

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, never has a bill been so misrepresented and trashed as has the patent bill. The effort to demonize this bill has not contributed to our debate, but has only misled Members who do not and should not be expected to understand the intricacies of the complex patent laws.

Following our debate last week, a Member was quoted as saying Mr. ROHRBACHER's bill helps the little guy while H.R. 400 only helps big business. I asked him how he reached that conclusion, and he replied that is what the opponents of H.R. 400 told me to say. That is his explanation.

This typifies the type of reasoning that has surrounded this debate. We defeated the Rohrabacher amendment last week. We are not yet finished. Help us defeat the amendments today, pass H.R. 400, and bring the United States patent system into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, later today we will finish consideration of an omnibus patent bill, H.R. 400, which I have attempted to shepherd through this body. While I believe we will pass the measure without weakening amendments, I feel compelled to address the manner by which the bill has been criticized since its introduction on January 9.

Never, in my years as a Congressman have I seen a piece of legislation so thoroughly misrepresented as to content and effect as has the patent bill. The effort to demonize this bill has not contributed to our debate; it has only served to mislead, confuse, and paralyze some Members who do not and should not be expected to understand all of the intricacies of a complex and arcane topic such as patent law. If we wait much longer, I anticipate that our detractors will attempt to convince the American public that I, as a lifetime member of the VFW, am conspiring with the other Bolsheviks down at the VFW Hall in Greensboro, NC, to destroy the United States and subvert her national economy.

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the chief opponent of H.R. 400 does not serve on either the subcommittee or full committee of jurisdiction. I dare say he has never sat on a panel charged with having knowledge of any intellectual property law.

Mr. Speaker, I implore my colleagues to bring our patent system into the 21st century by supporting H.R. 400 and rejecting the simplistic and distorted criticism that has surrounded the bill to date.

AGAINST MFN FOR CHINA

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, the question of MFN will be coming up. I urge Members to take a look at a recent poll done by the Weekly Standard which I will put in the RECORD. This is what Public Opinion Strategies said:

By an overwhelming margin of 61 to 29 percent, the American people oppose MFN for China. The other 10 percent did not know.

Sixty-one to twenty-nine percent.

The pollsters asked the respondents: "Do you support or oppose continuing most-favored-nation status with China?" Sixty-one percent to twenty-nine percent. That is all across the country, in every region, in all the cities, in the suburbs, on the farms, all political spectrum, men and women. The fact is even a greater percentage of women, 67 to 22 percent, oppose MFN.

Let us listen to the American people. The Chinese are persecuting Christians, they have Christians in jail, Catholic priests, Catholic bishops, evangelical pastors, persecuting Buddhists and Moslems, and yet this Congress and this administration is thinking of giving MFN for China.

I strongly urge Members to read the poll. The American people are aware. The Republican Party and the Democratic Party ought to be. Oppose MFN for China.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following editorial for the RECORD:

[From the Weekly Standard, April 28, 1997]

THE POLL NUMBERS ON CHINA: 61-29 AGAINST

The Washington debate over the Clinton administration's policy of appeasement—pardon us, "engagement"—toward China is heating up. It will get even warmer as July 1 nears, when Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty after 155 years as a British crown colony. And there'll be a full boil when Congress takes up the question of China's "most favored nation" status in American trade law. The fearsome let's-trade-with-Beijing lobby will twist the arms of congressmen to shut up about human rights and pass MFN. Wavering legislators will want to know: Where's the public on this nettlesome issue? Here's the answer.

At the Weekly Standard's request, the polling firm Public Opinion Strategies earlier this month reminded 800 Americans that the MFN designation "gives the Chinese full trading privileges with the United States." Then our pollsters posed a question that, if anything, bends over backwards in favor of engagement.

Some people support MFN "because they believe it will promote democracy and free markets in China and help the U.S. economy." Others want to suspend MFN "because China limits human rights, sells arms to Iran and pursues an aggressive foreign policy." So do our poll respondents "support or oppose continuing most favored nation status with China?"

The result: The American people oppose MFN, overwhelmingly, by 61 to 29 percent (the other 10 percent don't or gave no answer). They oppose it in every region of the country. They oppose it in the cities. They oppose it in the suburbs. They oppose it on the farm. White people oppose it. Black people oppose it. Republicans oppose it. Democrats oppose it. Rich people oppose it. Poor people oppose it. High-school dropouts oppose it. Ph.D.s oppose it. Married people oppose it. Single people oppose it. Clinton voters oppose it. Dole voters oppose it. Perot voters oppose it.

In other words, everyone opposes MFN. And interestingly enough, no one opposes MFN more than women do; by a whopping 45-point margin, 67 to 22 percent. So on this issue, President Clinton has a gender gap. He deserves it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. LEWIS of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. POMEROY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. KELLY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. KELLY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as my colleagues and I do every year at this time to join in remembrance and commemoration of one of the most horrible events of the 20th century and, in fact, in all of human history. That is the systematic extermination of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children during the final years of the Ottoman Turkish empire. This was the first genocide of the 20th century, a precursor to the Nazi Holocaust and the other cases of ethnic cleansing and mass extermination of peoples in our time in Bosnia and Central Africa and in other parts of the world.

We must, Mr. Speaker, call what happened to the Armenian people between the years 1915 and 1923 by its correct name, and that is genocide. Tomorrow, Thursday, April 24, marks the 82d anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. Armenian-Americans

throughout the United States and people of conscience everywhere are commemorating this event in various ways.

Our annual tradition of holding a special order here in the House of Representatives on or near the anniversary of the genocide is always a proud moment for this institution, a time where Members come together on a bipartisan basis to remember, to try to counter the indifference and the outright distortions of history. Yet, regrettably, I would say incredibly, the United States does not officially recognize the Armenian genocide. Bowing to strong pressure from Turkey, the U.S. State Department has, for more than 15 years, shied away from referring to the tragic events of 1915 to 1923 by the word "genocide."

Successive U.S. Presidents have annually issued proclamations on the anniversary of the genocide expressing sorrow for the massacres and solidarity with the victims and survivors, but always stopping short of using the word "genocide," thus minimizing and not accurately conveying what really happened beginning 82 years ago.

In the 1970's, the U.S. House passed a resolution officially recognizing the genocide, but it did not become law. In June 1996, just last year, during debate on the foreign operations appropriations bill, the House passed, by more than 300 votes in favor, an amendment withholding economic assistance to Turkey until and unless that country acknowledged the genocide. But again, that provision was removed in conference.

Today, there are some 30 countries from Australia to Russia to Lebanon that have adopted resolutions officially recognizing the Armenian genocide. When I speak to Armenian-American groups, many people are shocked to learn that the United States does not officially recognize the genocide. Armenian-Americans love this country and are very proud of the stands, the brave stands that we have taken throughout our history. Many people, Armenian-Americans and people of other ethnic backgrounds, probably just naturally assume that the United States, usually at the forefront of defending human rights and the cause of confronting history head on, including the difficult parts of history, that we would have been in the lead in this effort to remember the past. The fact that we have failed to go on record proclaiming the truth about the Armenian genocide must be rectified.

The United States should go on record clearly and unambiguously recognizing the Armenian genocide in setting aside April 24 as a day of remembrance. To that end, I urge renewed effort on the part of Congress to pass a resolution that puts the United States firmly on record on the side of the truth, and I pledge to keep up the pressure on the President to call the genocide by its proper name.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more comments that I would like to make about

the genocide this evening, but I would like now, if I could, to yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MCGOVERN], who has joined me on many occasions on the floor on Special Orders, and I am very pleased to see him here tonight on this occasion.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey for organizing this time so that we might come together in remembrance of this terrible chapter in human history.

While there are some nations that object to the term "genocide," what took place in Armenia between the years of 1915 and 1923 was exactly that, a genocide. Whole communities were wiped off the face of the map. Over 1.5 million men, women, and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured, and exterminated by the Ottoman government of Turkey.

What happened in those years was more than just a series of massacres carried out by the Turkish Government during a time of instability, revolution, and war. It was the first example of genocide of the 20th century, a precursor to the Nazi Holocaust and the other cases of ethnic cleansing and massive extermination that have so haunted our times.

With the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe during the 1920's and 1930's and the outbreak of World War II, the genocide perpetrated against the people of Armenia was largely forgotten. It has often been said that Adolph Hitler, when planning the Nazi strategy of extermination of the Jews that culminated in the final solution, remarked, who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians? Well, we remember, and we must always remember. Forgetting history not only dishonors the victims and the survivors, it encourages tyrants to believe that they can kill with impunity.

Most of the survivors of the Armenian genocide have now passed away, while the few who are still living are very old now.

□ 1930

Their sons and their daughters, their grandchildren and great grandchildren, will continue to speak out about their family's history and tragedy. It is out of respect for them that we add our voices here today on the floor of the U.S. Congress. It is with great sorrow and with a sense of disbelief that I find the United States has yet to recognize the Armenian genocide.

There are official statements each year observing the massacres that took place at the beginning of the century, but for reasons of political expedience, and bowing to Turkish pressure, the United States has never recognized these mass exterminations as genocide, this in spite of the fact that the U.S. National Archives, which is right here in Washington, DC, holds the most comprehensive documentation in the world on the Armenian genocide.

Some 30 nations, from Australia to Russia to Lebanon, have adopted reso-

lutions officially recognizing the Armenian genocide. The United States should go on record clearly and unambiguously recognizing the Armenian genocide, and setting aside April 24 as a day of remembrance.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 55 that honors the victims of the Armenian genocide and calls upon the United States to recognize the genocide and encourage the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge and commemorate the atrocity committed against the Armenian population from 1915 to 1923.

As a Member of the National Caucus on Armenian Issues formed in 1995 by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] and our colleague, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER], I am committed to being a voice for a stronger partnership between the United States and the Armenia of today.

But the gentleman from New Jersey also brought us together this evening not only to remember the past, but to praise the spirit and contributions of Armenian-Americans who are integral members of our cities and communities. The gentleman from New Jersey may not be aware that the first Armenian community in the United States was established at the end of the 19th century in the city of Worcester, in what is now the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts, which I have the privilege of representing. The very first Armenian church was built in Worcester. So the history of my district and the history of the Armenian people in America are deeply linked.

That history continues today, for operating just outside the town of Franklin, MA, in the center of my district, is the Armenian Youth Federation Summer Camp, where for the past 40 summers over 500 Armenian young people from across the country come together in fellowship.

There are 1,400 Armenian families in the Third Congressional District in Massachusetts, active members in the communities of Worcester, Shrewsbury, Holden, Westborough, Franklin, Medway, and elsewhere. They are involved in supporting the educational institutions of the district, an issue that is a high priority for me in my work here in the U.S. Congress. They have made their mark in business, the professions, and the arts. We are all enriched by their presence.

It is on their behalf that I have come here today to remember and to honor the past, to praise and respect the courage of the present, and to make a commitment to work for a better future for all Armenians.

I just want to again thank the gentleman from New Jersey for allowing me to have this opportunity, and thank him for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the gentleman from Massachusetts, and I know that the Armenian community is a very large one in Massachusetts and continues to grow. Basically, I think in

many ways it was the first State that really did have a large Armenian community, so I thank the gentleman for joining us tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to report some good news on this issue. That is that on Monday, just this past Monday, April 21, the California General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide, as well as the more recent anti-Armenian pogroms committed in Azerbaijan.

Assemblyman Howard Kaloogian, a Republican representing north San Diego, authored the resolution and guided its passage through the legislature of that State. I know members of the California delegation will be joining this special order today, and I know they are very proud of their State today because of what happened with this resolution.

I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN].

Mr. HORN. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Speaker, and particularly for his initiative in getting this hour for a number of us to speak to the terrible, sad history that has been suffered by the Armenians from the Turks.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to this House floor again, along with the gentleman from New Jersey and many other colleagues, to remember the 82d anniversary of the beginning of the massacre that would ultimately claim over 1½ million Armenian dead, and untold suffering by those who came after them.

I have followed the history, both distant and recent, of Armenia for many years. Mr. Speaker, out of personal interest and as a result of my interactions with many fine individuals who are members of the American-Armenian community in Long Beach and Fresno, CA, I have had a long-held interest in this matter.

It is particularly sad for me that this House must gather year after year to commemorate this tragic event and to secure recognition in memory for it, and press for the acknowledgment of this terrible tragedy and shameful place in history by Turkey.

Unfortunately, the sad history of this massacre that took place in Turkey so many years ago is often overlooked. This leaves the historical reality of the plight of the Armenian people vulnerable to efforts to minimize or even deny the terror that was unleashed against their ancestors, unleashed in the first decade and a half of this century.

Because the events 82 years ago are so distant, this House is very right to draw the attention of the Nation to it. But it must be even more forceful, and the U.S. Government, through its diplomatic efforts, should pressure the government of Turkey to admit the role that their predecessors many years ago at that time played in this assault.

The continued denial by the Turkish government, our ally in NATO, of this

massacre, and that it occurred on its soil, and that Turks were actively involved, only serves to denigrate the memory of those who died and those who suffered and those who suffer today, thinking of their ancestors.

