

Armenian National Committee of Virginia

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Armenian National Committee of Virginia Hosts Central Bank Officials from Armenia

RICIIMOND, VA - The Armenian National Committee of Virginia (ANC-VA), headed by Dr. Murad Kerneklian, and assisted by the Very Rev. Fr. Nareg Berberian of the St. James Armenian Church and other leading figures in the Richmond Armenian community, recently hosted a delegation of Armenian officials from the Central Bank of Armenia. The Armenian bank officials were invited to the United States by the U.S. Federal Reserve System for training in advanced monetary policies and practices.

The ANC-VA organized a dinner reception for the Armenian delegation, officials of the U.S. Federal Reserve, and the local Armenian community on the evening of February 6th. Among the members of the Armenian delegation attending the dinner were group leader George Machanian, the Head of Payments for the Central Bank, and Khachatur Khagramanian and Samuel Arakelian, both experts in the field of electronic payments and financial software. Others included Olag Agasian and Armen Sarkisian, who are electronic systems development experts. Among the many members of the local Armenian community who were present were Dr. Paul Mazmanian, Tigran Amirkhanian, and Garen Karapetian.

Arthur Zohab, Jr, the Assistant Vice-President of the Federal Reserve, attended the dinner as part of the group of senior U.S. officials involved in the training. Mr. Zohab, a long-time friend of the Armenian community, remarked about the Armenian delegation that "they have come prepared and most knowledgeable." He also expressed confidence that, with continued activities of this nature and the will to advance, Armenia will move quickly into world-wide commercial activity. Stephen Druhot, Vice President of International Services Corporation, added that "The fellowship of the Armenian communities is most gratifying. . . and the political power of their lobby is amazing even though their numbers are small."

Following the dinner, the group visited St. James Church, where Very Rev. Fr. Nareg Berberian gave an extended tour and shared the story of the first Armenians in Virginia in 1607. John Baronian, from the parish council, assured the Armenian delegation of the Virginia Armenian community's steadfast commitment to the security, independence and advancement of the Republic of Armenia.

The following day, February 7th, Melanie Kerneklian, legislative assistant to Eric Cantor of the Virginia House of Delegates, and Dr. Kerneklian, representing the ANC-VA, arranged a complete tour of the Virginia General Assembly and private meetings with Delegate Franklin Hall, the Chairman of the Banking and Commerce Committee, and with Virginia's Secretary of Finance. In a gesture of friendship to Armenia, the delegation was formally welcomed during the opening of the Assembly. Delegate Cantor, who is currently working with the ANC-VA to promote economic development between Armenia and Virginia, then introduced the delegation during his remarks on the Assembly floor.

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