

It is time for us to take that simple step to reduce unnecessary gun violence. It is time for the Federal Government to step forward and stop purchasing firearms for our use that do not have smart gun technology that ensures that that gun that we give to a law enforcement officer cannot be used against him or her, to personalize the weapon. Similarly, we would not think of having an automobile that did not have a key that personalized its use, so we should do the same with firearms.

There are other important areas that we have tried to bring before people in this Chamber. Law enforcement wants us to help them tackle the all-too-frequent problems of firearm violence. Fifteen States have child access protection laws which make it harder for children to gain access to guns.

We have had the tragic example of Jonesboro, Arkansas where the children's first stop was at a home that used safe storage of the weapons. There, even using a blowtorch, they were unable to get access to weapons. They went to the next home, and there the weapons were open and accessible. The rest is tragic history.

The horror that we witnessed yesterday in Colorado is part of a larger pattern. How many more examples are we going to have to witness before we come to our senses on the floor of this Chamber and take simple steps?

There is no one single solution to solve the epidemic of gun violence, but we have the responsibility to undertake these simple, common sense steps. I pray the Republican leadership will allow us to vote on some of them in the course of this session.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

84TH COMMEMORATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, today I come to the floor to again commemorate the anniversary of one of the darkest stains on the history of modern civilization, the genocide of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

I greatly appreciate the strong support of so many of our colleagues in this effort, especially the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), my fellow cochairman of the Armenian Issues Caucus. I commend him for arranging this special order and for his

continued dedication to these vitally important issues.

I would also like to recognize the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) for introducing a resolution calling for a collection of all U.S. records relating to the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I wish, as every Member does, that this special order did not have to take place. We would like to believe that such a tragedy could never have happened in the modern world because it is painful to accept that man is capable of committing and tolerating such atrocities.

Unfortunately, we have seen over and over the tragic results of hatred and ignorance: the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and today the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Far too often the so-called civilized nations of the world have turned a blind eye.

I cannot stand here at this moment and talk about genocide without mentioning a genocide which is happening right now before our eyes. Today the United States is not sitting by and simply watching this happen, unlike its reaction to the Armenian genocide 84 years ago. The United States is embarking on a new phase of foreign policy.

This is perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the first time in all of human history that the greatest power in the world is not using its power with the aim of advancing itself and its own interests, but with the intent of protecting and defending a group of oppressed people. The American people can be proud that we are finally using every effort to stop the ethnic cleansing of innocent people. These efforts were not made in the past, resulting in the genocides of the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Armenia. They are, thank God, being made today.

Today, I come to the House floor to commemorate a very specific genocide which began on April 24, 1915. On that date, over 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested in Istanbul and killed, marking the beginning of an 8-year campaign which resulted in the destruction of the ethnic Armenian community which had previously lived in Anatolia and Western Armenia. Between 1915 and 1923, approximately 1.5 million Armenians were killed and more than 500,000 were exiled.

The U.S. Government was aware of what was happening during these tragic years. U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. sent back graphic descriptions of death marches and mass killings, as did other Western diplomats. Although the U.S. and others voiced concerns about the atrocities and sent humanitarian assistance, little was actually done to stop the massacres.

The Armenian genocide was the first genocide of the modern age and has been recognized as a precursor of subsequent attempts to destroy a race through an official systematic effort.

We must call this what it was, genocide, and we must never forget that it happened. Congress has consistently demanded recognition of the historic fact of the Armenian genocide.

The modern German government, although not itself responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust, has taken responsibility for and apologized for it. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Turkish government continues to deny that the Armenian genocide even happened. This, unfortunately, is consistent with the Turkish government's position that it, today, has no problem concerning the rights of its Kurdish population.

Armenia and Armenians will remain vigilant to ensure that this tragic history is not repeated. The United States should do all that it can in this regard as well, including a clear message about the historic fact of the Armenian genocide. We do Turkey no favors by enabling her self-delusion, and we make ourselves hypocrites when we fail to sound the alarm on what is happening in Turkey today.

Armenia, Mr. Speaker, has made amazing progress in rebuilding a society and a nation, a triumph of the human spirit in the face of dramatic obstacles. Armenia is committed to democracy, market economics and the rule of law. We must continue to take a strong stand in Congress in support of these principles and respect for human rights, and I am proud to stand with Armenia in so doing.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I join many of my colleagues today in remembering and acknowledging the atrocities endured by the people of Armenia earlier this century.

Eighty-four years ago, on the night of April 24, 1915, the Turkish government placed hundreds of the most prominent public figures in the Armenian community under arrest. They were apprehended and sent to prison. In the end, most of these cultural leaders and scholars were executed. The most disturbing part is that these deaths were only the beginning as an attempted extinction of an entire civilization was to shortly follow. For this reason, April 24 is commemorated as the date of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide.

The atrocities committed against the Armenian people during this time can be categorized as a genocide because such an organized killing of a people would require the central planning and resources only a government is capable of implementing. The Armenian Genocide was centrally planned and administered by the Ottoman Empire against the entire Armenian population under its rule. It was carried out during World War I between the years 1915 and 1918. The Armenian people were subjected to deportation, torture, massacre, and starvation. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forcibly moved from Armenia and sent to the desert to die of thirst and starvation. Others were methodically massacred throughout the region.

Most estimates illustrate that one and a half million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923. There were an estimated two million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I, and more than one million Armenians were deported in 1915. Hundreds of thousands more were either killed or died of hunger or exhaustion.

Even after the systematic and deliberate actions of the Ottoman empire and the millions of Armenian lives that were taken, there still remains a denial on the part of the Turkish government that this genocide actually occurred. This is a mistake. This is wrong.

Our world today is filled with nations fighting against one another. The lives of thousands of men, women, and children are taken every day from these conflicts. If we hope to ever stop these merciless killings and ensure that lives can be saved, it is imperative that we acknowledge the perilous acts of our past. We can learn from our history and make sure that it never repeats itself.

Today, I join my colleagues in condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians and continue to emphasize our need to prevent similar tragedies from developing. We must recognize and openly acknowledge the atrocities committed against humanity before we are able to prevent them from happening again in the future.