As a nation we must not forget the sad history of a larger power unleashed on a vigorous and creative people to obliterate their whole culture. The Armenian massacre is among the most terrible chapters of the 21st century, along with what Stalin did, along with what Mao did, along with what Hitler did, along with what Pol Pot did in Cambodia.

This House must remain vigilant to the efforts of historical revisionism and the attempt to make de minimis, as the lawyers would say, this terrible tragedy when 1.5 million Armenians were killed and many others maimed and wounded, or else we should be faced with the prospect of witnessing this type of tragedy again.

I hope that those who want to be members of the European Community, those who want to continue in NATO, will admit what those that came before them did, just as this Nation has admitted its mistakes in both slavery, how black Americans have been treated, how Indian Americans have been treated, how Hispanic-Americans have been treated, and how the Japanese-Americans in the Second World War were treated.

This Nation's greatness is because we have the capacity to say we were wrong, our ancestors were wrong, and we try to do something about it to remedy what has been left of this proud colony of vigorous people.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] for the statement that he made, and again, his State just this past week passed this resolution commemorating and recognizing the genocide for what it is, and certainly everyone in California can be proud of that fact. I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentleman from California mentioned, and I would like to reiterate again, the problem, or certainly one of the most serious problems we face, is the fact that Turkey goes right on denying that the genocide ever took place.

Yesterday my office received, as I am sure many other offices did, a document from the Turkish Democracy Foundation. This document repeats the well-worn claims that the genocide did not happen, or that the number of victims is overstated, or that relocation of a certain portion of the population was limited, et cetera, et cetera.

The document concludes, and I will quote: "The U.S. Congress is not the proper place to discuss historically controversial issues, and it should not pass historical judgments."

I would like to say right now on the floor, with all due respect to the Turkish Democracy Foundation, I would say that the Congress is the proper place to discuss the genocide, as well as class-

rooms and civic organizations and religious institutions throughout this country. We must not deny the truth. Our responsibility on the floor is to make sure that the truth is told, and told over and over again, so that genocide does not occur again. That is the point we need to make.

Just to give some facts, again, and these are simple, documented facts, on April 24 of 1915 some 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders from Constantinople or Istanbul were arrested and exiled in one fell swoop, silencing the leading representatives of the Armenian community in the Ottoman capital. This was the symbolic beginning of the genocide, the occasion we commemorate tonight.

But over the years from 1915 to 1923, as the gentleman mentioned, there were over 1.5 million men, women and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured and exterminated by the government of the Young Turk Committee. The deportations and killings finally ended with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, although efforts to erase all traces of the Armenian presence in the area continued.

After years of imprisonment, slave labor, acts of torture and 1.5 million murders, the Turks tried to erase the evidence of the Armenian presence in the region by changing place names and destroying Armenian culture and religious monuments. But this entire shameful and appalling period of history meets every definition of the term "genocide."

Turkey has to come to terms with its past. After all, Mr. Speaker, Turkey is a member of NATO. The gentleman from California mentioned that it is a member of NATO, a defense alliance that was basically set up to defend freedom. Many of our NATO allies, as well as some of the eastern and central European nations moving toward NATO membership, have very painful and horrible aspects of their history, in some cases very recent history. But some have done a better job than others in confronting their past. Turkey, at least at the official level, has made no attempt to face up to the truth. Those independent Turkish voices that have tried to tell the truth have been intimidated into silence.

Mr. Speaker, I mention this again only because there is such merit in the fact that, for example, in the case of Nazi Germany, that the German Government recognized that the Holocaust took place. They give reparations for the Holocaust. They commemorate the Holocaust. They put up memorials to the Holocaust. That makes such a difference in terms of the Jewish people, to recognize that the German Government acknowledges that this took place and it was a terrible thing. When Turkey refuses to acknowledge it, it is almost as if the genocide continues to occur, because the government officially will not recognize it.

Mr. HORN. If the gentleman will continue to yield, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned it was the Turkish Democracy Foundation.

Mr. PALLONE. Yes.

Mr. HORN. They seem to feel that over 8 years, as the gentleman mentioned, from 1915 to 1923, that 1.5 million Armenians must have committed suicide. Of course, that is nonsense.

Mr. PALLONE. I think the gentleman is right. I am not saying that they do not acknowledge that some people were killed, but they refuse to acknowledge the numbers, certainly, and they refuse to acknowledge there was any systematic effort to kill people in the nature of a genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Of course, the fact that they are willing to say that a few people were murdered or a few people were involved in some conflict is simply not acceptable. That is not what happened. This was a systematic effort at the government level by the Ottoman Empire to exterminate a whole people.

Mr. HORN. Exactly.

Mr. PALLONE. If I could just say, I just want to say that in January I had the opportunity to go to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and visited the genocide Memorial Museum, which was a really amazing place and really valuable to just be there to see it.

But when I went into the museum, which is actually still being completed, it was almost embarrassing, because I went through a particular room where they had collected the various countries, and there are 30 now, that have recognized the genocide. The director of the museum, who was a wonderful man who basically, you know, made this his life ambition, to continue and complete this museum, sort of under his breath said, you know, the United States does not recognize the genocide, even though Russia and so many other countries have.

It was really embarrassing to think that our country, the bastion of freedom, has not recognized the genocide when some of the other countries did, including Russia as one of the ones that did.

The other thing was, it goes back to what we were saying before about the Turkish Government recognition. They are in the process of constructing in the museum a sort of memorial that looks like a court. In other words, it is in the round, and in the center is basically where the judge would sit, and then on each of the walls of this round room they have a testimony from eyewitness accounts, contemporary eyewitness accounts, of what occurred, including one from the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time, Henry Morgenthau.

□ 1945

He testified, repeating what actually happened, that it was genocide and what occurred. It was explained to me, but it needed no explanation, that this is their idea, the Armenian idea of the Nuremburg trial.

In other words, that in the case of Germany and the Jewish Holocaust, trials were held and the people were brought to justice that in some, not all of them, but some of them who had perpetrated this crime. But in the case of Armenia, the Armenian genocide, no trial took place.

So in a sense the museum is creating the trial using contemporary documents and eyewitness accounts. It just brought home again how important and how valuable from a cleansing point of view, if nothing else, it is to have a trial or have a public pronouncement by the government or the perpetrators that this took place and that we still do not have in the case of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I would hope we would draft a bipartisan bill that would solve that problem.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, we have. There is legislation that has actually been introduced by the gentleman from California [Mr. RADANOVICH], I believe, and the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] on a bipartisan basis and obviously we would like to get that moved. I think we are moving in that direction with what we do tonight and with other actions and statements by our colleagues.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, let me, if I may, I wanted to just elaborate a little more, if I could, on why we attach such significance to insisting that the world community, including the United States, recognize the tragedy of the genocide and call it by its proper name.

As I said, Turkey stubbornly maintains its disgraceful policy of denying that the genocide we solemnly remember today ever took place, despite the lack of factual or historical basis for Turkey's denial. From the eyewitness accounts of journalists and diplomats on the scene to the eloquent and horrifying testimony of the survivors, the historic record is clear: that in the name of Turkish nationalistic ideology, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire conceived, planned and executed a program to eliminate ethnic minorities. The primary victims of this cruel policy were the Armenians. At that time the word "genocide" had not been coined but genocide is what it was. And I said there were no Nuremburg trials.

There has been no official atonement by the Turkish nation, and statements by me and other Members of Congress about the Armenian genocide are routinely met with contemptuous responses by Turkey's ambassador to the United States. But the denials of the revisionists fly in the face of the preponderance of evidence from American and other Western diplomats, from journalists on scene and from the survivors themselves, many of whom are still alive and some of whom are American citizens.

The U.S. National Archives holds the most comprehensive documentation in the world on this historic tragedy, more than 30,000 pages. Formal protests were made by the U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, and Congress approved of allowing a private relief agency to raise funds in the United States. American consular officials and private aid workers secretly housed Armenians, distributed aid and helped in their escape to other nations during the years from 1915 to 1923, and many times these Americans acted at great personal risk to themselves and in direct defiance of Turkish orders not to help the Armenians.

We have to continue to persuade the leaders of the Republic of Turkey, a country that receives hundreds of millions of dollars each year in U.S. aid, to officially acknowledge the truth. As one way to make amends, Turkey should immediately lift its blockade of Armenia and accept the Armenian government's offer to normalize relations without preconditions. I believe that these steps would ultimately be in Turkey's long-term interest as well. By doing the right thing and accepting historical responsibility and improving relations with the nation of Armenia, Turkey can help its own cause in terms of gaining admission to the European community and recognition in other historical forums.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California [Mr. SHERMAN].

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide, one of the most tragic events of this century and, of course, the first genocide of this century.

During the years 1915 to 1923, between a million and a half and 2 million Armenians who were citizens of the Ottoman Empire died as a result of a concerted effort to annihilate the Armenian population. This genocide is an undeniable fact. It is time for the Turkish government to recognize history and to apologize, not only to the Armenian community but to humanity as a whole.

I want to bring to my colleagues' attention a statement which the Holocaust Council issued in 1987 on the inclusion of the Armenian genocide in the U.S. Holocaust memorial museum, because I think it speaks volumes about the need to commemorate, to recognize and to remember the first genocide of this century.

That statement read: The genocide of the Armenian citizens of the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923 will have a place in the U.S. Holocaust museum and its library. The fate of Armenians should be included in any discussion of genocide in the 20th century.

I also want to bring to the attention of my colleagues perhaps the most famous statement uttered about the Armenian genocide, and that was the comment made by Adolf Hitler when he reached the conclusion that history would forgive him if he engaged in the genocide he was planning. He stated,

who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?

Mr. Speaker, we here today speak of the annihilation.

That is why we insist, we must insist that this body remember once again the Armenian genocide as one of the most important events of this century. The mistakes made by the west in reaction to that event or failure to react led in at least part to the annihilation of 6 million Jews and millions of others in the rest of this century.

That is why I hope that before a single dime of American taxpayer dollars are spent in aid to Turkey, that Ankara must, among other things, recognize the Armenian genocide. There is a tendency to view history as something only of relevance to the past. But those who forget history or those who refuse to acknowledge history are doomed to repeat it.

Today Turkey is not engaged in genocide against Armenians, but it is engaged in trying to strangle the Republic of Armenia by not allowing even humanitarian supplies to pass to this landlocked country. I note with regret that the State Department a few days ago informed those of us who are members of the House Committee on International Relations that once again it would waive the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. It is time for this act to carry out its purpose. It is time for Congress to evaluate whether Turkey should be given impunity to continue to blockade Armenia.

When Congress passed the act involving humanitarian aid corridors, we were serious. And I look forward in future meetings of the Committee on International Relations to trying to put some teeth in that act, to give Congress the right to review whether or not it is really necessary for our security that we waive that act again and again.

With that, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. PALLONE. I thank the gentleman from California.

He specifically mentioned the appropriation process and some of the provisions that the Armenia caucus, which the gentleman is a member of and that I am a member of, some of the things that we are trying to accomplish. It is sort of ironic in a way or coincidence that tomorrow, April 24, is not only the anniversary of the genocide but also the day when the appropriations subcommittee on foreign affairs or foreign operations is going to meet, and that has been, that subcommittee and the bill that comes to the floor has been the vehicle in the past for us to make a point on a number of issues.

The gentleman mentioned the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, which has been one of the main pieces of legislation that the caucus has worked on in the last few years. It really makes perfect sense.

Here all we are really saying is that if one country, in this case it happens to be Turkey, but it could be any coun-

try, accepts U.S. assistance, they have to allow humanitarian assistance that the U.S. is providing to its neighbor to pass through that first country's borders.

I cannot imagine anyone, I cannot imagine any American who would think that it would be possible for a country that receives American assistance to deny safe passage of humanitarian assistance through its borders to another country. I think if we told any of our constituents that the U.S. government allowed that first country to deny access, they would be outraged. Yet not only is that done routinely by Turkey through its blockade, but when we passed the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, we see year after year the administration coming forward and waiving it and saying, for national security reasons, whatever the reasons they gave, I thought were rather poor, it is okay to waive this corridor act and allow Turkey to blockade humanitarian assistance to Armenia. It just totally flies in the face of any notion of humanitarian assistance or human rights.

Mr. SHERMAN. I think that perhaps some in the State Department are victims of continuing Cold War thinking. We are no longer engaged in a giant chess game against the evil empire of the Soviet Union. Certainly when we emerge as the sole superpower, that is the status that we will enjoy only so long as the world regards the United States as a bastion of decency and morality in foreign policy.

Never in the history of the world has the rest of the world acquiesced to one country emerging as the sole superpower. It has happened in various regions. It has happened in the world before, but never with acquiescence.

The reason we are trusted to play the role we play in the world is because we are, yes, we are concerned and I think perhaps should be even more concerned with our own national interest, but we also are guided by morality. And for us to ignore the strangulation of both economic and humanitarian aid that Turkey is imposing on Armenia is actually harmful to our national security interests because it calls into question the foundation, the ideological foundation that allows us to be the only world superpower.

