

of the tax code and its perverse incentives. We need to change the tax system if we are going to leave this century the way we have entered it with the most productive economy and the preeminent economy in the world.

A FUTURE OF HOPE FOR TURKEY: ONE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR THE KURDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THUNE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I introduced a resolution, House Resolution 461, to ask for the freedom of Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Dogan and Selim Sadak as well as the lifting of the ban on the Kurdish language and culture in Turkey. Now, these names may be unfamiliar to some, but the names I just read are those of Kurdish parliamentarians, Kurdish Congress members who have been in prison, yes, Mr. Speaker, in prison as Congresspeople for the last 6 years. The language and culture that they represent are the Kurds, an indigenous people of the Middle East who live in an ancient land called Kurdistan. These representatives are in prison solely because they are Kurds, and the Kurds are not free because their land is ruled by Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

Now, this body has previously heard of the name Leyla Zana who, according to *The New York Times*, is the most famous Kurdish dissident in the world. This country has heard of the Kurds because Saddam Hussein gassed them with his chemical and biological weapons in 1988 and threatened to do so again in 1991. But neither this country nor this body has really paid any attention to the plight of the Kurds living as they still do on their ancient lands and still persecuted now even as I speak by the governments in Ankara, Damascus, Tehran, and Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to restrict my commentary today to Turkey, because it is a country we honor as an ally, we support as a friend and we favor as a partner. Turkey boasts of having a sophisticated U.S. arsenal in its inventory: M-16 machine guns, M-60 battle tanks, Cobra attack helicopters, and F-16 fighter planes. American Special Forces in fact train Turkish commandoes in Turkey. Turkish leaders are fond of referring to their people as an "army nation" and talks are now under way to supply Turkey with an additional 145 attack helicopters worth \$4 billion.

Now, is Turkey really worthy of these investments? Have our fighter planes, our attack helicopters, our battle tanks, and our machine guns protected the liberty of its citizens? Why are we training Turkish commandoes who are known to behead their victims and haul their dead bodies behind armored vehicles? In Turkey today, Mr.

Speaker, I note with trepidation that liberty is under assault. Cultural genocide is the law of the land. A way of life known as Kurdish is disappearing at an alarming rate.

Mr. Speaker, we are not always as a country indifferent to the plight of the Kurds. Our 28th President, Woodrow Wilson, supported the right of subject peoples to self-determination. In an address to the Senate on January 22, 1917 he said:

No nation should seek to extend its policy over any other nation or people but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.

Three months after this statement, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies. The war cry "making the world safe for democracy" resonated with subject peoples all over the world and families from North Africa to Central Europe and people who named their sons after our President. But the prophetic words of President Wilson were disregarded, especially in the Ottoman provinces. The Armenians were massacred and the Kurds were subdued after the emergence of the Turkish republic. What followed has been chronicled as nothing other than a slow-motion genocide.

In Turkey, a people known to historians as the Kurds and a land known to geographers as Kurdistan simply disappeared from the official discourse overnight just 1 year after the inception of the young Turkish republic. The Kurds, said the Turkish officials, were not really Kurds but mountain Turks and their land was not really Kurdistan but eastern Turkey. This act of social engineering and historical revisionism has been propagated as the law of the land ever since. Thousands of Kurds have died in rebellion after rebellion. Millions have been uprooted. Some wish to raise a Rest in Peace sign over the entire Kurdish nation.

Perhaps of all the stories that have come out of the Kurdish land administered by the Turks, that of Layla Zana captures the essence of what it means to be a Kurd in Turkey. She was born in 1961 in a small Kurdish village near Farqin. Her earliest recollections of the Turks were either as tax collectors or as soldiers. In elementary school the lone Turkish teacher that she had told her she should learn Turkish because it was the language of the civilization. She was able to go to school for only 3 years. Then she worked on a farm, helped out in the house and occasionally heard of the name Mehdi Zana, who was her future husband, as the rising star of Kurdish politics.