I am proud to have been able to participate in this special tribute to the Armenian community.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise, along with my colleagues, in solemn commemoration of the events of April 24th, 1915. On that day, a group of leaders of the Armenian community in Turkey was murdered. That fateful day marked the beginning. By 1923, about a million and a half Armenians had been killed and 500,000 more had been deported. The Armenian community of the Ottoman Empire was uprooted, as this bloody century witnessed its first genocide.

Many survivors came to the United States to rebuild their lives. As a community and as individuals, they attained remarkable successes, contributing greatly to their new homeland and consolidating Armenians' longstanding reputation for resourcefulness and resilience. But they never forgot their roots or their ancient homeland or the terrible wrong done to them. Our remarks today demonstrate our solidarity with them as they grieve over their losses, even while contemplating how much Armenia and Armenians have accomplished in this century.

Every commemoration of the Armenian Genocide is somber. But 1999's ceremonies are especially so. After all these years, after all the invocations and prayers, after all the memorials, it is horrifying to realize that the century is ending as it began. Once again, a government is using all its instruments of war against a civilian population solely because of its ethnic and religious affiliation. In Kosovo, marauding soldiers and paramilitary groups are terrorizing and killing men, women and children, in the implementation of a deliberate policy devised by truly evil people, led by Slobodan Milosevic. The twisted drive for "purity" is bad enough when reflecting the sincere convictions of intolerant and unenlightened masses of people; but it is somehow even more awful when stirred and manipulated by cynical politicians, determined to hang on to power and willing to employ literally any means—even the most unconscionably savage—to do so. The worst instincts of the human heart are claiming new victims, despite our earnest pledges that such atrocities would never happen again.

In this century, Armenian Christians, European Jews, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia—among others—have been singled out

as targets. The fate that has befallen them all demonstrates the universality of the lesson of their suffering. If the international community ignores the massacre of minorities, its perpetrators will be emboldened. Though nothing can compensate the Armenians for the losses of the genocide, the sacrifice they made earlier this century helped change the world's consciousness. I pray that we have learned from the hard lesson taught us by the Armenians and their sufferings. Days of commemoration are meant to honor those who have gone before us, and hopefully the lessons learned will provide some solace to the grieving on this sacred day.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide that took place in Turkey between 1915 and 1923. This antecedent for all subsequent 20th-century genocides began on April 24, 1915, when the rulers of the Ottoman Empire began the systematic and ruthless extermination of the Armenian minority in Turkey. By the end of the Terror, more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children had been massacred and more than half a million others had been expelled from the homeland that their forbearers had inhabited for three millennia.

Last weekend I traveled to the Kosovo war zone with other members of a bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Delegation. The official briefings were important and informative; but the visit to a refugee camp was staggering. I saw whole landscapes of misery, broad vistas of suffering, vast panoramas of despair and destruction. Yet I heard very little. The silence was deafening. It was the sound of deep sadness. I was in Macedonia, but I suspect that the scenes I was witnessing are reminiscent of the Anatolian plateau circa 1920, when the Armenian population was experiencing a demographic disaster of Biblical proportions.

As we enter the Third Millennium of the Christian Era, it behooves us to remember. If we ignore the lessons of the Armenian Genocide, then we are destined to continue our stumblings through the long, dark tunnel of endless ethnic-cleansings, genocides, and holocausts. Let us, then, remember to remember.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and commemorate the Armenian genocide of 1915 through 1923. Each year, we pause from our legislative schedule to pay tribute to those killed in the terrible Armenian Genocide, which began in 1915 under the Ottoman Empire. We take time to remember those who were forcibly removed from their homeland and relocated, killed or imprisoned solely for their Armenian heritage. One reason we do this is to draw importance to the event so it never happens again. Unfortunately, we are in the midst of another ethnic cleansing in the Balkans.

One and one half million people perished during the Armenian genocide. Virtually the entire Armenian population was eliminated from the Ottoman Empire in the eight years of the Armenian Genocide. This terrible point in history marked the first genocide of the 20th Century. It is a sad and shameful period in history. We must remember it, and work toward preventing such terrible atrocities in the future.

In my district in Southwestern Illinois, there is a significant population of Armenian-Americans. I would like to pay special tribute to those survivors who eventually made their way

to the 12th District. These survivors suffered terrible atrocities and upheaval. They have never forgotten their ordeal, and through them we hear their history. These survivors are an important link to a past that we cannot ignore. Many in the Armenian community in my district attend St. Gregory's Armenian Apostolic Church in Granite City, Illinois. St. Gregory's has a strong tradition of preserving Armenian heritage and remembering the atrocities of the Genocide of 1915–1923.

I would like to mention that I am a cosponsor of Rep. RADANOVICH and BONIOR's resolution which affirms the U.S. record on the Armenian Genocide. This important resolution calls on the President to collect and house all relevant U.S. records on the Armenian Genocide and provide them to the House International Relations Committee, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia. The legacy of the genocide must be remembered.

Each year, my colleagues and I take to this floor to pay tribute to the victims of a terrible crime against humanity. This is just one way in which the Congress can continue to pay recognition to those who were killed during this terrible episode in Armenia's history. It is my sincere hope that we and future generations will never forget these atrocities.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on one of the most atrocious 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 co-chairs 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.

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, one hundred and seventy-eight 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. This atrocity lasted from 1915 till 1923. In the end, one and one half million Armenians had been systematically eliminated 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, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that we take a moment to reflect upon the hardships endured by the Armenians. In the face of adversity the Armenian people have persevered. The survivors of the genocide and their descendants have made great contributions to every country in which they have settled—including the United States, where Armenians have made their mark in business, the professions and our cultural life.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to observe one of the most tragic events in our history, the Armenian Genocide, which took place during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Each year on April 24th, the Armenian community, along with their friends and supporters around the world gather in remembrance of the 1.5 million Armenians who lost their lives.

The facts on the Armenian genocide are well documented. By the direction of the Ottoman Government, thousands of Armenian citizens were ruthlessly killed in their eastern Anatolian villages. Hundreds of thousands more were forcibly deported to Syria and then marched into the desert and abandoned without water, food, or shelter. This tragedy of history has left deep scars in the hearts and minds of its survivors and their descendants. In remembrance of one of the twentieth century's darkest chapters, we must make a commitment to ourselves and to our children that such atrocities will not be allowed to repeat themselves ever again.