Another factor that I think is important, every time I go back to my district, and I was just there earlier today, people are concerned with how effectively our money is spent. They are willing to see the U.S. government do things that are good but only if the money is spent effectively.

When we have an international aid program which aids Turkey on the one hand and allows Turkey to prevent the aid program from being effective, when the recipient is also the obstructor, then how do we go back to our districts and say we are paying for air freight into Yerevan because we cannot truck things through Turkey and at the same time we are spending money to provide aid to Turkey.

What we need to do is insist that those who receive aid from the United States not prevent our aid programs around the world from being effective.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments. I also wanted to make reference, I know that I was at the international relations subcommittee, one of the subcommittee hearings that the gentleman was a member of when we talked about trying to provide some assistance to Nagorno-Karabagh. I know the gentleman made reference to that.

Again, if I could just mention that, and perhaps you would like to comment as well, right now under the Freedom Support Act, section 907, there is no direct assistance to Azerbaijan, no direct U.S. assistance, because they also have a blockade of Armenia. So Armenia is really effectively blockaded on almost all sides between Turkey and Azerbaijan. However, the U.S. continues to provide humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan through nongovernmental organizations.

Unfortunately, none of that assistance goes to Nagorno-Karabagh. Nagorno-Karabagh is an Armenian country, between Azerbaijan and Armenia, that fought a war of independence about 5 years ago, successfully, and is in the midst of trying to gain recognition by Azerbaijan and Turkey and other countries of its existence.

And I was there in January at the same time that I went to Armenia. I will say, as I have said, that the humanitarian needs are great and there is absolutely no reason why the U.S. should provide nongovernmental assistance, if you will, to one side in this conflict, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh, when the need is just as great, if not greater.

□ 2000

So one of the things that we are trying to do this year is to provide some humanitarian assistance, probably through nongovernmental organizations, to Nagorno-Karabagh.

I know the gentleman at that hearing was very supportive of that and I appreciate that, and I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SHERMAN. As a matter of fact, I think it is very important that if we are going to provide aid to that region of the world that we provide it to the one part of that region that has been wracked by warfare, and that is Nagorno-Karabagh. If there is any part of the Caucasus that needs our help, that is an area that should be receiving our help.

Indeed, a portion of the aid that we provide to that region should go through nongovernmental organizations to the people of Nagorno-Karabagh, and I will be working with the Armenians Issues Caucus and others, both in the committee and here on the floor, to make sure we provide that aid.

Also at that same committee hearing I was more than a bit surprised and

certainly not impressed when I saw that the administration's plan for aid to the Newly Independent States, the states of the former Soviet Union, anticipated that going from 1997 to 1998 they would increase aid to Azerbaijan by \$15 million and decrease aid to Armenia by \$15 million.

Now, they assured me that that figure was a mere coincidence, but whether it is a coincidence or a plan, it can certainly be reversed. One way to deal with it, of course, is to simply not increase aid to Azerbaijan, a country that, as the gentleman points out, continues to blockade Armenia on the other side, with Azerbaijan on one side and Turkey on the other, to certainly not go along with the administration's plan to increase aid, but to use that increment of dollars to provide aid to the people of Nagorno-Karabagh.

I hope that we would move in that direction and will be suggesting that to my colleagues not only here but in writing as well.

Mr. PALLONE. There is no question that there is a need for humanitarian assistance to Nagorno-Karabagh, and I have to say that I saw that firsthand. And I think the bottom line is that the United States policy needs to be more evenhanded. It does not make sense to say we are going to give money through the nongovernmental organizations to Azerbaijan and not to Nagorno-Karabagh.

The other thing I wanted to say, if the gentleman would bear with me, is having been to Karabagh, and of course our caucus has brought this up on a bipartisan basis many, many times, the concern, the need I should say, for the United States to play a larger role in trying to bring a peaceful settlement to Nagorno-Karabagh.

Obviously, there has been a cease-fire now in effect between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh for a few years, and overall it has held. Although there was an incident last week where Azerbaijan did violate the cease-fire and there were some people actually killed, which was certainly unfortunate, but, overall, the cease-fire has held. But there needs to be a peaceful settlement of this conflict and I believe very strongly the only way that that will occur is if the United States plays an important role.

Earlier this year the United States agreed to be the cochair of the MINS group, as it is called, which is a group of nations that are trying to come to a peaceful settlement with regard to Nagorno-Karabagh. But, unfortunately, the United States really has not played a major role in trying to come to a peaceful settlement.

In fact, I thought that the United States' position that it took back in late 1996, where the United States signed onto this Lisbon Accord, where they recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, thereby assuming that Nagorno-Karabagh was part of Azerbaijan, but at the same time did not recognize Nagorno-Karabagh's self-determination.

And we know there are two principles in international law, territorial integrity and self-determination. The United States was clearly siding with the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and not the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabagh.

We need to turn that around and then the United States has to be an advocate for Nagorno-Karabagh's self-determination and then be willing to play a more significant role.

We have seen the President, for example, get involved in the Bosnia situation, in the Dayton accords, we have seen the President play a major role in the Mideast, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the same type of role needs to be played, I think personally by the President, but certainly to not continue this policy of not recognizing or not promoting Karabagh's self-determination.

I bring this back again to the genocide issue because one of the things that was certainly brought home to me when I was in Nagorno-Karabagh is the fact that the history of what has occurred in that region of the world not only at the time of the genocide between 1915 and 1923, but certainly before and after makes it almost impossible for people who are Armenian, who live in Nagorno-Karabagh, to think that they can ever be protected or ever have any kind of security if they live under the suzerainty of Azerbaijan.

I met a woman outside of Yerevan who was a refugee, and really a victim of three genocides. She was basically deported or had to escape from western Armenia at the time of the 1915 genocide; she went to Sush, which is a town, a religious center, in Karabagh, and was expelled or deported from there a few years later; then she ended up in Baku, which is the capital of Azerbaijan, and she was about 5 or 6 years ago she was expelled and deported from there and ended up in Yerevan.

So there are people who in the course of their lives have been the victims of deportation or genocide on many occasions. They are never going to accept the notion that somehow they are part of Azerbaijan or that they can live peaceably under the suzerainty of Azerbaijan.

That is why I believe very strongly that the United States has to recognize that fact. We cannot have another genocide in Karabagh, so the speak, and the only way we will make sure it does not happen is if we play a major role in trying to bring about a peaceful settlement.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SHERMAN. I agree with the gentleman that one of the crowning glories of the second term of the administration of President Clinton would be to work for peace and achieve peace in the Caucasus. There is always a conflict between the concept of territorial integrity and the concept of self-determination, and when we look at the concept of self-determination we see that

that allows people to live under the government of their own choice.

Our own country was born, perhaps the world's greatest exercise of the concept of self-determination, our own Declaration of Independence, and we set forth in that declaration some standards that ought to be applied. Because when you render a country apart, when you change borders, the whole world can be affected.

We talked about the injustices imposed upon us by King George III. But they seem somewhat pale compared to the pogroms, compared to the aggression and the expulsions that the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabagh has had to suffer over the last decade. Certainly if we made the case for self-determination, Nagorno-Karabagh has as well.

But also the argument for territorial integrity. There are borders and there are borders. The borders of Azerbaijan were drawn by Joseph Stalin for the purpose of dividing the Armenian people and placing Nagorno-Karabagh not for any logical reason except mischief, except division, except to deliberately cause peoples to be at conflict with each other.

If there was ever a border that should not be given a lot of respect by the international community, it is a border drawn by Joseph Stalin for the purpose of oppressing peoples in the Caucasus. And when we weigh territorial integrity, where the integrity is a Joseph Stalin border and the right of self-determination for a people who have suffered, I think in ways that our Founding Fathers did not, the scales certainly are in the direction of recognizing the rights of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh.

Mr. PALLONE. If I could, I think maybe we have another 5 or 10 minutes in our special order, and I just wanted to take this opportunity, if I could, to mention that although we, the Members of the House, are doing this commemoration this evening, many Members, yourself, myself and other Members of the House and Senate will take part in a Capitol Hill commemoration ceremony that is organized by the Armenian National Committee next Wednesday, April 30.

I wanted at this time, Mr. Speaker, to cite the work of both the great organizations representing the Armenian American community here in D.C., the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee, and they both deserve praise for their continued hard work and dedication to both Armenia and the United States.

The gentleman from California did mention the caucus, and if I could just say something briefly about the caucus. Two-and-a-half years ago Congressman PORTER and myself founded the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues basically to be a voice for a stronger United States-Armenia partnership and to better represent the interests of the Armenian American community. We now have 55 members.

There is a lot of sympathy and moral support for Armenia in the Congress and the administration, among State legislators. Your own State I mentioned earlier passed a resolution recognizing the genocide just earlier this week, I believe. But the bottom line is we cannot kid ourselves. We are up against very strong forces.

Unfortunately, the State Department, I believe, continues to take a basically pro-Turkey policy or adhere to a very pro-Turkey policy, and among United States and international business interests whose concerns with profits and sources of raw material often outweigh their concerns for the people of Armenia. So we have to constantly work against some of these others that are out there not really standing up for the concerns of Armenia and the concerns of the people of Karabagh.

In closing today, if I could just say one thing. Obviously, there is a need to pay particular tribute to the survivors of the genocide. I was in Michigan, actually, over the weekend at a commemoration service and there were many survivors there, I would say maybe about 15 or so people who survived the genocide. Of course, they are usually in their late eighties or nineties, or even 100, and one of the gentlemen actually gave me a book that he signed that talked about his whole eye witness account of the years 1915 through 1923. And it really was amazing to talk to someone who could directly explain what went on then. But of course there are thousands of accounts like that in the archives, in the U.S. archives and around the world.

I just wanted to mention, if I could, that we had many Members of Congress here tonight who wanted to join in this special order but because of the schedule, everything was a little crazy this evening. I think we have about 15 or 20 statements to submit for the RECORD.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to join my colleagues today in remembering the tragedy endured by the Armenian people in the years 1915–23.

Extensive massacres of Armenians took place during that period in eastern Anatolia plains in an atmosphere akin to a horrible civil war. Those events have indelibly and permanently marked the consciousness of many Americans, including Americans of Armenian descent, who are commemorating April 24, 1997, as a national day of remembrance of man's inhumanity to man and a special day of remembrance for the Armenian victims of strife in the early years of this century.

April 24 marks the 82d anniversary of the calamity. It is appropriate on this occasion to direct our attention and prayers to the memory of the vast number of victims who died in these tragic events.

It is in the interest of all of us and in the interest of mankind that this type of tragedy not occur again. The leading organizations of the Armenian-American community have been seeking to work within our political system for a statement concerning these critical events in their heritage.

The House of Representatives takes this occasion to honor the memory of the victims of

the massacres of Armenians. No one can deny these events and the centrality of these events in modern Armenian history. I am proud to be associated today with my colleagues on this important day of remembrance.

I would also like to salute the Republic of Armenia, and urge it to move forward in its democratic and economic reforms. Americans have an interest in the economic development of Armenia, its progress toward a free market economy, and its development of democratic institutions. We want to work with Armenia and its neighbors to insure peace, stability, and progress in their search for greater freedom and security. There is no better way to honor the misdeeds of the past than rededicating ourselves to a better future.

Today in Europe, we have a chance to advance the cause of peace and stability more vigorously and on a wider scale than ever before. I salute all governments, private organizations, and individuals, including the Armenians, who are working toward this end. I hope that their efforts will make the world a safer place, where innocent people no longer suffer the unspeakable crimes of war and terror.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 82d anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an act of mass murder that took 1.5 million Armenian lives and led to the exile of the Armenian nation from its historic homeland.

It is of vital importance that we never forget what happened to the Armenian people. Indeed the only thing we can do for the victims is to remember, and we forget at our own peril.

The Armenian Genocide, which began 15 years after the start of the 20th century, was the first act of genocide of this century, but it was far from the last. The Armenian Genocide was followed by the Holocaust, Stalin's purges, and other acts of mass murder around the world.

Adolf Hitler himself said that the world's indifference to the slaughter in Armenia indicated that there would be no global outcry if he undertook the mass murder of Jews and others he considered less than human. And he was right. It was only after the Holocaust that the cry "never again" arose throughout the world. But it was too late for millions of victims. Too late for the 6 million Jews. Too late for the 1.5 million Armenians.

Today we recall the Armenian Genocide and we mourn its victims. We also pledge that we shall do everything we can to protect the Armenian nation against further aggression; in the Republic of Armenia, in Nagorno-Karabagh, or anywhere else.

Unfortunately, there are some who still think it is acceptable to block the delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance around the world. Despite our success in including the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act in the foreign operations appropriations bills for the last 2 years, Azerbaijan has continued its blockade of United States humanitarian assistance to Armenia.

It is tragic that Azerbaijan's tactics have denied food and medicine to innocent men, women, and children in Armenia, and created thousands of refugees. The United States must stand firm against any dealings with Azerbaijan until it ends this immoral blockade. We must make clear that warfare and blockades aimed at civilians are unacceptable as means for resolving disputes.