In fact in 1976, she married Mehdi Zana and moved to the largest Kurdish city in the world known as Amed, or Diyarbakir, in northern Kurdistan. In 1977, Mehdi Zana was elected to the post of mayor of the city. Turkish officials were appalled. Here was an ardent Turkish nationalist who managed to earn the trust of his fellow Kurds. The

city Amed was put under siege. Its funds were frozen. Mayor Zana appealed to his European colleagues for help. French mayors responded by giving 30 buses and trucks filled with office supplies and for a short while the bus fares in the city were simply abolished. Leyla Zana's education in politics began in those tumultuous years.

On September 12, 1980, a general in the Turkish army named Kenan Evren declared himself the supreme leader of the country. He deposed the elected government and dissolved the parliament. His soldiers then began arresting dissidents, especially the Kurds. The rising star of Kurdish politics, Mehdi Zana, was high on their list. Twelve days later, he was arrested without any charges being posted. And for the next 8 years, he would be tortured in the infamous Diyarbakir military prison. He would witness the death of 57 of his friends. But through it all he did not break, he endured as did his wife and small children.

Mehdi Zana was kept in prison for 3 additional years in various Turkish prisons in Turkey proper. He has chronicled his ordeals in a book entitled *Prison No. 5*, now available in bookstores in this country as well as on amazon.com. I had the fortune of meeting this nonviolent champion of Kurdish rights a couple of years ago and was humbled by the generosity of his feelings toward his tormentors. Like President Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Mehdi Zana does not seek revenge. He wants peace for himself and his family and his people.

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In words that still haunt me, he urged me to speak out against the slow motion genocide against the Kurds. "The Armenians," he noted, "were massacred. The Kurds are being put to permanent sleep."

Mr. Speaker, Leyla Zana's schooling consisted of adversity, torture, humiliation, and State-sanctioned persecution that has never slackened to this day. She had given birth to a son when Mehdi was the Mayor of Amed and would later give birth to a daughter after her husband's arrest. She would learn Turkish the hard way, from the police who harassed her for being the wife of a popular mayor, and the courts who ruled that he was a trader and deserved to die.

In 1998, she herself was thrown into jail and endured abuse, humiliation, and torture for organizing the wives of Kurdish political prisoners to demand visitation rights. Although behind bars, the authorities, fearing a chain reaction, gave in to these mothers' demands, and Layla Zana has related this brush with the police as a turning point in her awakening as a political activist. She began reading voraciously, wrote for various publications, passed a proficiency exam for a high school diploma; in fact, the first Kurdish woman to do so in her city.

These were the years when the wall in Berlin came down, the Soviet Union

let go of its subject nations, the Cold War that had dominated international politics was supplanted with a rapprochement between the East and the West. The winds of change that brought democracy to former communist nations, people now hoped with visit the lands administered by "our dictators" in such places as South Africa, Indonesia and Turkey.

We all know that South Africa has made its transition to democracy. And just last year, the official world welcomed one of its smallest nations to the fold, the people of East Timor. But the Kurds, the Kurds, thus far, have been kept off of this forward march toward liberty. The adversaries of the Kurds and their misguided friends have managed to define them as the misfits of the world. But this cause of liberty is a just one, and the veil of oppression over the Kurds must come down.

There was a time when the prospects of peace and reconciliation between the Kurds and the Turks almost became a reality. In October 1991, the country held a general election. Twenty-two Kurds were elected to the Turkish parliament. The names I mentioned when I first began tonight, Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Dogan and Selim Sadak were part of that group. Hopes were raised that these newly and duly elected representatives would be the mediators with the Turks and peace and justice might once again come to the land of the Kurds.

But these hopes were dashed when Mehmet Sincar, a newly-elect Kurdish member of the parliament, was murdered in broad daylight on September 3, 1993. One year later, 6 Kurdish parliamentarians were arrested for their advocacy of a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish question. Six others, who were feeling the sword of Damocles hanging on their shoulders, fled abroad to seek political asylum in Europe, and the remaining nine Kurdish deputies in the parliament either resigned from their posts or changed parties to save their lives.