Following the war, hundreds of displaced Armenians came to the United States to rebuild their shattered lives. Their contribution, as well as that of their descendants, has greatly enriched American society. It is my hope that the memories of the past will serve to remind us of the importance of tolerance and respect for the diversity of our people.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation to Mr. PALLONE and Mr. PORTER for organizing this special order today to commemorate the Armenian genocide. This year, as NATO fights ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, it is especially important for us to remember the Armenian genocide, and to remember our promise of "never again."

On April 24, 1915, more than two hundred Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested and killed. From 1915 to 1923, 1½ million people lost their lives in the slaughter. Another half million lost their homes and property, and watched as the symbols of their religion and culture were destroyed.

Anyone who has studied or discussed these tragic events 84 years ago—not to mention the preposterous historical revisionism that still exist to this day—can fully understand how important this tribute is to the Armenian community in this country, some of whom still live with the memories of the horror.

Regrettably, the world's inaction in the face of these atrocities sent a message that human rights violations would be tolerated. The line from Armenia to Auschwitz is direct. When contemplating the destruction of the Jewish

people, Hitler is reported to have said, "who remembers the Armenians?"

This day is set aside to remind us that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. As we speak, in Yugoslavia, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is engaged in gross violations of the human rights of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. The images splashed across our television screens and newspapers of ethnic cleansing, forced deportations, and random executions there are horrors for which the Armenian genocide was a tragic precedent.

Today, we honor the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide, and vow once more that genocide will not go unnoticed and unmourned. We gather today to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to fight all crimes against humanity.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I rise today to join my colleagues in paying homage to the countless number of Armenians who were deprived of their freedom and senselessly killed because of their religious or political beliefs. The Armenian Genocide that occurred between 1915–1923 represents a disgraceful period in world history that should not be ignored or distorted.

Armenians have endured many hardships and unwarranted treatment by foreign countries throughout their history. This was most prevalent during the late 19th and early 20th century when Armenians were persecuted by Ottoman and Russian leaders for attempting to reform their political system. The Ottoman government, in particular, was responsible for causing the death of more than 1 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923. As disgraceful as these acts were, the Armenian people persevered and eventually seceded from the USSR to become an independent state. In 1992 they became a member of the United Nations and in 1995 held their first open legislative elections as an independent country.

Although Armenia has made great strides to become an independent state, the scars of their past remain. The senseless acts of violence inflicted upon their ancestors deserve historical recognition. It is important to ensure that future generations are made aware of the countless number of Armenians who were killed because of their religious and political affiliation.

With similar acts of human rights violations occurring in the Balkans and elsewhere, the world should never forget the atrocities that occurred in Armenia.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I am once again rising to honor the anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide to remember the 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children who were killed, and the additional 500,000 Armenians who were forcibly deported by the Ottoman Empire during an eight-year reign of brutal repression.

As history reveals, a group of Armenian leaders were forcibly taken into Turkey on April 15, 1915, and subsequently murdered. Over the next eight years, Armenians were deprived of their homes, their humanity, and ultimately their lives. In addition, post-World War I did not see those who were responsible come to justice. Although the Allied Powers, England, France, and Russia, jointly issued a

statement that for the first time charged another nation with committing "a crime against humanity," war criminals were never brought to justice. In years to come, firsthand sources indicate that Hitler proclaimed, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians;" thus allowing him to believe that his "Final Solution" could not only begin but also would be forgotten.

It brings me great sadness to remark on these terrible events not only because of the tragedy itself but also because we are seeing history repeat itself in Kosovo. Genocides occur when humanity ignores the cries of those being exterminated and forgets to hold those responsible accountable. We cannot and should not let that happen again.

As we in Congress grapple with the problems of today, I ask that we learn from the terrible events of yesteryear and move to educate today's generation about the lessons we have learned. The fact that the United States still hasn't even formally recognized the Armenian Genocide remains a stain on our heritage and the values we hold dear to us. It is for this reason that I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the "U.S. Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution" that will be introduced this week. This resolution directs the President to provide a complete collection of all United States records related to the Armenian Genocide to document and affirm the United States record of protest and recognition of this crime against humanity. Co-sponsoring this resolution is a small step but an important one.

In closing, I would like to thank Representatives PALLONE and PORTER for their ongoing support of Armenian issues and for organizing this special order remembering the people and events surrounding the Armenian Genocide. I am proud of my Armenian heritage and the contributions of so many Armenians to our great nation. It is my sincere hope that we not forget this tragedy and that we learn from it so that we never repeat its course.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on this somber occasion to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and to remind our nation and the world about one of the greatest tragedies and darkest moments of the 20th Century.

On April 24, 1915, the Armenian Genocide began. Within the next eight years, 1.5 million Armenians had been massacred and 500,000 more had been deported during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. They were denied their freedom, deprived of their possessions, and systematically massacred.

For those who have spent years attempting to refute the facts or minimize the extent of this tragedy, the facts are indisputable. The Armenian Genocide is a fact, a disturbing fact. Those who deny it are guilty of historical sabotage, and just as guilty as those who continue to deny that six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust in Europe. I am certain that years from now some will also deny the human tragedy and ethnic cleansing taking place in Kosovo today.

Many survivors of the Armenian Genocide came to America in search of freedom. Their

stories, passed from one generation to the next, serve as a record of the horrors faced by millions. Their stories will help in our efforts to ensure that history is not distorted and that future generations are fully aware of what truly happened.

On this solemn day, I commend Armenian Americans for their contributions to our nation and join with them in paying tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and join with my colleagues in commemorating the 84th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I would like to thank the other members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and particularly the co-chairmen Mr. PORTER and Mr. PALLONE, for their tireless efforts in organizing this fitting tribute.