Mr. Speaker, after the Genocide, the Armenian people wiped away their tears and cried out, "Let us never forget. Let us always remember the atrocities that have taken the lives of our parents and our children and our neighbors."

As the Armenian-American author William Saroyan wrote, "Go ahead, destroy this race * * * Send them from their homes into the desert * * * Burn their homes and churches. Then see if they will not laugh again, see if they will not sing and pray again. For, when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia."

I rise today to remember those cries and to make sure that they were not uttered in vain. The Armenian nation lives. We must do everything we can to ensure that it is never imperiled again.

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to commemorate the 82d anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

April 24, 1915, marks the symbolic beginning of the campaign to extinguish the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire. Over the course of nine long years, 1,500,000 Armenian men, women and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured, or exterminated. Another 500,000 had to flee their homes, some coming here to the United States. It is imperative, therefore, that we, as the elected representatives of the people of the United States, recognize and commemorate the Genocide of the Armenian people.

Some today deny that the Armenian genocide ever occurred. Not only is there a preponderance of evidence to prove that it did, but there are a number of survivors, and children of survivors, who are living testaments to the horrors of the past. Our own National Archives holds more than 30,000 pages of documentation on this historic tragedy. With this overwhelming evidence, we cannot continue to allow the truth to be denied. Forgetting the past not only deprives us of the lessons that it has to teach, but it also shows a disrespect for the people who had to live it.

It is also incumbent upon us, on the anniversary of the Armenian genocide, to speak out about the messages of hate and bigotry on the rise in this country. As we have learned in this country and witnesses abroad several times this century, hate must not be allowed to grow unchecked. We must continue to denounce messages of hate and bigotry and promote tolerance within our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think you for the opportunity to remember this tragic episode in world history.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian-Americans, I rise today to join my colleagues in the sad commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

First, I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER], co-chairs of the caucus, for all of their hard work on this issue and other issues of human rights.

April 24, 1997 marks the 82nd anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. It was on that day in 1915 that over 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested and subsequently murdered in central Turkey.

This date marks the beginning of an organized campaign by the "Young Turk" government to eliminate the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire. Over the next 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians died at the hands of the Turks, and a half million more were deported.

As the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., has written: "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race. They understood this well and made no particular attempt to conceal the fact."

As a supporter of human rights, I am appalled that the Turkish government is still refusing to acknowledge what happened and instead is attempting to rewrite history.

In a sense, even more dismaying than Turkey's denial is the willingness of some officials in our own government to join in rewriting the history of the Armenian Genocide. It is imperative that we do not let political agendas get in the way of doing the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, the issues surrounding the Armenian genocide should not go unresolved. I call upon the United States Government to demand complete accountability by the Turkish Government for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923. To heal the wounds of the past, the Turkish government must first recognize the responsibility of its country's leaders at that time for this catastrophe.

Nothing we can do or say will bring those who perished back to life, but we can imbue their memories with everlasting meaning by teaching the lessons of the Armenian genocide to future generations.

The noted philosopher, George Santayana, has taught us that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We should heed this wise principle and do all we can to ensure that the martyrdom of the Armenian people is not forgotten.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in this Special Order to commemorate the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Each year, I join Members of Congress from both sides of the political spectrum, representing areas from east coast to west coast to take part in this Special Order. We join together in this annual commemoration to bring awareness to a chapter in history so brutal and violent, that 75 years later, the Turkish Government still refuses to admit their involvement.

Each year, as I rise to pay tribute to over 1.5 million Armenians who were killed in this tragic event, I am amazed at how easily, and how well, the news of the Armenian genocide was squelched and then hidden. We all remember the now famous question posed by Adolf Hitler at the beginning of World War II—he said "Who remembers the Armenians." Well, citizens of the world, this is just the problem. When tragedies of this magnitude take place, it is our responsibility to ensure that the story does not get forgotten. Let us teach our children that we will not tolerate human tragedy of this nature. Instead, as our world grows smaller every day, we must learn to live together in a global village. We must discover and treasure the differences among peoples around the world. We must promote tolerance and understanding. Only then will we have peace. When we remember the Armenian genocide we send a strong message to our global community that violence born of hatred and fear is unacceptable.

The world has the responsibility to see that the crime of genocide does not go unpunished. Genocide cannot be allowed to be a policy of our international community. A crime unpunished and unrepented is a crime which can and will be repeated. Even today, as I speak, the present Turkish Government is enforcing a blockade of Armenia blocking American humanitarian assistance from reaching that country. This aid, supported by Congress, is prevented from being transported to Armenia by land. Such a violation of fundamental principles of humane conduct cannot be allowed to continue.

There are still living survivors of the Armenian genocide in my district, and the horror of this ordeal is forever etched in their collective memories. Every year survivors participate in commemoration ceremonies in Boston, Lowell, and other areas around the Merrimack Valley. The commemoration offers an opportunity to reach out to the public in hopes that the media, the educated public, and citizens around the world will not ignore—or will not forget the tragedy suffered by the Armenians at the hands of the Turkish empire.

I represent a large and active Armenian community in my district. They are hard working and proud of their heritage. As Representatives to the United States Congress, it is our duty to commemorate the Armenian genocide in the hope that future generations will never allow such a callous disregard for human rights to occur again.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our two cochairmen of the Caucus on Armenian Issues, Congressman PORTER of Illinois and Congressman PALLONE of New Jersey, for arranging this Special Order today.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Armenian-American community on this important occasion.

The annual commemoration of the Armenian genocide is indeed an occasion of sad remembrance for Armenian-Americans.

Over the years I have had the privilege of meeting and becoming friends with many Armenian-Americans who have lost relatives and friends in the tragic atrocities that began in 1915.

I can well understand their grief and deep-seated feelings about this terrible event.

There are others who have suffered from genocidal acts who know what it means to lose such loved ones.

While we look back with sadness on the events that took place more than 80 years ago, we are reminded of how such atrocities can come about—and reminded as well that we must continue to try to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to thank my colleagues for inviting me to join them in this Special Order.

As we look to the future, let us wish the Armenian people success and prosperity as they continue to build their country's independence from communist domination—an independence won just a few years ago.

An independent Armenia is the best guarantee that the terrible events that began 82 years ago will never be repeated.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues today in commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Eighty-two years ago, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire made a decision to attempt to

eliminate the Armenian people living under their rule. Between 1915 and 1923, nearly 1.5 million Armenian people died and another 500,000 were deported.

The purpose of this special order is really a dual one, and I thank the gentlemen from New Jersey and Illinois for organizing it. First and foremost, it is to show respect and remembrance to those Armenian people and their families who suffered during those 8 years at the beginning of this century. Secondly, we are here to recognize that if we are ever to witness a universal respect for human rights, we must begin by acknowledging the truth. And that is the fact that governments continue to commit atrocities against their own citizens while escaping the consequences of their actions, internally by means of repression and externally for reasons of political expediency.

The events that took place under the rule of the Ottoman Empire 82 years ago were real. Many people died and the results were, and still are, shocking. If we in the Congress continue to react with silence regarding these events and are unwilling to stand up and publicly condemn these terrible events, we effectively give our approval to abuses of power, such as the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, all of us participating in this special order today realize that silence can mean acceptance when it comes to human rights abuses. And now it is our responsibility to make sure that everyone who is not here today realizes that they too must speak out against human rights violations. Not just violations of the past, but also against violations which are occurring in our world today. We must let the truth about these events be known and continue to speak out against all instances of man's inhumanity to man.

Today nearly one million Armenians live in the U.S. They are a proud people who spent 70 years fighting Stalinist domination. Finally, in just the past 5 years, they have achieved freedom. But even that freedom will never allow them to forget the hardships suffered by their friends and families nearly a century ago, nor will they ever stop forcing us to recognize that these and similar acts must continue to be condemned by nations and people who hold the highest respect for human rights.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide. I am pleased to join my House colleagues on both sides of the aisle in remembering the terrible atrocities that were committed against the Armenian people earlier this century.

Despite the efforts of some, there is no denying that the Armenian genocide occurred. History is clear that the Ottoman Empire engaged in a systematic attempt to destroy the Armenian people and their culture. It started on April 24, 1915, when over 200 religious, political, and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community in Istanbul were brutally executed. By 1923, over half the world's Armenian population—an estimated 1.5 million men, women, and children—had been killed.

The Armenians are an ancient and proud people. In the fourth century, they became the first nation to embrace Christianity. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by an organization known as the Young Turk Committee and became allied with Germany. Amid fighting in the Ottoman Empire's eastern Anatolian provinces, the historic heartland of the Christian Armenians, Ottoman authorities

ordered the deportation and execution of all Armenians in the region. By the end of 1923, virtually the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and western Armenia had been either killed or deported.

Despite the well documented fact that over 1.5 million Armenian were killed and hundreds of thousands more were exiled from their homes, there are some who still choose to believe that the genocide did not take place. The U.S. National Archives contain numerous reports detailing the process by which the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire was systematically decimated. Further denial of the Armenian genocide by certain parties, either due to ignorance or malice, can only be seen as a misrepresentation of history and should be roundly condemned.

While it is important to remember the horrible facts of history in order to help comfort the survivors, we must also remain eternally vigilant in order to protect Armenia from new and more hostile aggressors. Even now, as we rise to commemorate the accomplishments of the Armenian people and mourn the tragedies they have suffered, Turkey and other countries are attempting to break Armenia's spirit by engaging in a debilitating blockade against this free nation.

Last year, I led the fight in the House of Representatives to free Armenia from Turkey's viscous blockade by offering an amendment to the fiscal year 1997 Foreign Operations appropriations bill. Under current law, U.S. economic assistance may not be given to any country that blocks humanitarian assistance from reaching another country. Despite the fact that Turkey has been blocking humanitarian aid for Armenia for many years, the President has used his waiver authority to keep economic assistance for Turkey intact. My amendment, which passed in the House by a bipartisan vote of 301 to 118, would have prevented the President from using waiver authority and would have cut off U.S. economic aid to Turkey unless it allowed humanitarian aid to reach Armenia. Unfortunately, my amendment was not included in the final version of the Foreign Operations appropriations bill and the Turkish blockade continues unabated.

I am proud to say that a strong and vibrant Armenian-American community thrives in my district in northwest Indiana. My predecessor in the House, the late Adam Benjamin, was of Armenian heritage, and northwest Indiana's strong ties to Armenia continues to flourish. Mrs. Vickie Hovanessian and her husband, Dr. Raffi Hovanessian, residents of Indiana's First Congressional District are two Armenian-Americans who have contributed greatly to the quality of life in Armenia, as well as to the Armenian-American community in northwest Indiana.

Although it has suffered greatly, Armenia is once again a strong, sovereign nation. Its people are determined to succeed, and I am proud of the steps that Armenia has made to promote democracy. It is my sincere hope that Armenia remains strongly committed to democratic ideals and that our two countries continue to remain close friends.

In closing, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOHN PORTER and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Their efforts will not only help to console the victims and their families, but also serve as a reminder to remain

vigilant in the fight to protect basic human rights and freedoms around the world.

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, in my long association with the Armenian-American community, I have become very familiar with their pain by the act of genocide—and the further pain caused by a continuing attempt to deny that this genocide ever took place.

From 1915 to 1923, 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured, and exterminated.

The Armenian genocide was the model for subsequent efforts of religious and ethnic annihilation. The infamous quote by Hitler—"Who, after all, remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"—which is prominently displayed in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, serves as chilling affirmation of this fact.

I am a proud cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 55, a resolution honoring the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide. As we reflect on the past, we must also take positive steps for the future of the men, women, and children of Armenia.

Therefore, I am currently circulating for signature a letter to President Clinton to express Congress' grave concerns regarding U.S. efforts to mediate a settlement in the conflict between Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan—to finally bring peace to that war-torn region.

This letter stresses that all U.S. humanitarian assistance should be provided to all people in the Caucasus region who need it, irrespective of ethnicity. To date over \$100 million in U.S. humanitarian assistance has been provided to Azerbaijan, despite that country's blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. But U.S. policy prohibits direct U.S. humanitarian assistance to the people of Nagorno-Karabagh, a discriminatory practice which must be stopped.

Finally, the letter protests the President's recent decision to waive the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. Last year, I worked hard with my colleagues to pass an amendment to the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill which would restrict the President's authority to waive the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act—a measure which I co-authored.

Last year the amendment passed in the House but was not signed into law. This year we must pass legislation to ensure that the President's ability to waive this measure is restricted, and we must ensure that this language is signed into law.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on one of the most appalling events in human history—the genocide of the Armenian people. I would like to thank Mr. PORTER of Illinois and Mr. PALLONE of New Jersey, the cochairs of the congressional caucus on Armenian issues, for holding this special order.

It shames and saddens me to say that the human race is no stranger to genocide—the great purges in Russia, during which Stalin methodically killed millions of Russians; the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews were systematically slaughtered by the Nazis; and less well known, but certainly just as significant, the Armenian genocide in which 1.5 million Armenians were exterminated by the Ottoman Turks. The number of people who died during this tragedy was almost equal to the entire population of Nevada.

