

the Flood Prevention and Family Protection Act of 1997; H.R. 3, the Juvenile Crime Control Act of 1997; and the Fiscal Year 1997 Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Mr. Speaker, we should finish legislative business and have Members on their way home to their families by 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 8.

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

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

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE KURDS

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my colleagues' attention this evening on the plight of the Kurds, an ancient people living in the Middle East in a land that should be a nation called Kurdistan, a proud people numbering some 30 million, perhaps the largest people in the world today lacking in the exercise of their right to self-determination.

The Kurds have resided in their present homelands for thousands of years. Kurdish Guti kings ruled Persia and Mesopotamia over 4,000 years ago. Before that, the Neolithic revolution probably first took place in Kurdistan, around 7000 B.C., 3,500 years before similar developments in Europe.

Some of the earliest towns and villages, as well as other human settlements, have been discovered in Kurdistan. Yet, one of the largest nations in the Middle East is prevented from exercising sovereignty over any part of its own land. It is an international colony, governed over by the states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

The Kurdish people suffer from ghastly atrocities committed by all four regimes. Over one half of Kurdistan and nearly two-thirds of the Kurdish population are under Turkish control, an occupation legitimized in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which reneged on a promise to Kurds and Armenians in the earlier 1920 Treaty of Sevres. That promise envisioned the creation of a Kurdish state on Kurdish territory in the aftermath of World War I. The Lausanne Treaty legitimized the Turkish massacres against the Armenians which had already taken place and set the stage for a stepped-up campaign of genocide against the Kurds in subsequent years.

Turkish states have been responsible for a long string of ethnic cleansings ever since. Historian James Tashjian has estimated that over 2½ million people perished in a 100-year period between 1822 and 1922.

□ 1800

Among them were Greeks, Nestorians, Maronites, Syrians, Bulgarians, Yezidis, Jacobites, and Armenians. He acknowledged that these figures did not include over 500,000 Kurds murdered, deported, or displaced in the same period.

Between 1925 and 1938, an additional 1 million Kurds were reported slaughtered. Almost the entire Armenian population under Turkish control had previously been exterminated, over 1½ million people.

Today, Turkish Special Komandos actually collect rewards for the severed heads of Kurdish guerrillas and others, casually referring to their victims as Armenians, leaving no doubt as to what is in store for the Kurds and their national aspirations.

"Special action teams," as they are called, color their faces green and white. The paint, as well as 80 percent of Turkey's military hardware and equipment, is furnished by the United States, much of it at the taxpayer's expense.

Today, seven Kurdish members of parliament are in prison in Turkey. Most prominent among them is Leyla Zana, the recipient of the Sakharov Freedom Award. Andrei Sakharov came to the defense of the Kurds in 1989, when he declared, and I quote, "The tragic struggle of the Kurdish people, which has continued for so long, originates in the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, and for this reason, it is a just struggle."

Human Rights Watch, Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International and a variety of other human rights groups have devoted much attention to Turkish depredations against the Kurds in recent years. They note that over 20,000 people have been killed since 1984, over 3,000 villages destroyed with rampant torture, murder, displacement and imprisonment directed at the Kurdish population.

The repression by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq has been more widely publicized. Over 200,000 Kurds were killed in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war, and over 4,000 Kurdish villages have been destroyed over the past three decades by Iraqi forces. Three tons of documents and other materials related to the post-Iran-Iraq war "Anfal" campaign are stored away by the U.S. Government. I call upon the State Department to release them for general inspection by interested parties. I believe they would confirm the crimes against humanity carried out by the Iraqi regime in Kurdistan.

It is imperative that we affirm a human rights linkage with any foreign aid given by the United States and to oppose the furnishing of lethal equipment to those who would use it for repressive purposes. Never again should United States-made chemical weapons be used against the Kurds or against anybody else, as they were at the ancient Kurdish city of Halabia, where

over 5,000 Kurdish civilians, mostly women and children, were gassed to death in March 1988.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to reverse our longstanding policy and recognize the existence of Kurdistan and the rights of its citizens to exercise the prerogatives and liberties which every people without exception should and must enjoy.