84 years ago Saturday, April 24, 1915, the nightmare in Armenia began. Hundreds of Armenian religious, political, and educational leaders were arrested, exiled, or murdered. These events marked the beginning of the systematic persecution of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire, and also launched the first genocide of the 20th century. Over the next eight years, 1.5 million Armenians were put to death and 500,000 more were exiled from their homes. These atrocities are among the most cruel and inhumane acts that have ever been recorded.

As we reflect today on the horrors that were initiated 84 years ago, I cannot help but be disturbed by those who wish to deny that these deeds occurred. Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary—eyewitness accounts, official archives, photographic evidence, diplomatic reports, and testimony of survivors—they reject the claim that genocide, or any other crime for that matter, was perpetrated against Armenians. Well, History tells a different story.

Let me read a quote from Henry Morgenthau, Sr., U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time: "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, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact." * * *

The world knows the truth about this tragic episode in human affairs. We will not allow those who wish to rewrite History to absolve themselves from responsibility for their actions. This evening's event here in the House of Representatives is testament to that fact. We can only hope that the recognition and condemnation of this, and other instances of genocide, will prevent a similar instance from happening again as we move into the 21st Century. I would like to once again thank the organizers of this event and I would like to once again reaffirm my sincere thanks for being given the opportunity to participate in this solemn remembrance.

Ms. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, April 24th marks the 84th 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 twentieth 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, ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, 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 other 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 six 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 overwhelming international condemnation, Azerbaijan continues its blockade of U.S. 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 Nagorno-Karabagh, and created thousands of refugees. The U.S. must stand firm against Azerbaijan's brazen violations of international law 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 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. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise somberly to remember and commemorate the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide.

During the final years of the Ottoman Empire, from 1915–1923, 1.5 million Armenians had been massacred and 500,000 more were forcibly removed from their native land. April 24 is the day which is annually remembered by not only the world's Armenian community, but by people all over the world who hold basic human rights sacred. On this day in 1915, hundreds of Armenian leaders and intellectuals were arrested in Constantinople and killed. Additionally, thousands more were murdered in the streets. The attempt at systematic extermination of the Armenian people was conducted over the next eight years.

The lack of an international response to this disaster is frightening. Hitler saw this as proof that he could carry out the holocaust with no consequences, and, like tyrants afterward, used the Armenian Genocide as a blueprint for his campaign of terror.

Unfortunately, the Turkish government, despite overwhelming evidence, refuses even

today to acknowledge that the genocide ever occurred. The disaster we commemorate today has sadly been repeated often throughout the century. Today we sometimes refer to it as ethnic cleansing, but it all adds up to the same result—mass murder. We see this terror continue throughout the world today. In Somalia, Hutus systematically murdered hundreds of thousands of Tutsis, and afterward received refugee assistance from the United Nations once the Tutsis gained control. The massacre of Christians and other peoples in Somalia by Muslims goes practically unnoticed by the world.

Today we must make sure that we never forget the Armenian Genocide, and work to ensure that individuals who commit these atrocities are brought to justice.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Houston on this very sad day. In Colorado, parents are grieving their murdered sons and daughters. In the Balkans, Albanian refugees are running for their lives, having been kicked out of their homes by Serbian thugs who rape, torture, and kill their former neighbors. In central Africa, civil wars are rocking the Cargo furthering the horror started there by the genocidal murders of Hutus and Tutsis. In China, North Korea and Cuba, communist dictators continue to deny their citizens basic human rights and imprison anyone who dissents.

That is the world today. But I rise, joining my colleagues, to remind the world of a genocide that happened 84 years ago in the part of the world we now call Turkey. On April 24, 1915 more than 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders from Constantinople—what is Istanbul—were arrested and sent into exile. By silencing the leading representatives of the Armenian people, the government of the Ottoman Empire was able to proceed with its premeditated and methodical extermination of the Armenian people. Between 1915 and 1923, more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were deported, forced into slave labor concentration camps, tortured, and murdered. The goal of this atrocity was to remove all traces of the Armenian people and their rich heritage from Anatolia.

At the time, the world had not coined such terms as concentration camps, genocide, ethnic cleansing or holocaust. It is tragic that in this century we have had to come up with new words to describe Man's inhumanity to Man. And it is tragic that as we end this century, history is repeating itself as Serbs in Yugoslavia unleash their cruelty upon the Kosovar people.

It is vital that we remember the countless victims of the Turkish genocide against the Armenians. We honor the memory of those killed and the bravery of those who, having been forced out of their homes and off their land, traveled throughout the world and re-established themselves in distant lands far from home.

We remember, Mr. Speaker. We remember and we speak here today so that History will record that 80 years later, the victims of this genocide are not forgotten. It is important that people like Mr. Slobodan Milosevic and other tyrants around the world realize that we do not forget and we will not let the world forget the evils they perpetrate against their own people.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise along with many of my colleagues, to commemorate

the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923. Many of us here are already quite familiar with the details: on April 24, 1915, 84 years ago this week, over two hundred Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were executed by the Turkish government. This mass execution was not an isolated incident, but rather was the beginning of a systematic campaign perpetrated by the Ottoman Turk government. These executions had also been preceded by a historic pattern of persecution officially sanctioned by the Ottoman Sultan. To Armenians around the world, April 24th marks the start of an organized campaign by the government of Ottoman Turkey to completely eliminate the Armenian population from the Ottoman Empire. During the following eight years, from 1915–1923, 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives, whether directly or indirectly at the hands of the Ottoman government.

I stand here before my colleagues to also praise the efforts that we make today to end persecution and genocide around the world. I rise not as a Democrat or a Republican, but as a human being, honoring the memory of those massacred, so that this will never happen again. It is our responsibility and obligation as humans to acknowledge these tragic events in history and to ensure that the memories of those massacred are honored and respected for all time. In that light, we must not allow the Turkish government's denials of the Armenian genocide to go unanswered. Explaining away the Genocide as a series of internal conflicts during and after WW I that caused the unfortunate death of many Armenian people, not only insults the memories of the victims and survivors, but also offends our own sensibilities. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that events such as the Armenian Genocide are not forgotten and NEVER repeated. As a Congressman, a Jew, and as a person, I stand here today to honor the memory of those who have been massacred by totalitarian governments throughout history. In fact, there are many comparisons between the suffering of the Armenian people and the Jewish people. Quite simply, just as we pledge to never forget the tragedy of the Holocaust, we must also not let the Armenian Genocide go unacknowledged, as that would be the equivalent of forgetting. The obvious lesson in this is that we must not ever turn our backs to the suffering of any people. In fact, I think this lesson resonates loudly in our actions today in Kosovo.