I feel a special kinship to the Armenian people. As many of you know, I am a Greek-American, and my ancestors, too, suffered at the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

In fact, every March, I conduct a special order in this Chamber to commemorate Greek Independence Day. On that day, 176 years ago, the Greeks mounted a revolution which eventually freed them from the tyranny of the Ottoman Empire.

Unfortunately, the Armenians were not as fortunate as their Greek brothers and sisters. Between 1915 and 1923, 1½ million Armenians were murdered and hundreds of thousands were driven from their homes by the Ottoman Turks. They were people like you and me. People with families and friends, hopes and dreams and they were all destroyed by the Ottoman Turks.

Today, I want to acknowledge this dark moment in history and remember the Armenian people who tragically lost their lives. We in Congress must always remember tumultuous moments in history where people suffered because they were different. Of course, we all want to forget these horrific tragedies in our history and bury them in the past. However, it is only through the painful process of acknowledging and remembering that we can keep similar dark moments from happening in the future. In closing, I want to share a passage inscribed in the stone of Israel's National Holocaust Museum. "Forgetfulness leads to exile, while remembrance is the secret of redemption." We must never forget these words.

Mr. Speaker, this Sunday is Easter for the Christian orthodox faiths. It is a time for us to reflect on and to celebrate the glory of redemption. Hopefully, tonight many will hear our speeches and will take the time to remember those who lost their lives during the Armenian tragedy. By reflecting tonight on this sad event in history, I am hopeful that we are preventing similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, on April 24, 1915, 200 American political and intellectual leaders from Istanbul were arrested and exiled. This action had the effect of silencing the leading voices of the American community in the Ottoman capital, and it is considered the symbolic beginning of the genocide. Over the years from 1915 to 1923, 1.5 million men, women, and children were deported, forced into slave labor, tortured and exterminated by the government of the Young Turk Committee. During this dark time, the Turks of the Ottoman Empire carried out a systematic policy of eliminating the Christian Armenian minority within its bounds. The deportations and killings finally ended with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, although efforts to erase all traces of the Armenian presence in the area continued.

What happened in the Ottoman Empire during 1915 until 1923 was more than a series of massacres in a time of instability, revolution, and war. It was the first example of genocide in the 20th century, a precursor to the Nazi Holocaust, and other cases of ethnic cleansing and mass exterminations in our own time, and we must never ever forget it. To forget history not only dishonors the victims and survivors—it encourages other tyrants to believe that they can commit such heinous acts with impunity.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time for solemn reflection. But this act of remembrance also affords us the opportunity to celebrate the incredible

resilience of the human spirit when faced with the most horrendous disasters and challenges. Armenia itself and the Armenian diaspora have managed to rebuild their shattered, destroyed communities. This determination to overcome such an atrocious past is written clearly in the faces of those of Armenia descent. On a national level, the struggle for existence and a better future is an everyday fact of life for the young independent, democratic, Republic of Armenia. The successes that so many Armenian-Americans have found in this country also peaks volumes on this subject.

Despite the incontrovertible evidence of the historical fact of the Armenian genocide, modern Turkey continues to deny that this horrific event ever happened. While various Turkish sources express the view that certain unfortunate incidents took place, there is an overall denial that there was ever a systematic, ethnically based policy targeting the Armenian people. There are those who say we should not offend our Turkish allies by using the word "genocide", but friendship takes no refuge in relationship based upon dishonesty. There was a genocide in which over 1.5 million people, including women and children, lost their lives and over 500,000 Armenians were exiled, eradicating the historic Armenian homeland in Anatolia—a community which had existed there since the time of Christ.

Let us remind ourselves that the United States, and the rest of the world, we did little to prevent these crimes against humanity, despite the frequent and detailed reports that Ambassador Morgenthau sent back to Washington from his post in Istanbul. Turkey's historic difficulties in respecting minority rights have not gone away, and they are continuing now in a different form against another minority people. Today in Turkey, another campaign of ethnic dissolution is being waged by the Turkish Government against yet another minority, the Kurdish people. For years now, Turkish troops have pursued a scorched Earth policy in southeastern Turkey—burning and tearing down over 2,000 Kurdish villages, and displacing over 2 million innocent civilians. Turkey has also crossed into the border in Iraq to launch attacks on Kurdish refugee camps. Our Government has stood idly and allowed this to happen and, moreover, has defended Turkey's actions against innocent civilians by cloaking them in the guise of antiterrorism. Once again, our Embassy has provided comprehensive reports of what is occurring in Turkey, and once again, we are ignoring these reports. As we stand here once again to commemorate this sad day in the long history of the Armenian people, we should realize that we are our brother's keeper, and we do have a responsibility to stand up and be honest about both the past and the present. History ignored is history repeated.

We have made great progress in helping to establish a new Armenia, an Armenia that is free and democratic, and forging ahead to provide, through economic and political freedom, a better life for its people and greater stability for its future. Armenia is a struggling young country that does reflect the values that we stand for and believe in, and by supporting Armenia we will extend those values across the world.

Mr. Speaker, we also want to support Turkey and have a strong relationship with this important ally. We understand the importance of a free and democratic Turkey. But we also

understand that it is important for Turkey to look honestly at its past, and acknowledge what the world knows to be true. It is time that Turkey reexamine its military campaign against its Kurdish minority. Now is the time for Turkey to join the community of Western nations, but that means that they must stop committing human rights abuses against their own people and build better relationships with their neighbors. We can and should be a strong supporter of Turkey's efforts to move in this direction.

Unfortunately, I believe that our administration continues to send the wrong signals to Turkey in this regard. In the fiscal year 1997 omnibus appropriations bill, the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act was made permanent law, barring the provision of U.S. assistance to any country which blockades U.S. assistance to another country. Last week, however, President Clinton again waived this provision for Turkey in spite of her continuing blockade of U.S. assistance to Armenia. By doing so, he is telling Turkey that the United States does not really care whether they lift the blockade or not, and that we would rather waste U.S. tax dollars than stand on our principles. I firmly believe that this is not the message we should be sending.

This observance of the 82d anniversary of the Armenian genocide is an important acknowledgment of the past, and an important inducement to take action in the present. I thank my colleagues for joining me and the cochairman of the Armenian issues caucus, the Honorable FRANK PALLONE of New Jersey, in this most worthwhile endeavor.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, beginning on the night of April 24 in 1915, the religious and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community of Constantinople were taken from their beds, imprisoned, tortured, and killed.

In the days that followed, the remaining males over 15 years of age were gathered in cities, towns and villages throughout Ottoman Turkey, roped together, marched to nearby uninhabited areas, and killed.

Innocent women and children were forced to march through barren wastelands—urged on by whips and clubs—denied food and water.

And when they dared to step out of line, they were repeatedly attacked, robbed, raped * * * and ultimately killed.

One and one-half million Armenians lay dead, and a homeland which had stood for 3,000 years was destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor this evening to remember the victims—and the survivors—of the Armenian Genocide.

As we come to this floor, we do so with the knowledge that all of us have a responsibility to remember the victims, to speak out and to make sure that tragedies like this are never allowed to happen again.

Now more than ever, those of us who embrace democracy have a responsibility to speak out for all those who live under tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, we must pause today and say "Never again."

We can never forget that in 1939, another leader used the Armenian genocide as justification for his own genocide.

This leader said, and I quote: "I have given orders to my Death Units to exterminate without mercy or pity men, women, and children belonging to the Polish-speaking race. After all," Adolf Hitler asked, "who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"

Mr. Speaker, it is up to all of us to remember.

For centuries, the Armenian people have shown great courage and great strength.

The least we can do is match their courage with our commitment.

Because in the end, we are their voices and we must do all we can to remember.

Because if we don't, nobody else will.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. As Armenians gather around the world to commemorate the anniversary of this event, it is important for all of us to remember the significance of this tragedy. For, it is only by remembering past horrors that we will not allow them to be repeated.

As many of my colleagues know, 1.5 million Armenians were subjected to this century's first systematic extermination based on their ethnicity, something we know all too commonly now as genocide. Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman empire implemented a deliberate policy of deporting, torturing, starving and massacring Armenians throughout the lands under their rule. Many of the Armenian survivors and those deported emigrated to the United States. At that time, the United States condemned the brutal acts of the Ottoman Empire and even provided humanitarian assistance to survivors, in the largest relief effort ever organized by our country.

Today, there are those that refuse to recognize the sins of the past—despite the overwhelming evidence of the Armenian Genocide. We must stare history in the face no matter how terrible. The cost of not being honest about the past threatens our future. That is why I urge the President, the Senate, and every Member of this body to send a unified message to the world that we do remember the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Let us not allow any nation to forget or disavow that this tragedy ever happened.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Armenian-Americans, who continue their vigilance on the issue of the Armenian Genocide and who continue to make invaluable contributions to our shared American culture. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Republic of Armenia, a fledgling democracy of 3.3 million people, for working to enact economic and democratic reforms while developing important ties to the United States. We welcome Armenia into our growing assembly of free nations and look forward to working with the Armenian people to insure that they realize the fruits of liberty and democracy.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking Representatives Pallone and Porter for their work on behalf of Armenia, and in particular for organizing this special order in remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.

Today marks the 82nd anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, an event that foreshadowed many dark moments to come in this century.

In its final days, the Ottoman Empire systematically exterminated 1.5 million Armenians, and the forcibly deported 500,000 more. These tragic events began on April 24, 1915 when leaders of the Armenian community living in Constantinople were arrested and killed.

Tragically the genocide lasted for eight years until 1923 and the international community never mounted any serious effort to bring it to an end. Armenians were deprived of their homes and businesses. Families were torn

apart and individuals were robbed of their freedom and dignity. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forced to flee their homeland or risk death, and 1.5 million people lost their lives.

As the only Member of Congress of Armenian descent, I believe what we are doing here tonight is important, not only because we honor the memory of the men, women and children who lost their lives, but also the millions of those who survived and have contributed to our nation.

We cannot lapse in our efforts to speak out and teach about the atrocities of the past. When the international community stands silent, as they did in 1915, we allow the evil to flourish. When we commemorate the Armenian Genocide we fight not only against forgetting, but also against tolerating a future that brings misery to vulnerable people wherever they may live.

We must continue to fight against those who want to obscure, minimize or even deny that the Armenian Genocide occurred, and memory is our weapon, the memory of survivors, victims, and their relatives. The memory is also alive in modern Armenia, where in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, fledgling democracy is taking hold.

It is my hope that as we come together tonight to remember the past, we also renew our commitment to a secure and prosperous Armenia. This will only come through full enforcement of the Humanitarian Corridor Act, and a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh based upon self-determination.

As an Armenian-American I am grateful so many of my colleagues have participated in this remembrance of the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I am also proud of the contributions so many Armenians have made to our nation. Their legacy ensures that we will never forget this tragic chapter in history.

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in remembering the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I especially want to thank Congressman FRANK PALLONE and Congressman JOHN PORTER for arranging this important special order in observance of this tragic event in world history.

Beginning with the arrests of hundreds of intellectual and political leaders in 1915, the Ottoman Turkish Empire began the systematic process of genocide against the Armenian people. In addition to the blatant killings of millions of innocent people, there were works of deportation, rape, slavery and other unspeakable acts.

The persecution and mistreatment of the Armenian peoples continues today through the conflict regarding Nagorno-Karabagh. Since 1988, this contentious situation has left more than 1,500 Armenians dead and uprooted hundreds of families, forcing them to flee to other parts of this unstable region. However, I believe hope is on the horizon with the recent induction of Robert Kocharian as the new Prime Minister of Armenia. I am confident his courage and leadership will play an important role in bringing this conflict to an end.

Mr. Speaker, this historic event can no longer be denied. Vast amounts of documentation exist in the United States' Archives and in the U.S. Embassy in Istanbul, as well as in the public domain, which lend proof that the horrific events surrounding this tragic pe-

riod took place. It is important that we as Members of Congress continue to officially recognize the Genocide because it is a part of our world history, just as historically important as World War II, and just as tragic as the Holocaust. However, it is a shame and an outrage that the Genocide is still not recognized by many nations.

It is also important that we continue to mark this event on an annual basis. Although most of the survivors of the Genocide are, unfortunately, no longer with us, their relatives continue to remember and mourn the loss of life. I am proud that New York State is one of the few states which has offered a human rights/genocide curricula for teachers to use at their discretion, including the story of the Armenian Genocide. Education programs such as this allow our children to learn about the unfortunate and sad aspects of our world's history, such as the tragic past in Armenian history, hopefully ensuring a peaceful existence for future generations. A wise man once said that those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Armenia Caucus, I urge my colleagues in joining me as a member of this bipartisan organization dedicated to ensuring a strong U.S.-Armenia relationship and lending our support for issues affecting Armenians and Armenian-Americans. In addition, I urge them to join me as cosponsors of two pieces of legislation on this important issue: H.R. 500 would provide additional assistance to Armenia in FY 1997; and H.J. Res. 55, honors the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh for their courage, and wish them well in their struggle to strengthen their democracy. I will continue to support their efforts to ensure a stable future for their people.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 82nd anniversary of the Armenian genocide and urge an end to the denial of this atrocity by the government of Turkey. Denial of an event which cost the lives of one and a half million human beings should not and must not be allowed to continue.