We should use our influence to help resolve the Kurds' internal conflict and support their unity in the effort to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination. We must stop looking at whole nations in terms of the profitability of oil companies and as assets to be deployed in big power maneuvering. We must ban the export of chemical weapons. Both Iraq and Turkey have used lethal weapons against the Kurds which were furnished by the United States. Cluster bombs are continuing to be sold to Turkey and continuing to be used in bombing runs against Kurdish villages and areas.

Iran also continues to oppress the Kurds in its territory. The Shah's father, a Fascist sympathizer who was removed from his throne by the Allies in 1941, oversaw what was called the "sedentarization" policies which resulted in the disappearance of many Kurdish and other tribes. Khomeini's regime went after the Kurds almost immediately upon assuming power over Iran in 1979. Leaders of the major Kurdish party resisting Iranian domination have been repeatedly assassinated by agents of the government, often in European settings.

The Kurdish plight at the hands of Iran has received surprisingly little notice in America, given our oft-stated concerns over the human rights violations of that regime.

We must stop viewing freedom for the Kurds as being some kind of threat to stability and instead welcome such freedom.

As was stated by Michael van Walt van Praag, an adviser to the Dalai Lama of Tibet, and again I quote, "The potential for explosive disintegration lurks in all states where the people are prohibited from exercising their right to self-determination. We must move away from our misguided view of stability premised on immediate short-term economic and political considerations to a long-term perspective which will ensure the peaceful coexistence of all peoples. Universal recognition is the cornerstone and, indeed, the sine qua non of a truly peaceful and stable world."

According to Justice William O. Douglas, who visited the Kurds nearly 50 years ago, "The Kurds have a saying: The world is a rose; smell it and pass it to your friends."

The source of such resources as water, oil, gas and agricultural wealth, Kurdistan has much to share with neighboring peoples in the world, once the pall of oppression has been lifted and they can manage their own affairs and control their own resources and their own destiny.

President John F. Kennedy was right when he said that "There can be no doubt that if all nations refrain from interfering in the self-determination of others, the peace would be much more assured."

And Dwight D. Eisenhower underscored the point when he declared that "Any nation's right to a form of government and an economic system of its own choosing is inalienable. Any nation's attempt to dictate to other nations their form of government is indefensible."

We must apply these principles to our dealings with the Kurds and their aspirations. United States military aid to Turkey should be halted pending a review of Turkish policies toward Kurdistan. Kurdish initiatives for peaceful resolution of conflicts related to the occupation of Kurdistan should be supported.

Above all, we must recognize the Kurds as a people with the right to self-determination, a right held sacred by liberty-loving Americans, a right that should be enjoyed by all people in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I hope to speak about this at a later time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in this effort to focus more attention on the plight of the Kurdish people. I want to thank my colleague from California, Mr. FILNER, for taking this time to discuss the ongoing human tragedy in the mountains of Kurdistan.

About half of the worldwide Kurdish community lives within the borders of the Republic of Turkey, where their treatment is an absolute affront to the basic fundamentals of human rights. At least one-quarter of the population of Turkey is Kurdish. Yet, in Turkey, the Kurds are subjected to a policy of forced assimilation, which is essentially written into the Turkish constitution. To date, 3,124 Kurdish villages have been destroyed, and more than 3 million of their residents have been forced to become refugees, either in Kurdistan or abroad.

While the situation for the Kurdish people in such nations as Iraq, Iran, and Syria is also deplorable, I wish to draw particular attention to the situation in Turkey for some basic reasons. Turkey is, after all, a military ally of the United States, a member of NATO. As such, Turkey has received billions of dollars in military and economic assistance—courtesy of the American taxpayers. In addition, Turkey aspires to participate in other major Western organizations and institutions, such as the European Union.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that most Americans would be frankly appalled to know that a country that has received so much in the way of American largesse is guilty of so many breaches of international law and simple human decency. I have joined with many of my colleagues in denouncing Turkey's illegal blockade of Armenia, its failure to acknowledge responsibility for the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923, its ongoing illegal occupation of Cyprus, and its threatening military maneuvers in the Aegean Sea. The brutal treatment of the more than 15 million Kurds living within Turkish borders offers a major argument for cutting back on military and economic aid to Turkey, or to at least attach very stringent conditions

to the provision of this aid. If Turkey wants the benefits of inclusion in Western institutions that are supposed to be founded on the defense of democracy and human rights, then that country should start living up to the agreements it has signed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on behalf of one of the most prominent victims of Turkey's cruel irrational anti-Kurd policies. Mrs. Leyla Zana was elected to a seat in the Turkish Parliament in 1991, representing her hometown of Diyarbakir. She was elected with 84 percent of the total vote. She became the first Kurd to break the ban on the Kurdish language in the Turkish Parliament, for which she was later tried and convicted. She had uttered the following words: "I am taking this [constitutional] oath for the brotherhood of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples."