Lastly, I want to thank my colleagues, Congressmen JOHN PORTER and FRANK PALLONE, for leading this effort in the House of Representatives. Their combined leadership on the Armenian Issues Caucus makes us all proud to work together on this issue of concern to all human beings.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I join Armenians throughout the United States and around the world on this solemn day of remembrance commemorating the genocide of innocent Armenian people perpetrated during the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. On this day, the 84th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide committed in Ottoman Turkey from 1915 to 1923, it is crucial that we recall the horrific events of this dark chapter in world history and dedicate ourselves to preventing such atrocities in the future.

History shows that in 1915 the systematic massacre of Armenian political, religious, and intellectual figures began. This slaughter con-

tinued until 1923, although the memories of this campaign of terror still haunt us today. From 1915–1923, the Armenian population was expelled from their homeland. One and a half million Armenians lost their lives and over 500,000 surviving refugees rebuilt their lives outside of Armenia, many of them coming to the United States to build their new homes. The Armenian-American population, many of whom reside in my district, have prospered in the United States and contributed to our cultural enrichment, enhanced our diversity and become strong members of our society.

Despite the calculated effort to banish the Armenian people from their land and eradicate Armenian culture and tradition, today the Republic of Armenia is striving to establish a strong and progressive nation committed to establishing democratic institutions and ideals. The Armenian government has launched a program of industrial reform, privatized agricultural land, and made substantial progress in small-enterprise privatization. Armenia has also made an effort to take steps to resolve the Karabagh conflict and moved to stabilize its economy based upon free market principles. I am proud we are here today to demonstrate American solidarity in our support of Armenian efforts to achieve a bright future.

As we acknowledge the 84th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, we join with our Armenian friends in remembering those who lost their lives as a result of this terrible tragedy. While we reflect upon the past and commit ourselves to learning from the history of this humanitarian disaster, we also look forward to a brighter future for Armenia. We look forward to a time in which Armenia will, we hope, grow prosperous, achieve economic strength, and, above all, enjoy peace.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, in a dark time in Europe, a nation slowly collapsed. At this tumultuous time of great societal transformations, uncertain futures, and with governmental change looming on the horizon, leaders fell back on the one proven weapon that assured their personal survival. It is a weapon that feeds upon fear, desperation, and hatred. It transforms the average citizen into a zealot, no longer willing to listen to reason. This weapon is, of course, nationalism. Its result is ethnic strife and senseless genocide, committed in the name of false beliefs preached by immoral, irresponsible, reprehensible leaders.

Today I rise not to speak of the present, but in memory of the victims of the past, who suffered needlessly in the flames of vicious, destructive nationalism. On April 24, 1915, the leaders of the Ottoman government tragically chose to systematically exterminate an entire race of people. We gather in solemn remembrance of the results of that decision, remembering the loss of one-and-a-half million Armenians.

The story of the Armenian genocide is in itself appalling. It is against everything our government—and indeed all governments who strive for justice—stands for; it represents the most wicked side of humanity. What makes the Armenian story even more unfortunate is history has repeated itself in all corners of the world, and lessons that should have been learned long ago have been ignored.

We must not forget the Armenian genocide, the holocaust, Rwanda, or Bosnia. Today, on this grim anniversary, we must remember why our armed forces fight in the skies over Yugoslavia.

We must not sit idly by and be spectators to the same kind of violence that killed so many Armenians; we must not watch as innocent Kosovars are brutalized not for what they have done, but simply for who they are. Ethnic cleansing is genocide and cannot be ignored by a just and compassionate country. We owe it to the victims of past genocides to stamp out this form of inhumanity.

It is an honor and privilege to represent a large and active Armenian population, many who have family members who were persecuted by their Ottoman Turkish rulers. Michigan's Armenian-American community has done much to further our state's commercial, political, and intellectual growth, just as it has done in communities across the country. And so I also rise today to honor the triumph of the Armenian people, who have endured adversity and bettered our country.

But again, Mr. Speaker, it is also my hope that in honoring the victims of the past, we learn one fundamental lesson from their experience: Never Again!

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in commemorating the 84th 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 20th 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.

Over 8 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. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in remembering the Armenian people who lost their lives in one of history's greatest atrocities, the Armenian genocide. Today, the importance of such a commemoration could not be more timely, as our brave troops in Yugoslavia struggle to stop another similar atrocity. As new reports of ethnic cleansing, torture and rape continue to arise in the Balkans, I believe it is especially important that the United States officially recognize this horrible episode.

Mr. Speaker, despite attempts to minimize its effect, the Armenian Genocide is a historical fact. This was an episode so terrible that our ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time, Henry Morgenthau, commented, "The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."

On April 24, 1915, Turkish officials arrested and exiled more than 200 Armenian political, intellectual and religious leaders. This symbolic cleansing of Armenian leaders began a reign of terror against the Armenian people that lasted for the next 8 years, and resulted in the death of more than 1.5 million Armenians. In the assault, another 500,000 Armenians were exiled from their homes.

Acts of deportations, torture, enslavement and mass executions obliterated the Armenian population and changed the world forever. These mass exterminations and incidents of ethnic cleansing are the first examples of genocide this century, and have often been referred to as the precursor to the Nazi Holocaust.

Mr. Speaker, the accounts by survivors of this incident are chillingly similar to those we are currently hearing from those lucky enough to escape Milosevic's terror in Yugoslavia. It is amazing how often history will repeat itself, and how often we don't listen to the past. The memory of the Armenian Genocide, no matter how cruel and brutal, must serve as a lesson to us all to never ignore such actions. We owe that to the Armenian people who showed such bravery in a time of great pain and tragedy.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on this occasion each year we remember the terrible events that took place in Ottoman Turkey 84 years ago.

