-org) and other American agencies investigate the Sept. 16 shooting, which Iraqi investigators have said killed 17 Iraqi civilians.

In response to the shooting, the State Department has acknowledged the need to tighten controls over Blackwater. But department officials have said that they were tightening controls by sending State Department personnel as monitors on Blackwater security convoys in and around Baghdad, and said that therefore there was no need to shift oversight to the Pentagon.

By contrast, Pentagon and military officials say, Mr. Gates has been told by senior American commanders in Iraq that there must be a single chain of command overseeing the private security contractors working for a variety of United States government agencies in the war zone. The commanders argue that the military is best positioned to be that single authority.

Congress has already voiced its concern over the current legal uncertainty involving American contractors. Earlier this month, the House overwhelmingly approved a bill that would bring all United States government contractors in the Iraq war zone under the jurisdiction of American criminal law. A similar measure is pending in the Senate.

But Pentagon officials remain divided over whether they might recommend additional changes if the contractors were brought under Defense Department authority. Some military commanders in Iraq favor using the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a system they know well and trust. Other Defense Department officials support the model being considered by Congress, which would make clear that the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act would extend federal law to civilians supporting military operations.

The Pentagon press secretary, Geoff Morrell, said Mr. Gates “has made clear that he supports his commanders’ assertions that, at the very least, they need greater visibility on the work and movements of armed security contractors in Iraq.”

The civilian casualties from contractor gunfire have infuriated the Iraqi government and damaged the American image in the country, frustrating military officers who say the heavy-handed tactics by contractors undermine broader efforts to win the trust of the Iraqi people.

American commanders have a more specific military complaint, as well: They say the security contractors complicate American combat operations, in part because local commanders sometimes do not even know of armed official convoys moving through their areas.

Mr. Gates said this month that 30 percent of the calls for help from security contractors had come from convoys that the military did not know were on the road.

Because of their overseas travel schedules, Mr. Gates and Secretary of State [Condoleezza Rice](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/condoleezza_rice/index.html?inline=nyt-per) have been unable to meet face to face to resolve the issue, officials said. “In no way are we at a point of impasse with the State Department,” said Mr. Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary. “We have not even begun discussions with them at the secretary level on the way forward.”

A State Department official said the department had not yet received any formal proposal from the Pentagon. “Our interests and theirs is ensuring that the activities of personal security contractors are effectively coordinated between the military and the embassy,” the official said. “We’d certainly be interested in hearing any additional ideas that the Defense Department might have.”

One outside adviser to the Pentagon said Mr. Gates felt so strongly that he told associates he was prepared to go to President Bush to decide the matter.

However, that adviser and Pentagon officials said Mr. Gates would not raise the issue with Mr. Bush until he and Ms. Rice had a chance to discuss it with Stephen J. Hadley, the national security adviser, after Ms. Rice returns from her current foreign travels.

Since Mr. Gates was sworn in as defense secretary in December, he has established a far friendlier relationship with Ms. Rice than was maintained by his predecessor, [Donald H. Rumsfeld](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/r/donald_h_rumsfeld/index.html?inline=nyt-per). Mr. Gates and Ms. Rice, who worked together in government previously, share views on many significant issues, including on the Guantánamo Bay detention facility, on dealing with Iran and on the broad outlines for the future of the Iraq mission.

However, tensions have emerged, especially over personnel issues. Earlier this year, Ms. Rice asked the Pentagon, whose budget dwarfs that of the State Department, to help supply people to fill State Department reconstruction positions in Iraq.

As details of the Blackwater shootings have emerged in recent weeks, Mr. Gates has signaled his unease with the existing command and legal authorities governing security contractors.

“Do we have the mechanisms and the means for our commanders to exercise a kind of strategic oversight and assure accountability in terms of the behavior and the conduct of these security contractors?” Mr. Gates asked at the Pentagon on Sept. 27.

“It’s very important that we do everything in our power to make sure that people who are under contract to us are not only abiding by our rules, but are conducting themselves in a way that makes them an asset in this war in Iraq and not a liability,” he added.

**House Passes Bill Shielding Reporters**

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 (AP) — The House on Tuesday strongly backed the right of reporters to protect the confidentiality of sources in most federal court cases, saying that right was crucial to a free and effective press. The White House threatened a veto, saying the bill would encourage leaks of classified information.

Under legislation that passed by 398 to 21, reporters could still be compelled to disclose information on sources if that information was needed to prevent acts of terrorism or harm to national security.

That was not enough for the White House, which said the privileges given to reporters “could severely frustrate — and in some cases completely eviscerate — the ability to investigate acts of terrorism or threats to national security.”

Press freedom advocates have pushed the issue this year after several prominent cases involving journalists who were asked to identify sources, including subpoenas issued for reporters to testify in an inquiry into the leak of the identity of a [Central Intelligence Agency](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/central_intelligence_agency/index.html?inline=nyt-org) operative.

Supporters of the bill, including more than 50 news organizations, among them The New York Times Company, pointed to news reports on Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, clandestine C.I.A. prisons and shoddy conditions at [Walter Reed Army Medical Center](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/r/reed_walter_army_medical_center/index.html?inline=nyt-org) as examples where source confidentiality was crucial.

Representative Mike Pence, Republican of Indiana, a conservative who sponsored the bill with Representative Rick Boucher, Democrat of Virginia, said he promoted it because “I believe the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press.” The bill, Mr. Pence said, “is not about protecting reporters; it’s about protecting the public’s right to know.”

A similar bill, sponsored by Senator [Arlen Specter](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/arlen_specter/index.html?inline=nyt-per), Republican of Pennsylvania, cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee this month, but it is uncertain if the full Senate will take it up in the final legislative weeks of this year.

Supporters of the House bill said it was designed to strike a balance between the need to protect a reporter’s sources and the need for courts to see critical pieces of information.