

I am also encouraged that Russia decided this past December to work with the Minsk Group of the OSCE to seek a peaceful solution in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Minsk Group, cochaired by Russia and Finland, has been meeting regularly to address the needs of all the concerned parties. The process is moving along slowly, but there is hope that a peacekeeping unit may soon be in Nagorno-Karabakh to ensure the safety of all people.

The United States is eager to see a lifting of the blockade of Armenia and to see a return to the free flow of humanitarian aid in this region. We share the aspirations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the other members of the OSCE Minsk Group for a peaceful solution to this troubling problem.

We must do whatever we can to solve the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. We must use all available resources to see that the tragedy which befell Armenians in the first part of this century is not repeated—either in Armenia or anywhere else in the world. On this, the 80th anniversary of a terrible genocide, we must learn from the past and make sure that such a tragedy is never repeated.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. GLENN. Mr. President, once again I join my colleagues in pausing to reflect upon, and remember the victims of, this century's first example of the horrendous crime of genocide, the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. April 24, 1995, marked the 80th anniversary of the beginning of this tragedy. On that day in 1915, some 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested in Constantinople and exiled or taken to the interior and executed. For the next several years, Armenians were systematically expelled and deported. Some were killed and others left to die of deprivation. When the horror ended in 1923, 1.5 million Armenians had perished and another 500,000 had fled their homeland.

Evidence of the Armenian genocide is available from a number of sources, among the most compelling of which is the reporting of our own United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau. In a cable to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Morgenthau wrote:

Deportation of and excesses against peaceful Armenians is increasing and from harrowing reports of eye witnesses it appears that a campaign of race extermination is in process under a pretext of reprisal against rebellion.

Some may ask why it is important to take time each year to commemorate an event which occurred over half a century ago. In reply I would recall the reported observation of Adolph Hitler as he contemplated the "final solution"—"Who remembers the Armenians?"

Sadly, as we all well know, the Armenian peoples' tragedy was not the last

genocide of this century; there followed the horrors of the Holocaust and the extermination of the Cambodians during the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. Surveying the world today we unfortunately see many too many examples of brutal ethnic, religious, or tribal-based conflict, from ethnic cleansing in Bosnia to massacres in Rwanda.

Today we remember the 1½ million victims of the Armenian genocide. It is not comfortable to remind ourselves of this tragedy, or to visit the Holocaust Memorial Museum, or to see ongoing atrocities in real time on our television screens. Let us hope and pray today that we never allow ourselves to become complacent about man's inhumanity to man. For in the words of Edmund Burke, "the only thing necessary of the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

ARMENIAN COMMEMORATION

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I join many of my colleagues today in commemorating one of history's greatest tragedies: The slaughter 80 years ago of more than 1 million Armenians. That brutal assault on the Armenian people was an unconscionable effort to deny Armenians basic political and social rights of self-determination, independence, cultural identity, and community.

The atrocity could not extinguish the Armenian people's desire for freedom and justice. The Armenian community survives in many places around the globe, including, thankfully, the United States of America. In commemorating the immense tragedy which took place 80 years ago, we are honoring the achievements and lives of those who perished. We are also paying tribute to the perseverance and vigor of the Armenian people, who have maintained their cultural and historical identity despite oppression and diaspora. They continue to make positive contributions wherever they are, including in the United States and in the Republic of Armenia.

Commemorating these tragic events of 80 years ago, we also recognize the need for vigilance and action in the face of ethnic intolerance and injustice. Failure to learn the lessons of such events in history will unquestionably lead to future tragedies.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, April 24 was the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. On that day in 1915, 200 Armenian leaders were arrested in Constantinople, now Istanbul, and taken to the Turkish interior, where they were executed. This act marked the beginning of the first genocide of the 20th century.

From 1915–1923, 1.5 million Armenians were killed and more than 500,000 were exiled. By 1923, the entire Armenian population, which had numbered 2

million, 9 years before, was removed from Turkey.

During the last years of the Ottoman Empire, the government carried out the extermination of the Christian Armenian minority as a matter of government policy. The Turks were concerned that the Armenian population sympathized with the Allied Powers, and were worried that they might side with the Russians in the Turkish-Russian conflict during World War I. The Ottoman Government felt they needed to fully contain the Armenians.

All Armenians were equal candidates to be deported or massacred—men, women, children, the elderly. The Ottoman Empire justified the genocide as one of the necessary military operations during wartime.

Many Armenians were transferred from their homes and taken to desolate areas to be abused and killed in mass slayings. They were moved either by forced caravan marches or by overly packed cattle car trains, both of which caused massive casualties.

The survivors of these deportations were sent to camps in the middle of the Syrian desert, where they faced heat, starvation, exhaustion, thirst, and disease.

In addition to the loss of life, Armenian churches, libraries, towns, and other symbols of their culture were razed. The property and belongings of individual Armenians were transferred to the state.

The massacres ended only after the intervention by the Great Powers, including the United States. Henry Morgenthau, the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, organized and led protests against the targeting of Armenians. Congress chartered an organization, Near East Relief, which provided \$113 million between 1915–1930 for the Armenians' cause. 132,000 Armenian orphans were sent to America and placed in foster homes. The United States' efforts stopped the Turks from fully completing their plan of extermination. Unfortunately, though, we were unable to protect the majority of the Armenians from that brutal government.

Those who were not killed were scattered around the globe. The largest community of Armenians today is in the United States, and approximately 25,000 Armenians live in Illinois.

I believe it is important to recognize this history of suffering. The United States should make April 24 a national day of remembering the Armenian genocide. We must acknowledge the Armenian genocide for what it was.

There is no way we can go back and change history, but we must recount the truth of what happened to the Armenian people between 1915–1923 in the Ottoman Empire. We must demonstrate that the attempted extermination of an entire people will not be tolerated. We must not forget those who suffered and died.