Throughout 1915 and 1916, the "Young Turk" government of the Ottoman Empire conducted a systematic campaign of murder and oppression against the Armenian minority throughout the country; first, rounding up and killing all Armenian political, military, and intellectual leaders, and then, by forcing the remaining Armenians from their homes and "relocating" them to camps in the desert where they died from thirst and starvation.

At the time, the Armenian genocide was condemned by nearly all European powers. The United States, while neutral at this stage of the war, condemned the massacres and acted as the chief spokesman of behalf of the Armenians and issued strong protests against the reprehensible actions of the Ottoman government.

Diplomatic dispatches and newspaper reports tell of deportations, beatings, and mass killing. Our own Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau Sr. wrote in 1915, " * * * it appears that a campaign of race extermination is in progress under a pretext of reprisal against rebellion." Numerous articles appeared in the New York Times throughout August, September, and October of 1915. The articles cite eyewitness accounts from American, Greek,

Bulgarian, Turkish, German, and British citizens as well as those from Armenians themselves which tell of widespread atrocities including forced deportations, mass starvation, deliberate drowning, and the sale of women and girls into slavery.

Throughout the "relocation," American missionaries and relief workers in Turkey risked their lives to save as many people as possible, namely orphaned children, and brought them to the United States which formed the foundation of today's Armenian-American community. At home in the United States, Americans collected and donated millions of dollars to help feed the survivors of this human tragedy.

Following the war, the post-war government of Turkey held war crime trials and sentenced to death the major leaders responsible for the atrocity calling the fact "proven and verified" and describing the decision to eradicate the Armenians "the result of extensive and profound deliberations." Repentance soon gave way to denial, as Turkey's post-war government was replaced by Nationalists who made war criminals into national heroes.

Today, despite all the facts, eyewitness accounts, recognition by countries throughout the world, and the findings of their own post-war courts, the government of Turkey still refuses to acknowledge the genocide ever occurred. Instead, they claim, as did the Ottoman Empire before them, that they only "relocated" the Armenians from the eastern "war zone" to a more secure location and that the deaths were caused by the "brutalities of war."

Indeed, the government of Turkey goes one step further calling the Armenians "traitors" who collaborated with the enemies of the Ottoman Empire during war. The government of Turkey even claims that 2.5 million widely disbursed Armenian men, women, and children were a direct threat militarily to the 17 million and mobilized Turks. As evidence they cite a few scattered incidents of self-defense by Armenians against Turkish death squads.

We cannot allow such blatant disregard and denial to go on. Genocide is genocide, no matter how, when, or where it happens. To deny is to accept.

We need to remember and commemorate this horrible chapter in human history not only for the survivors and their families, but for ourselves. Respect for human rights and individual diversity are the cornerstones of our society. We cannot afford to forget the past, lest we doom the world to a similar such fate in the future.

To me, and to my constituents, the Armenian genocide is not just a footnote in history. In Detroit and its surrounding suburbs lives the third largest Armenian-American community in the United States many of whom are the children and grandchildren of genocide survivors or actual survivors themselves.

Mr. Speaker, for myself and my constituents, I rise today to urge the government of Turkey to end its denial and accept its past, no matter how painful. Only then can we all move forward to the future and stop these atrocities from repeating themselves over and over again.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Mr. PALLONE and Mr. PORTER, for giving us this opportunity to remind the world that we will never forget the

Armenian genocide even when the descendants of the Ottoman Empire refuse to accept responsibility for this crime against humanity.

In 1944, noted jurist and scholar, Raphael Lemkin looked to a previous generation when he coined the word "genocide" to describe the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people by the Nazis. Lemkin was thinking of the Turkish attempt in 1915 to extinguish from this earth the ancient community of Armenians living within the Ottoman Empire. Ironically, Hitler had also referred to the extermination of the Armenians when he spoke of his plans for the Jewish people in 1939: "Who, after all, speaks today of the Armenians," Hitler said.

During World War I, Turkish rulers tried to eradicate all traces of this culturally rich and historic people. At least one and a half million Armenians were massacred and 500 thousand deported. We owe it to the survivors and their descendants to remind the world of this tragic event. We owe it to Turkey and to the Turkish people who face continued recriminations in this chamber and throughout the civilized world for as long as the Ankara government stonewalls and rejects historical fact. We owe it to the Bosnians and Rwandans who wonder if the perpetrators of modern day atrocities will be brought to justice. The stench of genocide must not be allowed to waft over future generations.

In 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a free Armenia emerged. This tiny, landlocked nation is attempting to embrace democratic ideals as it struggles to gain its footing amidst hostile neighbors. These proud people are defying the odds to retake their place among the community of nations.

I must also express my deep gratitude to the survivors of the Armenian genocide who sought refuge in the United States and to their descendants. As someone who represents a city rich in cultural diversity, I can say without reservation that the Armenian people have enriched San Francisco, the State of California, and this nation with their splendid heritage, their commitment to family values, their work ethic, and their contributions to their communities in their adopted homeland.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in commemorating the 82d anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

We observe the Armenian genocide today so as not to forget. We remember the horrific conflagration that engulfed the lives of 1.5 million innocent Armenian men, women, and children so that governments around the world will know that they will be held accountable for their bloody deeds by the consciousness of mankind. In one of the darkest chapters of the 21st century, the Government of the Ottoman Empire systematically implemented a policy of extermination against its Armenian population through ruthless marches of forced starvation and endless waves of bloody massacres.

Eight decades have now come and gone since the tragic event unfolded and, yet, the Turkish Government continues to deny the undeniable. The Armenian genocide is a historical fact that has been indelibly etched in the annals of history. It cannot be erased from our collective memory.

To heal the open wounds of the past, the Turkish Government has a moral obligation to acknowledge and recognize the Armenian genocide. Turkey must come to terms with its past. It must also come to terms with its present actions against the Republic of Armenia.

The Government of Turkey should immediately lift its illegal blockade of Armenia, which it has had in place since 1993. Turkey must also stop obstructing the delivery of United States humanitarian assistance to Armenia. This is not only unconscionable but it also damages American-Turkish relations. Turkey is indeed an important ally of the United States. However, until Turkey faces up to its past and stops its silent but destructive campaign against the Republic of Armenia, American-Turkish relations will continue to be strained.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, today we in Congress are solemnly observing the tragedy of the Armenian genocide.

We honor the bravery and courage of those who survived and we honor the memory of those who perished.

We speak out so that future generations of Americans will know the story of the first genocide of this century.

Over 6 million people of Armenian descent live in this country. Many of them can still recount the persecution they faced during the Ottoman Empire and the stories of the night of April 24, 1915.

That night must be remembered, not only for the atrocities which took place, but because we must never forget our duty to fight against human rights abuses, ethnic cleansings, genocides, and other atrocities.

Unfortunately, we see the atrocities of the past being replayed today. In the former Yugoslavia, the terrors of the past have recently been replayed.

By observing the Armenian genocide we make a strong statement. A statement that the atrocities of the past are not acceptable. They were not acceptable then and they are not acceptable today.

It has been said many times that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. Let us never repeat this history. We must all work to always remember and never forget the genocide, to cherish and preserve the Armenian culture, and to fight for human rights in this region.

We owe that to those we honor today and to our Nation's Armenian-Americans.

Thank you.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I join with my colleagues in commemorating the 82d anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Along with the Armenian-American community in my district and with people of goodwill throughout the country, Congress today is observing the death of 1.5 million Armenians from the years 1915–1923.

As we gather today, many of my constituents over the weekend participated in solemn requiem services held at their respective places of worship in the memory of the martyrs, consecrated a genocide monument in Ridgefield, NJ, held an observance ceremony in front of the Bergen County Court House in Hackensack, NJ, and attended a series of other events commemorating the Armenian genocide.

And so let me offer my solidarity with those remembering the Armenian genocide today. And let me also emphasize that we should today not only remember the martyred, but as well, the survivors of the Armenian genocide. Those few survivors of the Armenian genocide are still living today, those who endured the horrors of 1915, are heroes for all time.

Today, the people of Armenia and her Diaspora are proudly looking to rebuild their coun-

try. From the ashes of despair born of the genocide, and from the ravages of seven decades of Communist rule, Armenians the world over are striving to secure a safe and prosperous future for Armenian and Nagorno-Karabagh.

As Armenian-Americans rebuild their homeland, and as they seek to secure an economically prosperous state, founded on firm democratic principles, I will stand by them.

Let me conclude my brief remarks today by encouraging the young people of America to never forget the tragedy and lessons of 1915. Because as George Santayana once remarked, "Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it." And if no clearer evidence of these prescient words are necessary let us remind one another today that before commencing the Holocaust, Hitler himself stated, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

As a Jewish-American and being ever mindful of the Holocaust, I join with my colleagues today in observing the Armenian genocide. And I promise to stand firm against the shameful efforts of those who would rewrite the facts as it pertains to the Armenian genocide.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, today, April 23rd, 1997, the House of Representatives commemorates a bleak chapter in world history: the Armenian genocide of 1915–1923. To overlook or deny its existence is not only irresponsible, but also provides incentive to despots who have it within their evil designs to commit similar atrocities. Civilization and peaceful nations, like the United States, can ill afford failures of justice, let alone tolerate breakdowns of the magnitude of the Armenian genocide.

On March 21, 1997, I introduced, along with Rep. DAVID BONIOR, H. Con. Res. 55, the Armenian genocide Resolution. This measure honors the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide. As with similar resolutions in the past, this measure enjoys widespread bipartisan support. I believe the time has long since passed for all governments to publicly acknowledge and rebuke this fatal chapter in the history of human events.

Mr. Speaker, the 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives during the genocide deserve our utmost respect. The highest honor this House can bestow on the victims is to secure a formal recognition from the Turkish government that the genocide indeed occurred. It is for their honor that we must wage this principled fight.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring attention to the 81st anniversary of the genocide of the Armenian people. On April 24, 1915 some 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were arrested and exiled from Istanbul, Turkey. Over the next eight years, 1.5 million men, women, and children were forced into slave labor, tortured, exterminated, and deported by the government of the "Young Turk Committee."

For more than 15 years the U.S. State Department has refrained from referring to the tragic period between 1915–1923 as "genocide." Several former Presidents have issued proclamations on the anniversary of this event, expressing deep sorrow for the massacres, yet stopping short of declaring the tragedy as genocide. The U.S. should, in conjunction with the state of California and some 30 other nations, go on record to clearly and unambiguously recognize the Armenian massacres as

genocide, and set aside April 24th as a day of remembrance.

Remembering the Armenian genocide is important not only for the Armenian people, but for the future generations of our global society. We must not forget and we must not repeat such tragic history.

Mr. Speaker, what happened in the Ottoman Turkish Empire during the years of 1915–1923 was more than a series of massacres in a time of instability, revolution, and war. It was the first example of genocide in the 20th century. Calling this by its proper name is extremely important, both from the standpoint of the historical accuracy, and respect for the victims and survivors. Given the alarming number of conflicts in today's world that often verge on genocide, stating the truth about what happened in the history of the Armenian people, including commemorating this anniversary, can help strengthen our determination to prevent genocide from occurring again.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 82nd Anniversary of the Armenian genocide. On April 24th, 1915, the people of Armenia were subjected to long-term, organized deprivation and relocation. Eighty-two years later, we mark this date to remember the beginning of this systematic elimination of Armenian civilians, which lasted for over seven years. By 1923, 1.5 million Armenians had been massacred and 500,000 more deported.

Many Armenian-Americans reside in my congressional district, and each year they mark this date with solemn commemoration. It is a day to reflect on the loss of property, freedom and dignity of those Armenians who were deported or killed under the Ottoman empire. We honor their memory and vow that such deprivation will never happen again.

Mr. Speaker, we also mark this date to celebrate the contributions of millions of Armenians and Armenian-Americans since that awful time. As we continue to strengthen our bonds with the Armenian people, we must continue to be vigilant about remaining a strong friend of Armenian democracy through U.S. foreign policy. The Clinton Administration's recent decision to waive the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act does not bode well for long-term stabilization in this region. It is important for those of us in the Congress to continue to speak out in favor of Armenian human rights and free trade.

I urge my colleagues to join me in commemorating this solemn anniversary.

[Armenia This Week, April 18, 1997]

CLINTON WAIVES CORRIDOR ACT PROHIBITION ON AID TO TURKEY

For the second consecutive year the Clinton administration waived the prohibition of aid to Turkey for violating the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. The legislation mandates the suspension of aid to any nation that bars the transshipment of U.S. humanitarian assistance to a third party. However, the president can waive the halt in aid if the national security interests of the United States are deemed to be damaged by such an action.