While the rise of independent Armenia just 8 years ago serves as a clear symbol of the Armenian nation's will to survive, the tragic events that occurred over 80 years ago should not be forgotten—and have not been forgotten.

Beginning in 1915, the decaying Ottoman Empire, in a final struggle against its own disintegration, engaged in a genocidal campaign of executions and attacks against many of its ethnic Armenian residents in a vain effort to turn the tide of the First World War.

Those attacks, while failing to turn the tide of war, resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of lives of innocent men, women and children.

This special order today honors those victims and commemorates their untimely deaths.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said on earlier occasions, I am hopeful that, as we today honor the memory of those who lost their lives long before the Armenian nation regained its independence, we can nonetheless look forward to that day when the new, independent Republic of Armenia and its people will live in peace with their neighbors—a peace that will never see Armenian men, women and children subjected to the horrors and atrocities their ancestors experienced over 80 years ago.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that later this week I will be joined by my colleagues Mr. ROGAN, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. PALLONE and a bipartisan group of legislators in introducing legislation to affirm the U.S. historical record on the Armenian Genocide.

We take this step to bring together in a collection all the U.S. records on the Armenian

genocide and then to provide this collection to the House International Relations Committee, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, here in Washington, DC, and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

In so doing, we reaffirm the principled stand taken by U.S. diplomats, religious leaders, and government officials during the years of the Genocide, and in the years since that terrible tragedy.

Our archives contain extensive documentation of the widespread opposition to Ottoman Turkey's brutal massacres and deportations. They contain, as well, records of the unprecedented efforts of the American people to bring relief to the survivors of this, the century's first genocide. As many in this Chamber know, the United States led the international humanitarian campaign to aid those who escaped the Genocide, the countless thousands who found refuge in the camps and orphanages established through the generosity of the American people.

In introducing this legislation, we also take a stand against those who would, in a cold political calculation, deny genocide, past or present. By affirming the U.S. historical record of the Armenian Genocide, we challenge this denial and reinforce our national resolve to prevent future genocide.

Please add your name today as a cosponsor of this legislation and join with me at the Armenian National Committee's Genocide Observance being held this evening in the Rayburn House Office Building.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, April 24, marks the 84th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. I rise today to commemorate this terrible chapter in human history, and to help ensure it will be forgotten.

On April 24, 1915, the Turkish government began to arrest Armenian community and political leaders. Many were executed without ever being charged with crimes. Soon thereafter the government deported most Armenians from Turkish Armenia, ordering that they resettle in what is now Syria. Many deportees never reached that destination. From 1915 to 1918, more than a million Armenians died of starvation or disease on long marches, or were massacred outright by Turkish forces. From 1918 to 1923, Armenians continued to suffer at the hands of the Turkish military, which eventually removed all remaining Armenians from Turkey.

We mark this anniversary of the start of the Armenian genocide because this tragedy for the Armenian people was a tragedy for all humanity. It is our duty to remember, to speak out and to teach future generations about the horrors of genocide and the oppression and terrible suffering endured by the Armenian people.

We should not be alone in commemorating these horrific events. We will know that humanity has progressed when it is not just the survivors who honor the dead but also when those whose ancestors perpetrated the horrors acknowledge their terrible responsibility and honor as well the memory of genocide's victims.

Sadly, we cannot say that such atrocities are history. We have only to recall the "killing fields" of Cambodia, mass ethnic killings in Bosnia and Rwanda, and "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo to see that the threat of genocide persists. We must renew our commitment never to remain indifferent in the face of such assaults on humanity.

We also remember this day because it is a time for us to celebrate the contribution of the Armenian community in America—including hundreds of thousands in California—to the richness of our character and culture. The strength they have displayed in overcoming tragedy to flourish in this country is an example for all of us. Their success is moving testimony to the truth that tyranny and evil cannot extinguish the vitality of the human spirit.

Surrounded by countries hostile to them, to this day the Armenian struggle continues. But now with an independent Armenian state, the United States has the opportunity to contribute to a true memorial to the past by strengthening Armenia's emerging democracy. We must do all we can through aid and trade to support Armenia's efforts to construct an open political and economic system.

Adolf Hitler, the architect of the Nazi Holocaust, once remarked "Who remembers the Armenians?" The answer is, we do. And we will continue to remember the victims of the 1915–23 genocide because, in the words of the philosopher George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Mr. LEVINJ. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join with my colleagues in Congress, Armenian Americans in my district, and Armenians all over the world as we commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Between 1894 and 1923, approximately 2 million Armenians were massacred, persecuted, or exiled by the Ottoman Empire. Today, fewer than 80,000 declared Armenians remain in Turkey. The Eastern provinces, the Armenian heartland, are virtually without Armenians. There are still Armenian refugees and internally displaced persons in Russia, an issue not well-known internationally. They face extreme difficulties and hardship.

The years since the Armenian Genocide have magnified its tragedy, not diminished it. It is true for the hundreds of thousands who lost their lives as well as their families for whom the void can never be filled.

It also has been true for all the world. The Holocaust of the 1930's and 1940's has been followed by a number of genocides in the last three decades. The failure of the Turkish government to acknowledge the sinful acts of its predecessors sent the wrong message to the rulers of Cambodia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia. It is especially poignant at this time to observe and remember the Genocide against the Armenian people in 1915 as the world watches man's inhumanity to men, women and children in Kosovo in 1999.

The failure of countries of the world to take prompt notice of these modern atrocities should remind all of us of the failure of other nations to promptly acknowledge the massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

There is more that the United States can do to ensure that history does not forget the Armenian genocide. Along with Representatives BONIOR and RADANOVICH, I will shortly join as an original cosponsor of the "United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution." This legislation calls on the President to collect all U.S. records on the Armenian Genocide and provide them to the House International Relations Committee, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

It is the duty of all of us to join Armenian Americans in remembering the Armenian

genocide. We have been fighting this battle for formal acknowledgment by the Turkish government for many years. We must not give in until the battle is won.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 84th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Like the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide stands as a historical example of the human suffering which persecution and intolerance have brought far too often this century.

