

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Loretta E. Lynch as Attorney General *April 23, 2015*

Today the Senate finally confirmed Loretta Lynch to be America's next Attorney General, and America will be better off for it. Loretta has spent her life fighting for the fair and equal justice that is the foundation of our democracy. As head of the Justice Department, she will oversee a vast portfolio of cases, including counterterrorism and voting rights; public corruption and white-collar crime; judicial recommendations and policy reviews—all of which matter to the lives of every Amer-

ican and shape the story of our country. She will bring to bear her experience as a tough, independent, and well-respected prosecutor on key, bipartisan priorities like criminal justice reform. And she will build on our progress in combatting newer threats like cyber-crime. Loretta's confirmation ensures that we are better positioned to keep our communities safe, keep our Nation secure, and ensure that every American experiences justice under the law.

Statement on Armenian Remembrance Day *April 23, 2015*

This year we mark the centennial of the Meds Yeghern, the first mass atrocity of the 20th century. Beginning in 1915, the Armenian people of the Ottoman Empire were deported, massacred, and marched to their deaths. Their culture and heritage in their ancient homeland were erased. Amid horrific violence that saw suffering on all sides, 1½ million Armenians perished.

As the horrors of 1915 unfolded, U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr., sounded the alarm inside the U.S. Government and confronted Ottoman leaders. Because of efforts like his, the truth of the Meds Yeghern emerged and came to influence the later work of human rights champions like Raphael Lemkin, who helped bring about the first United Nations human rights treaty.

Against this backdrop of terrible carnage, the American and Armenian peoples came together in a bond of common humanity. Ordinary American citizens raised millions of dollars to support suffering Armenian children, and the U.S. Congress chartered the Near East Relief organization, a pioneer in the field of international humanitarian relief. Thousands of Armenian refugees began new lives in the

United States, where they formed a strong and vibrant community and became pillars of American society. Rising to great distinction as businesspeople, doctors, scholars, artists, and athletes, they made immeasurable contributions to their new home.

This centennial is a solemn moment. It calls on us to reflect on the importance of historical remembrance and the difficult but necessary work of reckoning with the past. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger and build a foundation for a more just and tolerant future by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. We welcome the expression of views by Pope Francis, Turkish and Armenian historians, and the many others who have sought to shed light on this dark chapter of history.

On this solemn centennial, we stand with the Armenian people in remembering that which was lost. We pledge that those who suffered will not be forgotten. And we commit ourselves to learn from this painful legacy so that future generations may not repeat it.