The Clinton administration expressed its rationale for the waiver in a memorandum of justification, saying, "It is very much in our national security interests not to terminate U.S. assistance programs for Turkey. Such a termination would create significant difficulties in our bilateral relations, affecting a broad range of national security interests. Such a termination would also reduce pros-

pects for the successful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict." The statement cites the rationale for Ankara to close its border with Armenia, explaining that the action was taken, "when local Armenian forces seized large areas of Azerbaijan despite UN Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of all occupying forces and the cessation of hostilities." It also praised Turkey for opening an air corridor to Armenia in 1995 and for its promise to open the land border "once Armenia and Azerbaijan agree on a statement of principles for a settlement of the [Karabagh] conflict."

Congressional and Armenian community reaction to the Clinton waiver decision was quick and critical. Congressman John Porter, a Republican from Illinois issued a sharp rebuttal to the Clinton waiver action. He said, "It is unconscionable that the president continues to defend Turkey's ongoing four-year blockade of Armenia." He noted that a bipartisan decision was made by Congress to enact the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. He added, "The United States must not tolerate countries blockading the delivery of humanitarian aid to alleviate hunger and suffering to those who need it." Congressman Frank Pallone, Democrat from New Jersey, speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives, noted, "Maintaining good relations should not entail turning a blind eye to the outrageous actions committed by Turkey."

In the United States Senate, Rhode Island Democrat Jack Reed criticized the Clinton waiver. He said, "The administration's decision is troubling. U.S. humanitarian aid should not be held hostage by any country to further its own political ends."

In Washington, the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee issued statements criticizing the administration action. The Assembly's Executive Director, Ross Vartian, said: "The president's use of the national security waiver is outrageous. The administration's expressed rationale not only justifies Turkey's blockade, it demonstrates that they have not encouraged Turkey to lift the embargo." Vartian also questioned the administration's praise of Turkey's role in the Karabagh conflict negotiations. He said, "Turkey has discredited itself as a neutral party by supplying arms and military training to Azerbaijan." [Sources: *State Department text, Armenian Assembly press release 4-16*]

AZERI SAYS ARMENIA HAS NO ALTERNATIVE IN KARABAGH SETTLEMENT

Vafa Gulizade, special adviser to Azerbaijan's president Heidar Aliyev, declared that Armenia has no alternative except to agree to autonomy of Nagorno Karabagh within Azerbaijan. Gulizade denied the OSCE peace process was "stuck." He said, "The ice has begun to melt and certain changes are evident." [Source: *Azg 4-16*]

BORDER TENSIONS REMAIN HIGH AS INCIDENTS INCREASE IN FREQUENCY

Incidents along the Armenian-Azerbaijan borders have increased in frequency in recent weeks and tensions remain high on the northeastern sector of the border. On April 16 three separate exchanges of fire took place in the area. No casualties were reported. [Source: *Noyan Tapan 4-17*]

AZERBAIJAN VIOLATES CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE TREATY

On the heels of a campaign charging that Armenia has received Russian arms illegally, Baku itself was accused by a representative of the International Human Rights Congress (IHRG), Vitaly Danilov, of violating the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. IHRG operates within the framework of the OSCE. At a press conference in Yerevan,

Danilov said that an April 10 analysis by IHRG showed that between 1992 and 1996, Azerbaijan purchased a volume of offensive armaments that exceeded CFE quotes. In contrast, Danilov declared that neither Armenia nor Georgia are in violation of the CFE treaty. He said, "it is only Azerbaijan that is violating the treaty." According to the analysis, IHRG asserts that Baku's allegations of illegal arms deliveries to Armenia "are motivated by efforts to reinforce Azerbaijan's military superiority over its neighbors." The report also suggests that Baku's most recent accusations against Russian arms to Armenia, "were aimed to impede the OSCE Minsk negotiations on the Karabakh problem that were in progress in Moscow, thus disturbing peace in the region." The IHRG report listed, by category, statistics covering arms deliveries to Azerbaijan by the Russian Federation. The document concludes with an appeal to OSCE members to take diplomatic steps to compel Azerbaijan to comply by the CFE treaty. [Source: *Noyan Tapan 4-14*]

ARARKTSIAN ADDRESSES RUSSIA'S UPPER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT

Babken Ararktsian, chairman of Armenia's National Assembly, reviewed Armeno-Russian relations in an address to Russia's upper house of parliament. Ararktsian asserted that the twin blockades of Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan coupled with the after effects of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia created a major energy crisis in Armenia. This, in turn, caused an abrupt decline in economic production, which has been overcome largely by international assistance. He said that close Armeno-Russia relations and the economic integration of the CIS were of importance to Armenia. Ararktsian expressed concern about the eastward expansion of NATO. He also noted the importance to Armenia's security of the Russian military bases in Armenia. The visiting Chairman of the Armenian National Assembly also praised Russia's peacekeeping role in the Nagorno Karabagh crisis, especially for Moscow's initiative in establishing the present cease-fire. [Source: *Noyan Tapan 4-17*]

EBRD CALLS ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ARMENIA 'REMARKABLE'

A report by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), says that the Armenian economy has been growing at a brisk pace since 1994, despite border closures and interruptions in the supply of energy. The report adds, "Armenia's success in achieving positive results is remarkable in view of the deadlock caused by the long-running dispute with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno Karabagh enclave." The report cites a 5.8 percent growth in GDP in 1996 and predicts 6 percent for 1997. Inflation in 1996 was set at 18.8 percent but EBRD expects it to fall by half in 1997. The report advises that Armenia will continue to require large capital inflows and that a vigorous response from the private sector is needed "if Armenia is to reap the benefits of its courageous reforms." [Source: *RFE/RL London report 4-16*]

REGIONAL TRILATERAL AGREEMENT SIGNED IN YEREVAN

Armenia's Foreign Minister Alexander Arzuomanian signed a mutual cooperation agreement in Yerevan with his counterparts from Iran and Turkmenistan. The accord covers cooperation in the spheres of trade, economic development, transportation, energy, banking, and tourism." Meanwhile it was reported that Armenia will begin receiving electrical energy from Iran beginning May 1. Also, the possibility of natural gas imports from Turkmenistan through Iran starting in 1998 depends on the completion of

pipeline links between Turkmenistan and Iran by the end of 1997. [Source: Azg 4-17]

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, once again I am proud today to raise and join my colleagues to honor the lives of the 1.5 million men, women, and children who were brutally murdered in the inaugural genocide of the 20th century.

Each year, Members of Congress come together to do more than simply remember that the Armenians were the first victims of what is sadly man's bloodiest century. Rather, we are dedicated to the fervent hope that raising the consciousness of past atrocities, such as those which befell the Armenian people, will help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

It is often said that before embarking on his planned final solution to the "Jewish problem," Adolph Hitler was heard to say "Who remembers the Armenians?" Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and 1986 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, has said, "He was right. No one remembered them." The Nazi Holocaust, the murder of millions of Russians and Ukrainians by the Soviet Government, and the bloody rampage of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, all had their seeds in Anatolia. Each of the murderous regimes depended upon people not remembering or caring.

The collapse of the Soviet empire and the independence of Armenia have been important milestones on the road toward freedom for the Armenian people. While very serious conflicts remain to be resolved in the Caucasus region, April 24 will remain an important day for Armenians and Armenian-Americans, who are equally dedicated to remembering the past and working for a brighter future.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, 82 years ago there began one of the most tragic events in modern history: the persecution of the Armenian population of Ottoman Turkey, which led to the death or deportation of some 2 million men, women, and children—solely because of their ethnicity.

Over a 10 year period, Turkish Armenians were subjected to arbitrary execution, torture, and forced labor. Armenian women were raped or forced into prostitution, and tens of thousands of men, women, and children were forced onto death marches that claimed their lives. When this horrified tragedy ended, as many as 1.5 million Armenians were dead, and hundreds of thousands of others became refugees. The Armenian genocide decimated the Armenian community in Turkey, reducing its size by some 90 percent.

Many years have passed since these events, but we must never forget what happened to the Armenians of Ottoman Turkey solely because of their ethnicity. First and foremost, it is a lesson in the terrible tragedy that can so easily result from hatred and bigotry—especially when a country sees political gain in supporting ethnic persecution.

Sadly, our modern world is no stranger to events of ethnic atrocity. More recently, Bosnia and Rwanda have been scenes of massacres and human brutality caused by ethnic hatred and prejudice. It is for this reason that we must remember and commemorate the Armenian genocide of 1915–23, to remind ourselves of how prejudice can lead to acts of great evil.

Let us join Armenian-Americans and others in commemorating the terrible events of 82 years ago, working to protect the human rights of all people around the world, and preventing such a tragedy from happening again.

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, we mark the 82d anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I rise to commemorate the lives of the 1.5 million Armenians who were enslaved, tortured, and exterminated from 1915 to 1923 by the Ottoman Empire.

On April 24, 1915, Armenian intellectuals, clergy, and leaders were rounded up and taken to their deaths. What was to follow was the ethnic cleansing of the native homeland of the Armenian people. Over a period of 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians were murdered and another 500,000 were deported. Before World War I, over 2 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman empire. By 1923, the entire population of Anatolia and Western Armenia had been killed or deported.

This was the first genocide of the 20th century, but, tragically, it was not the last. Prior to the invasion of Poland, Adolf Hitler asked, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" In a climate where no one remembered, the death camps became a reality.

Today, as nations around the world continue to struggle for peace, it is more important than ever to remember—and to stand up to oppose genocide, systematic extermination, or ethnic cleansing. I have cosponsored House Concurrent Resolution 55, a resolution commemorating the Armenian genocide, because of my belief that we must never forget the victims of this terrible act, and that we must always be prepared to prevent further crimes against humanity.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. On April 24, we commemorate the 82d anniversary of the Armenian genocide, a tragic passage in our world history which observed the systematic murder and relocation of 1.5 million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. This tragedy, the first genocide of the 20th century, included the torture, starvation, and butchering of peaceful Armenians was a horrid example and foreshadowing of the race extermination of which politically and religiously intolerant regimes are capable.

The Ottoman Turks decapitated the Armenian population by removing their religious, political, and intellectual leaders and placing them in exile to later be murdered. With their leadership removed, the Turks next deprived Armenians of 250,000 of their young, able-bodied men who were serving in the Ottoman army at the time. These men were disarmed, placed in forced labor battalions, and either starved or executed. Severed from their leadership and physical protection, the remaining Armenian population were deported from every city, town, and village in Asia Minor and Turkish Armenia. The ensuing march saw the torture, rape, and mutilation of defenseless women, children, and elderly before their subsequent death in the Syrian desert.

The Armenian genocide was a carefully executed government plan which effectively eliminated the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. I recommend that in commemoration of this tragedy, we remember not only the many lives lost, but the spirit that lives on in the Armenian people. I have seen this fervor in the many Armenian-Americans that live in my congressional district today and I commend the countless contributions that they have made to America from the national level all the way down to local communities.

Although the Ottoman Empire may have successfully executed their sinister plan to

eliminate the presence of the Armenian population, they certainly failed to kill the cohesive Armenian community or their spirit with which they continue to bless the United States and other nations fortunate to have their presence.

Mr. DOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 82d anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

This terrible human tragedy must not and will not be forgotten. Like the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide stands as an historical example of the human suffering that results from hatred and intolerance.

One and one-half million Armenian people were massacred by the Ottoman Turkish Empire between 1915 and 1923. More than 500,000 Armenians were exiled from a homeland that their ancestors had occupied for more than 3,000 years. A race of people was nearly eliminated.

However great the loss of human life and homeland that occurred during the genocide, a greater tragedy would be to forget that the Armenian Genocide ever happened. To not recognize the horror of such events almost assures their repetition in the future. Adolph Hitler, in preparing his genocide plans for the Jews, predicted that no one would remember the atrocities he was about to unleash. After all, he asked, "Who remembers the Armenians?"

Our statements today are intended to preserve the memory of the Armenian loss, and to remind the world that the Turkish Government—to this day—refuses to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. The truth of this tragedy can never and should never be denied.

This 82d anniversary also brings to mind the current suffering of the Armenian people, who are still immersed in tragedy and violence. The unrest between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues in Nagorno-Karabakh. Thousands of innocent people have already perished in this dispute, and still many more have been displaced and are homeless.

In the face of this difficult situation comes an opportunity for reconciliation. Now is the time for Armenian and its neighbors, including Turkey, to come together, to work toward building relationships that will assure lasting peace.

Meanwhile, in America, the Armenian-American community continues to thrive and to provide assistance and solidarity to its countrymen and women abroad. Now numbering nearly 1 million, the Armenian-American community is bound together by strong generational and family ties, an enduring work ethic and a proud sense of ethnic heritage. Today we recall the tragedy of their past, not to place blame, but to answer a fundamental question, "Who remembers the Armenians?"

Our commemoration of the Armenian Genocide speaks directly to that, and I answer—We do.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, thank you for taking this time tonight to speak about this important topic to many people in this country, including many in my district in Michigan.

Recently, our Armenian-American community lost a great hero, Alex Manoogian. A penniless Armenian immigrant who came to America in 1924, Manoogian was a kind benefactor, gentle-hearted leader, a talented inventor and a perfect model of the American dream.