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 the Armenian genocide took place. As recent events in the Balkans illustrate, to ignore the horror of such events almost assures their repetition in the future. Adolf 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 still refuses to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. The truth of this tragedy can never, and should never be denied. The ethnic Albanian refugees of Kosovo attest to the suffering which accompanies forced exile.

This 84th 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 Armenia and its neighbors, including Turkey, to come together, to work toward building relationships that will ensure 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?"

Let us take this opportunity today to contemplate the Armenian genocide, and with the global community standing as witnesses, affirm that we do remember them.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in somber recognition of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. This horrific tragedy claimed the lives of over one million Armenians in a nine-year campaign of systematic persecution, expulsion, and violence, and displaced at least a further 500,000 Armenians from their historic homeland in eastern Turkey.

Few Americans are aware that the Holocaust of World War II was in fact the second genocide of this century; for political reasons,

the United States government has long refused to recognize the Armenian exterminations and expulsions as a genocide. Make no mistake: this persecution was not the accidental and unfortunate by-product of a period of upheaval and chaos. From 1915 through 1923, the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire attempted to erase all trace of the Armenian people and culture from Turkey. In order to achieve this goal, government forces engaged in direct killing, starvation, torture, and forced death marches. The term "genocide" constitutes the only means sufficient to describe such an outrage, and the suffering of the Armenian people dictates that we acknowledge the Armenian genocide as such.

While paying tribute to the victims of the Armenian genocide, however, we must not forget to celebrate the fortitude and persistence of the Armenian people who have survived and thrived in spite of this persecution. The United States has a large Armenian-American population which has made significant and positive contributions to their communities and to this nation as a whole. The Republic of Armenia struggled through the turmoil of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to emerge as a force for democracy and a strong civil society in that region. The Armenian people have transformed tragedy into triumph, and I salute the power of their spirit.

As many of my colleagues may recognize, this anniversary becomes particularly poignant in light of the ongoing crisis in the Balkans today. I am reminded of the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, who observed, " * * * the Armenian genocide was the greatest crime of the war, and the failure to act against Turkey is to condone it * * * the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of guaranteeing the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense." Sadly, these words are all too applicable to the situation we now face in Kosovo and Serbia.

Hitler, when outlining the strategy that culminated in the "Final Solution," reportedly remarked: "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" Today, let us all prove Hitler wrong by not only remembering and mourning the Armenian genocide, but also by continuing our efforts on behalf of the Kosovar people to ensure that such a tragedy can never again be visited upon any people in this world.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I stand with my colleagues today to remember the Armenian genocide which occurred between 1915 and 1923.

Eighty four years ago the Ottoman Empire began a systematic eight-year purge of Armenians within its borders. Ultimately, 1.5 million men, women and children were executed. In addition, 500,000 Armenians were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in other countries. Many of those refugees came to the United States. In the decades since, these immigrants have made innumerable contributions to American society.

This first genocide of this century of genocides demonstrates the depths of brutality and evil that humanity can reach. By remembering it, we remember how important it is to work to prevent such evil from recurring.

I have a special connection to the fate that befell the Armenians, as my family has also fallen victim to ruthless genocide. My family was nearly destroyed by the genocide that Hit-

ler led throughout Europe against the Jews. Two of my grandparents were killed in the Holocaust. My father survived the extermination of his village by the Nazis and my mother spent the war fleeing the Nazis by going deeper and deeper into Russia. I was born in a displaced-persons camp in Germany after World War II.

Today, we look across the world and see history repeating itself in the most horrific terms. We are in the midst of a battle in the Balkans to confront the genocide being carried out by Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic.

However, even the most terrible events can have a ray of hope for the survivors. We can look at Armenia today and see that a people can indeed be restored after suffering such a devastating blow. After the genocide, the Armenians were oppressed for decades by the Soviet Union, but they persevered. Finally, in 1991, the Armenian people voted for, and achieved, their independence. Their young republic was the first of the former Soviet republics to achieve economic growth. This is a proud people, and with good reason. They are survivors—survivors who look to a brighter future, but who will never forget what happened. As you can see by the outpouring in Congress today, Mr. Speaker, we won't forget either.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of honor, compassion and resolve that I rise to speak on the floor of our United States House of Representatives on behalf of the 1.5 million Armenian victims of the 1915 genocide. As a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I am deeply honored to represent a large Armenian community located in the city of Montebello in my 34th Congressional District.

Together with my colleagues, I share a heartfelt compassion for the tremendous suffering visited upon the Armenian populations as a result of the systematic and deliberate campaign of genocide by the rulers of the Ottoman Turkish Empire during the period of 1915 to 1923. Let no succeeding generation forget these unspeakable atrocities, nor seek to deny the terrible truth of its occurrence.

The United States Archives are replete with material documenting the Ottoman Turkish government's premeditated exterminations, including the executions of the Armenian leadership in Istanbul and other Armenian centers, and the male population conscripted into the Ottoman Army. The surviving women, children and elderly were sent on horrific death marches through the Syrian Desert and subjected to rape, torture and mutilation along the way.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian-American communities throughout the United States, as well as all people of goodwill, stand firm in our resolve not to let the world forget the Armenian genocide of 1915. In solidarity with the countless victims of the Jewish Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide and the present massacres being committed in Kosovo, we must continually recognize these crimes against humanity and reaffirm the American people's commitment to steadfastly oppose the use of genocide anywhere in the world.

It is altogether fitting that on this last anniversary of the Armenian genocide of 1915 in this 20th century, and in recognition of the atrocities being committed in the Balkans today, to restate from this same floor of the House, the truly memorable words of our late

colleague, the Honorable Les Aspin, then chairman of the House Armed Services Committee on April 28, 1992:

We look back in order to memorialize those who died under Ottoman rule, to restate that they shall not have died unmourned and unnoticed, to shout that millions of us, Armenians and non-Armenians alike, will never forget.

We look forward to declare that this must never happen again, that the deaths of one and a half million people must serve as a perpetual warning to the world, alerting us to the threat of evil and uniting us to combat anyone who might again think of committing wholesale murder.

Mr. Speaker, in remembrance of those Armenian leaders executed during the genocide of 1915, I am honored to recognize some of the outstanding Armenian-American leaders of today, who have contributed so much to the betterment of our nation, our beloved state of California and our communities in the 34th Congressional District.