I dedicate this statement to those who did not survive the first genocide of the 20th century. They must never be forgotten.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to the Armenian people on the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, marked the beginning of the systematic elimination of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire by the Turks. It is important to recall this horrible chapter in history not only to commemorate the courage, strength, and energy of the Armenian people, but also to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Beginning in 1915, the Ottoman Empire carried out a genocidal plot against its Armenian minority. From 1915 to 1923, approximately 1.5 million Armenian people, including religious, political, and intellectual leaders, lost their lives due to starvation, torture, and disease. More than 500,000 Armenians were exiled from their homes and by the end of 1923, the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and Western Armenia had been killed or deported.

During this bleak period for the Armenian people, hope was temporarily restored on May 28, 1918, when Armenian refugees, with the help of volunteers from abroad, defeated a Turkish attack and gained freedom. Unfortunately, in 1920 the Soviet Union joined with Ottoman Empire forces to attack and defeat Armenia, whose people were subjugated by these foreign powers for the next 70 years. It was not until 1991, after the break up of the Soviet Union, that the independence of the Armenian people was restored and the Republic of Armenia was born.

Although independence has been gained, Armenia's struggle still continues. There have been many efforts to deny the Armenian genocide and to discredit scholarship on this historical event. However, the suffering inflicted upon the Armenian people—one of the oldest Christian nations in the world—must not be forgotten or denied. The horror of these events must not be concealed, because only through education and remembrance can the wounds inflicted by this tragic incident in history be healed.

It is our duty to salute the Armenian people, for it reminds us that we all must work together to discourage prejudice and discrimination, to hold steadfast to the view that genocide will not be tolerated, and to make certain that it is never again repeated.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak of a triple commemoration of horror. April 1995 marked the anniversary of both the first and the most recent genocide of the 20th century. The first, of course, was the mas-

sacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915. The most recent was last year's slaughter of the Tutsis of Rwanda.

Chronologically between these two grisly events stand the decimation of the Ukrainian people by Stalin's collectivization, the Jewish Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia, and most recently the unspeakable ethnic cleansing of Bosnia's Moslems.

The precedent for this inhuman chain was the Armenian genocide, the world's failure to prevent it, and the inability to ensure that it not be denied by future generations.

From 1915 to 1923, 30 percent of the Armenian people were massacred by the brutal hand of the Ottoman Turks, beginning with the Armenian intellectual and religious elite on April 24, 1915. Armenian men who had already been conscripted into the Ottoman Army were put into work battalions and then murdered.

Other Armenians—mostly helpless, elderly, women, and children—were driven on forced marches into the desert. Many of those who withstood unimaginable suffering finally succumbed to starvation or illness.

Sadly, the Armenian massacres have been labeled the "forgotten genocide" as a result of a concerted effort to rewrite history. Some who should know better assert that the horrid events were merely a regrettable sidelight of war, not genocide.

Mr. Chairman, we must not let unseemly quarrels over semantics cloud our moral vision or distract us from the fundamental point: The world must not allow human beings to be killed because of their race, religion, or ethnic group.

It matters little whether or not in every case of genocide in this century the perpetrators had a master plan for annihilation. The crucial, horrifying truth is that Armenians were killed because they were Armenians; Jews were killed because they were Jews; Gypsies were killed because they were Gypsies; Tutsis were killed because they were Tutsis; and Bosnian Moslems were killed because they were Moslems.

In the 1930's the international community should have been alerted by Hitler's cynical comment, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" Just as Hitler saw lack of historical memory of the Armenian genocide as a signal that he could carry out with impunity his demented genocide of Jews and Gypsies, so too must the Hutus in Rwanda have been emboldened by the world's failure to stop the vile ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

On this 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide; the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and other Nazi death camps; and the first anniversary of the Tutsi genocide, I stand here to tell you that this chain must be broken once and for all.

We must not only remember and honor the martyrs, but must also solemnly swear: "This will never happen again."

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, last Monday, April 24, marked the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. I rise today to acknowledge and commemorate this terrible chapter in our history, to help ensure that it will never be forgotten.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman authorities began rounding up hundreds of Armenian political and religious leaders throughout Anatolia. Over the ensuing months and years, some 1.5 million Armenians were killed at the hands of the Ottoman authorities, and hundreds of thousands more were exiled from their homes. For its devastation and barbarism, the Armenian genocide stands out as one of the most horrific events in human history.

As the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide passes, it is vital that we remember and speak out about the systematic persecution and murder of millions of Armenians by the Ottoman government. I urge my colleagues to join me, the Armenian-American community, and people across the United States in commemorating the genocide and paying tribute to the victims of this crime against humanity.

Americans, who are blessed with freedom and security, can never allow oppression and persecution to pass without condemnation. By commemorating the Armenian genocide, we renew our commitment always to fight for human dignity and freedom, and we send out a message that the world can never allow genocide to be perpetrated again.

Even as we remember the tragedy and honor the dead, we also honor the living. Out of the ashes of their history, Armenians all across the world have clung to their identity and have prospered in new communities. Their strength and perseverance is a triumph of the human spirit, which refuses to cede victory to evil. The best retort to the perpetrators of oppression and destruction is rebirth, renewal, and rebuilding. Armenians throughout the world have done just that, and today they do it in their homeland as well. A free and independent Armenia stands today as a living monument to the resilience of a people. I am proud that the United States, through our friendship and assistance, is contributing to the rebuilding and renewal of Armenia.

Let us never forget the victims of the Armenian genocide; let their deaths not be in vain. We must remember their tragedy to ensure that such crimes can never be repeated. And as we remember Armenia's dark past, we can look with hope to its future, which is bright with possibility.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to