He was one of the most important and influential leaders in the Armenian-American Community over the last century. As we commemorate the 82d anniversary of the genocide of millions of Armenians at the hands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, I want to remember a bright light who this community misses dearly.

And if he were here today he would be telling the story of his heritage. It is a story of sorrow, followed by a story of triumph. It is a story we must always remember so that this dark period can never happen again.

I rise today to commemorate this dark period in history—those 8 years starting in 1915 when over a million and a half of Armenian men, women and children were murdered by the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

While everyone has heard the story of Hitler and his systematic extermination of the Jewish people during World War II, the story of Armenian Genocide remains unknown to many.

The Ottoman Turks were every bit as systematic as Adolph Hitler. After eliminating the Armenian leadership—most of which was done on 1 day, April 24th, 1915—they then went after the male population. The Turks took their guns and put them into work camps where they labored until they died or were killed. Finally, the surviving women, children and elderly were marched out into the desert, where they were starved, raped, and tortured.

Very few who left ever came back. They were stripped of their homes, property, freedom, dignity, and ultimately, their lives. By 1923, 1.5 million Armenians had been massacred and 500,000 more had been deported.

The mental images are nothing less than horrifying. The ghost-like silhouette of an Armenian man after weeks and months of starvation and torture in a labor camp. Women, children, and the elderly, forcibly marched into a wasteland, left to die.

These images should be etched in the collective memory of every citizen of every country in the world.

Unfortunately, there was no CNN to beam disturbing pictures into the world's living rooms to galvanize international opinion. There were no U.N. convoys to bring food for the hungry and medical treatment for the injured. There was only blood, hunger, and dust as thousands upon thousands of innocent victims died in agonizing obscurity.

What troubles me most, beyond the scale of the atrocities, is that you can ask 10 people on the street what they know of the Armenian Genocide, and most will likely respond with silence.

Most people are unaware that the Armenian Genocide ever happened.

It wasn't until the 1980's that the world community officially recognized the genocide. And to this day, there are still some who dispute that classification.

It is time for the world to remember the Armenian Genocide and give it its rightful place in history.

If not for justice's sake, then for the important and painful lessons it lends to today's events.

We in America have a special responsibility to remember those who died in those dark days. Our country was built with the sweat of millions of persecuted refugees, who came here from many places and at great risk, to simply embrace a better life and to be judged only by the excellence of their endeavors.

Alex Manoogian is an example of this attitude.

Sometimes, while we have enjoyed the fruits of freedom, democracy, and basic human rights for so long, we tend to take them for granted.

This complacency sometimes allows us to forget that there are places where people have been systematically murdered because of who they are.

So let us pay homage to those who fell victim to their Ottoman oppressors, but let us also go forth and tell the story of the forgotten holocaust to everyone we know.

For the sake of the Armenian heritage, it is a story that must continue to be told.

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, each year, for the past 5 or 6 years of my memory, my colleagues, Mr. PALLONE and Mr. PORTER, have organized this special congressional opportunity for this body to pause to honor the memory of the 1½ million Armenians who were killed between 1915 and 1923 by agents of the Turkish Ottoman Empire in what is known in infamy as the Armenian Genocide. In essence, we retell a story of a moment in history, an event which began some 82 years ago. I have notices that each year, I find myself using the same words to tell this story, and I realize that this process of retelling the facts of genocide, committed against the people of Armenia is in itself a very important event. For in retelling this story of the horror which was perpetuated, we remember to be vigilant against the planting of the seeds of future atrocities.

I would like to add that my district, the 34th Congressional District of California, has what I believe is the only monument in the United States which commemorates and records the genocide against the Armenian people. The citizens of the 34th Congressional District have strong feelings about today's commemoration, and on their behalf I am here today to share with you this retelling of an old and difficult story.

Some would claim that our remembrance today fans the flames of atavistic hatred and that the issue of the Ottoman government's efforts to destroy the Armenian people is a matter best left to scholars and historians. I do not agree. For whatever ambiguities may be invoked in the historic record of these events, one fact remains undeniable: the death and suffering of Armenians on a massive scale happened, and is deserving of recognition and remembrance.

This solemn occasion permits us to join in remembrance with the many Americans of Armenian ancestry, to remind this country of the tragic price paid by the Armenian community for its long pursuit of life, liberty, and freedom.

Today, I rise, with my colleagues, to recall and remember one of the most tragic events in history and through this act of remembrance, to make public and vivid the memory of the ultimate price paid by the Armenian community by this blot against human civility.

We come together each year with this act of commemoration, this year being the 82d anniversary of this genocide, to tell the stories of this atrocity so that we will not sink into ignorance of our capacity to taint human progress with acts of mass murder.

The Armenian genocide was a deliberate act to kill, or deport, all Armenians from Asia Minor, and takes its place in history with other acts of genocide such as Stalin's destruction

of the Kulaks, Hitler's calculated wrath on the Jews, Poles, and Romany Gypsy community in Central Europe, and Pol Pot's attempt to purge incorrect political thought from Cambodia by killing all of his people over the age of 15, and more recently, the ethnic cleansing atrocities in Bosnia and Ruanda.

We do not have the ability to go back and correct acts of a previous time, or to right the wrongs of the past. If we had this capacity, perhaps we could have prevented the murders of millions of men, women and children.

We can, however, do everything in our power to prevent such atrocities from occurring again. To do this, we must educate people about these horrible incidents, comfort the survivors and keep alive the memories of those who died.

I encourage everyone to use this moment to think about the tragedy which was the Armenian genocide, to contemplate the massive loss of lives, and to ponder the loss of the human contributions which might have been.

Although, the massacre we depict and describe started 82 years ago, the Armenian people continue to fight for their freedom and independence today, in Nagorno Karabakh.

Again, this year, I would like to close my remarks with an urgent plea that we use this moment as an occasion to recommit ourselves to the spirit of human understanding, compassion, patience, and love.

For these alone are the tools for overcoming our tragic, and uniquely human proclivity for resolving differences and conflicts by acts of violence.

This century has been characterized as one of the bloodiest in our archives of human history. Certainly, the genocide perpetuated against the Armenian peoples has been a factor in this dismal record.

The dawning of a new millennium offers our human race two paths. One continues along a road of destruction, distrust, and despair. Those who travel this path have lost their connection to the primal directives, which permit us as a society to maintain balance, continuity, and harmony.

I would ask my colleagues, on this 82d anniversary of one of history's bloodiest massacres of human beings—and during a time of history when violent solutions to problems between peoples continue to hold sway—to contemplate the second path. The map to this path exists within the guiding teachings of all major world religions and are encapsulated in what Christians refer to as the 10 Commandments. I would ask my colleagues, no matter their religious or political persuasions and beliefs, to revisit these core teachings which form a common bond between all peoples. To use these common beliefs as the basis for action and understanding in these trying times. The surface differences between peoples, offer only an exciting diversity in form. At the core all peoples are united by common dreams, aspirations, and beliefs in a desire for harmony, decency, and peace with justice.

Let these testimonies of the atrocities perpetuated against the Armenian people serve as a reminder that as a human race we can, and must, do better. It takes strength and wisdom to understand that the sword of compassion is indeed mightier than the sword of steel.

Certainly, as we reflect over the conflicts of this closing century, we can only come to the conclusion that violence begets violence, hatred begets hatred and that only understanding, patience, compassion, and love can open

the door to the realization of the dreams which we all hold for our children and for their children.

Let our statements today, remembering and openly condemning the atrocity committed against the Armenians, help renew a commitment of the American people to oppose any and all instances of genocide. As we enter the new millennium let us commit ourselves to finding new and peaceful paths for resolving differences which inevitably arise.

I thank you for the honor of sharing these thoughts and words with you today.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, together with my colleagues, to commemorate the Armenian Genocide of 1915–23. On this day, in 1915, over 200 Armenian leaders were systematically massacred by the Turkish Government. Yet these horrific murders were only a precursor to the brutality and aggressiveness that would follow. In just 8 years, over 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were murdered and an entire population was faced with annihilation. I stand today, not only to acknowledge and remember the horrors of this tragic event but to denounce the government of Turkey for their denial of these historically documented truths. The official position of the Turkish Government is that, during World War I, a series of internal conflicts contributed to the unfortunate deaths of many Armenians. This claim shamefully ignores the premeditated murder of these people. As Members of Congress and as human beings, it is our responsibility to defend the memories of those who needlessly suffered. We must preserve the dignity of lives destroyed by the cruelty of a government. Their plight deserves remembrance and the world deserves the truth. The Turkish Government's refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide is disgraceful and I find it to be an injustice, which should not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is essential to recognize the devastation that was incurred by ignoring the Armenian genocide and allowing such horrors to reoccur through the Holocaust. We remember the trauma befallen upon the Jews and we must now stand up for the suffering forced upon millions of Armenians. The world can no longer refute history. Instead we must come together as Armenians, as Jews and as human beings to guarantee that no person shall ever endure such pain again. I thank my colleagues, Congressman JOHN PORTER and Congressman FRANK PALLONE, for leading this effort in the House of Representatives, and am proud to be a member of the Armenian Issues Caucus in order to work on this issue of concern to all human beings.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I am appreciative of the efforts of my colleagues in taking out this special order and making it possible for us to reaffirm our absolute determination that the Armenian genocide will not go unnoticed. The world made a terrible mistake, with disastrous consequences, when it ignored the terrible crime committed by Turkey against the Armenian people 80 years and more ago. I continue to be baffled by the unwillingness of the current Turkish Government to acknowledge this horrible crime. I do not blame the current inhabitants of Turkey for the sins of their ancestors, but their refusal to acknowledge these terrible actions do them no credit.

As do many of my colleagues, I greatly admire the fierce commitment of the current gen-

eration of Armenians to honor the memory of the innocent people who were slaughtered simply because they were Armenian. They do a great service for the world by not only commemorating their own ancestors, but by focusing world attention on the terrible consequences of allowing crimes like this to go unopposed and unnoticed. Remembering the Armenian genocide is both an important tribute to those who were slaughtered and one step in making sure that this does not happen again.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order on the Armenian genocide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from California has nothing else, I would thank him for participating with me.

TWO GREAT AMERICANS: BOB DORNAN AND BILL BLAKEMORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Georgia, JACK KINGSTON, for giving me some time here ahead of his 1 hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few things about two great Americans. One of them is my good friend Bob Dornan, who is no longer with us, but may be back soon depending on the outcome of the election challenge that he has offered; and the other one is Bill Blakemore, a private American citizen who right now is in the hospital, the Methodist Hospital in Houston, TX, who is in pretty serious condition, but who was very, very important to this country in the 1980's when he helped to put together a group of Texas conservatives who rallied the country behind the idea that Central America was worth saving, and particularly that we needed to support the Contras, the freedom fighters who were fighting the Communist-backed, Soviet-backed insurgents or Soviet backed Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and also that we needed to protect the very fragile government of El Salvador, the government of Jose Duarte, which at that time was holding off the Soviet-backed FMLN.

□ 2015

When Ronald Reagan came into office in 1980, and I was lucky to be one of the people that came in with him as one of the 54 Republican Congressmen who were elected that year, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua were all under some sort of a military dictatorship. Today all those nations have fragile democracies, imperfect, certainly not totally cast in the image of democracy that we have in the Unit-

ed States, but represented I think by a determination that was manifested in one of those voting lines in the 1980's, when one woman who had been ordered by the FMLN Communists not to go to the polls that day was standing in a voting line with a bullet wound in her shoulder and was asked by one of the reporters if she was not going to leave the line and she said "no". Essentially she said "We fought for a long time to get to this point, I'm going to vote." And they had a great turnout that year.

Jose Duarte remained the leader of El Salvador and, because of the steadfastness of Ronald Reagan a lot of his supporters and guys like Bill Blakemore of Texas, who was a real leader of the business community, we have a chance for real democracy in our own hemisphere.

Let me say just a word, Mr. Speaker, about my great friend Bob Dornan. There will never be another one like him. He was of great value to this House, and I think there is a good chance he will be of great value to this House again. I am just reminded when they had the incident in Somalia and those Americans were killed, Bob Dornan was the only Member of the National Security Committee who went over, flew that long distance, some 40 hours in the air, to Somalia, went over the event in detail, and came back and contacted the family of every member of that Ranger unit who were killed in that debacle.

That was Bob Dornan. A heart as big as all outdoors, a keen intellect, a great ability to speak. He has still got it. Obviously we have heard from him across the airwaves lately, but I just wanted to say that Bob Dornan was a great, great asset to the National Security Committee, flew all of the aircraft, knew all of the countries with whom we had treaty relations and knew what the treaty relations were and was a real expert in national security. God bless you, Bob. I hope to see you back soon.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Before he leaves the Chamber, I want to say to the gentleman from California that many, many Members and in fact I am sure most Members of this Chamber agree with him in his comments about Representative, the Honorable Bob Dornan, because he was such a viable part of this body for many years. He is an extremely dedicated patriotic American of great intellect and energy, and I hope that the years are as good to me as they have been to Bob Dornan in terms of getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker, tonight is the eve of the trustees report on Medicare. Each year