In particular, I wish to honor the Most Reverend Archbishop Lapajian, and the Reverend Babouchian, Pastor of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Cathedral in Montebello, California for their faithful spiritual guidance.

And, it is appropriate to recognize two former Armenian-American elected officials who made an enormous contribution to the State of California and the communities of the 34th Congressional District, the Honorable George Deukmejian, who served as a Member of the State Assembly, state Senator, Attorney General and Governor of California; and the Honorable Walter J. Karabian, who served as Majority Leader of the California State Assembly. Their exemplary service has been a beacon of hope to all that wish to realize the American dream of opportunity and success.

In addition, I am pleased to recognize the service of the Honorable Tom Malkasian, City Treasurer of the city of Montebello, and member of the board of the Armenian Mesrobian School.

I have also recently had the privilege to visit several worthy leaders and institutions of the Armenian community in my district including Raffi Chalian, President of the Armenian National Committee; David Ghoogasian, Principal of the Armenian Mesrobian School; Anita Haddad, Co-Chairwoman of the Armenian Relief Society; Manouk Zeitounian, leader of the Homenetmen Athletics and Boy Scouts; Joseph Gharibian, Member of the Board of Representatives of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Cathedral; and most significantly, Lucy Der Minassian, Co-Chairwoman of the Armenian Relief Society, and herself a survivor of the Armenian genocide of 1915.

Mr. Speaker, in closing let every American stand with our Armenian brothers and sisters noting this anniversary throughout the world, together with the victims of torture and genocide whenever and wherever it occurs, to honor their precious memory, in compassion for their terrible suffering, and with unflinching resolve to never, never forget.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, today, we solemnly observe the Armenian genocide, a tragedy that took place nearly 84 years ago.

The courage and strength of the survivors and the memory of those who perished are an inspiration to all of us to stand up here today. It is our task to make sure that the Armenian genocide will never be forgotten.

Over 6 million people of Armenian descent live in this country. Many of them can still re-

count the persecution they faced from the Ottoman Empire and the stories of the night of April 24, 1915, the night the genocide began.

In observance of this date, we must remember the hard lessons learned from this tragedy so that we will never forget our duty to fight against human rights abuses, "ethnic cleansing," genocide and other crimes against humanity.

As we support the brave men and women fighting to stop the genocide of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, we see that genocide is not simply a sad chapter in history. The lessons of the Armenian genocide are ever salient. In the Kosovo case, our country's message must be clear. When a leader decides to erase a race of people from the earth, we will react with all due force and determination to make sure that leader fails.

The blood of genocide victims stains not only the hands of the perpetrators, but also those who do nothing to stop it. We can not wash our hands of this tragedy. We must remember the crimes of the past and work to end all types of genocide. This includes dedicating ourselves to ending the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, we must never forget what happened to the Armenians 84 years ago, just as we must never overlook the human rights violations which are happening today in all corners of the world.

SAN JACINTO DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue with a series of speeches designed to explain to my colleagues the history of my home State of Texas.

On March 2 of this year I spoke to this body of the brave actions taken by 54 men who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, a document modeled after the one signed almost 60 years earlier by our Founding Fathers.

I also spoke to my colleagues of the brave sacrifices of the defenders of the Alamo and of the massacre of Texas forces at Goliad. Six weeks later, on the banks of San Jacinto River, approximately 750 Texans under General Sam Houston assembled, determined to avenge their brothers.

On the morning of April 20, 1836, over 1,500 Mexican soldiers under General Santa Ana approached the Texans' position. Driving off by fire from the famous "Twin Sisters" cannon, he fell back to regroup.

The Texans, inspired by their initial success, were champing at the bit. Houston, however, held them back, and sent his most trusted spy, Erastus "Deaf" Smith, with a few men to burn Vince's Bridge, thus cutting off the path of retreat for the Mexican Army. Mr. Speaker, Vince's Bridge is in the 29th Congressional District that I am proud to represent.

On the 21st, today's anniversary, though, Houston was ready to strike. With the Mexican Army still in its

camp, Houston gave the order to advance, and the Texans did not hesitate. I say "Texans," Mr. Speaker, because that force was made up of a lot of new immigrants to Texas from the United States. Texas has always been an immigrant State.

When within 70 yards the word "fire" was given, the Texan shouts of "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember Goliad" rang along the entire line. Within a short time 700 Mexican soldiers were slain, with another 730 taken as prisoners. The whole battle lasted less than 30 minutes.

From that point on, Texas was firmly established in the community of nations, seeking recognition. For 10 years she would remain an independent nation, until President James K. Polk signed the treaty admitting Texas to the United States in 1845.

A panel on the side of the monument at the San Jacinto battleground today underscores the importance of the battle after more than a century and a half of reflection: "Measured by its results, San Jacinto was one of the most decisive battles of the world."

The freedom of Texas from Mexico won here led to annexation and to the Mexican War in 1845, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the States of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at one time or another I am sure, coming from Texas, we claimed all those States as part of Texas, but they really were not. Almost one-third of the present area of the American Nation, nearly a million square miles, changed sovereignty starting with the battle of San Jacinto.

The San Jacinto battlefield was in the 29th Congressional District until 1996 when the Federal courts changed our lines, and now it is in the 25th Congressional District.

This major event in our history is remembered not only as a battle for Texas independence, but is a victory over freedom and dictatorship. Mr. Speaker, I hope the House and all of America will join those of us from Texas in celebrating that victory for freedom.

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

[From the Houston Chronicle, Apr. 21, 1999]

SAN JACINTO

A DAY TO REMEMBER GREAT, UNVARNISHED HISTORY OF TEXAS

"Measured by its results, San Jacinto was one of the decisive battles of the world."

"So begins the simple inscription at the base of the towering San Jacinto Monument. The obelisk, visible from the modern glass castles of downtown Houston, holds its head high over a few quiet, lowland acres at the confluence of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River. There fate and the future noisily and auspiciously crossed paths and swords on this date in 1836.

"The freedom of Texas from Mexico," the inscription continues, "won here led to annexation and to the Mexican War, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of