On May 17, 1993, she and her colleague Ahmet Turk addressed the Helsinki Commission of the United States Congress. This testimony was used against her in the court of law. On March 2, 1994, her constitutional immunity as a member of Parliament was revoked, and she was arrested, taken into custody, tried, in a one-sided mockery of justice, convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Leyla Zana, who is 35 years old and the mother of two children, is in the third year of her 15-year sentence at a prison in Ankara, the Turkish capital.

Leyla Zana's pursuit of democratic change by non-violent means was honored by the European Parliament, which unanimously awarded her the 1995 Sakharov Peace Prize. She has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. I know that some of my colleagues are circulating a letter to the President on her behalf, and I hope a majority of the Members of this House will join with the European Parliament in defending the human and civil rights of this brave woman—and, I might remind my colleagues—a fellow Parliamentarian, a fellow-elected official. We owe her our moral support, and to urge our ambassador in Ankara to raise Mrs. Zana's case with the Turkish authorities at the highest levels.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with the Members of this Body, and anyone watching us, some of the basic goals of Mrs. Zana and of the repressed Kurdish people of Turkey: The Kurdish identity must be recognized; The use of the Kurdish language in conversation and in writing should be legalized; All cultural rights should be conceded; Kurdish political parties must be given full Constitutional rights; and A general amnesty for all political prisoners must be granted.

Mr. Speaker, we often hear—from our own administration, from other apologists for Turkey—about what a great democracy the Republic of Turkey is. Yet this is how a duly elected representative of that so-called democracy is being treated, for the crime of speaking her language and defending the rights of her people.

Mr. Speaker, this cannot go on. For many years we have witnessed a clear pro-Turkish tilt on the part of the State Department. We often hear about the strategic importance of Turkey, its pivotal location. I don't discount these arguments completely. But we have to balance these factors against some other very important considerations. Turkey continues to spend billions of dollars on obtaining sophisticated weapons systems, not only from the United States, but from France, Russia, and

elsewhere. Much of this military hardware is then used to repress and terrorize the Kurdish people, citizens of Turkey who should be extended the protection of their country's armed forces, and not be victimized by those armed forces. Meanwhile, Turkey does not have a strong industrial base and is lacking in infrastructure in many key areas. Why is Turkey, our ally, throwing away so much of its limited resources on sophisticated weapons to use against its Kurdish residents, when it could be investing in better schools, health care and other services that could help put Turkey on a par with the Western nations it seeks to be associated with?

Mr. Speaker, last week I led a special order in this House commemorating the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923, committed by the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Just yesterday, I joined with members of the Armenian-American community for an observance of the anniversary of the unleashing of the Genocide. In recalling this well-documented part of history, the existence of which Turkey continues to officially deny, we often point out that the importance of remembering the past is to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we are currently witnessing a similar tragedy in Kurdistan. True, the Kurdish people have not been slaughtered on the scale that the Armenians were in the early part of this century. To some extent, the greater scrutiny that exists today—through satellite imaging and instantaneous communication—may be playing some role in restraining the Turkish Government. But there is a certain similarity to the pattern: A concerted effort by a Turkish government to wipe out the presence of a non-Turkic people which has lived in the region for centuries.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close my remarks with a statement from Lord Eric Avebury, the chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group of the British House of Lords, who recently visited Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan. He cited a quote, dating from AD 84, from the Roman historian Tacitus describing the Roman conquest of Britain: "Ubi solitudo facit, pacem appellant." "They made it a desolation and called it peace." Mr. Speaker, let us resolve not to let the entire land and nation of Kurdistan be made into a desolation.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BERRY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. WELDON of Florida) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HANSEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELDON of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ARMEY, for 5 minutes, today.