An all-out war was then declared with devastating results. Turkish troops using American weapons wanted to silence the Kurdish resistance once and for all. The Kurdish cease-fire offers were spurned. The Kurdish villagers were forced to either take up arms against their family members, the Kurdish rebels, or face the consequences of the destruction of their villages. Over 3,400 villages have been destroyed; 37,000 people, mostly Kurds, have been killed; 3 million Kurds have become refugees.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago our distinguished colleague from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) sent out a "Dear Colleague" letter which was signed by 153 Members of the 105th Congress to President Clinton urging him to intervene on behalf of Leyla Zana. A year later, in fact, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) visited her in Turkish prison and urged the Turkish authorities to do the same. Unfortunately, nothing came of these

efforts. Her imprisonment continues and the intransigence of the Turks is still at an all-time high.

The Porter letter, which was dated October 30, 1997 addresses some of the concerns of the resolution I have introduced in this Congress, and I would like to read that "Dear Colleague" for the RECORD.

It states: "Dear Mr. President: We want to draw your attention to the tragic situation of Leyla Zana, the first Kurdish woman ever elected to the Turkish parliament. Mrs. Zana, who is the mother of two children, was chosen to represent the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir by an overwhelming margin in October 1991. She was arrested by Turkish authorities in March of 1994 in the Parliament Building and subsequently prosecuted for what Turkish authorities have labeled "separatist speech" that is stemming from her exercise of her right to free speech in the defense of the rights of the Kurdish people. She was sentenced to 15 years in prison in December 1994 and remains in Ankara today.

One of the charges against Mrs. Zana was her 1993 appearance here in Washington before the Helsinki Commission of the United States Congress. We find it outrageous that although she was invited to participate at the request of Members of Congress, her participation was one of the activities that led to her imprisonment.

Mrs. Zana's pursuit of democratic change through nonviolence was honored by the European Parliament which unanimously awarded her the 1995 Sakharov Peace Prize. In addition, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have raised concern about her case.

"Mr. President," the letter goes on, "Turkey is an important partner of the United States, a NATO member, and a major recipient of our foreign aid, but its abuse of its Kurdish citizens and their legitimately-elected representatives is unacceptable. Mrs. Zana's majority Kurdish constituency gave her the mandate to represent them, but the government of Turkey has made an unconscionable effort to stop her. Her voice should not be silenced. This is just one of the many cases in which the Turkish Government has used the power of the State to abuse people, based on their political beliefs.

We ask you and your administration, Mr. President, to raise Mrs. Zana's case with the Turkish authorities at the highest level and seek her immediate and unconditional release so that we may, once again, welcome her to our shores."

Mr. Speaker, that was the letter that 153 of us wrote recently. Since then, Amnesty International has adopted Leyla Zana and her duly-elected members of parliament as prisoners of conscience. In 1995 and 1998, the Noble Peace Committee that assigns its prestigious Peace Prize to people who embody our most deepest aspirations for a more tolerant world acknowledged that

Leyla Zana was one of their finalists. The City of Rome has awarded her honorary citizenship. European organizations have bestowed on her numerous awards of their own.

In 1867, Mr. Speaker, a great American, Frederick Douglass, in his "Appeal to Congress for Impartial Suffrage," summarized the situation of his family which is akin to what this resolution is demanding from the Turkish Government. Reflecting on Mr. Douglas's historical remarks, I was reminded of my encounter with Mehdi Zana and how he too echoed the same sentiments as our own great emancipator. Mr. Douglas wrote that, "We have marvelously survived all of the exterminating forces of slavery, and have emerged at the end of 250 years of bondage, not morose, misanthropic, and revengeful, but cheerful, hopeful and forgiving. We now stand before Congress and the country, not complaining of the past, but simply asking for a better future." Simply asking for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, my resolution, supported at this time by my esteemed colleagues, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF), the gentleman from California (Ms. ESHOO), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), calls for a better future for the Kurds. In that future, public service is not rewarded with punishment, but honored with gratitude. In that future, languages are not banned, but cultivated as a gift of God to a people and of a people to its offspring. And only in that future, Mr. Speaker, lies the promise of peace and justice for the Kurds and a brighter future with the Turks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my friends to support us as we help the peoples of Turkey to leap into the future for the good of themselves, as well as our battered humanity.

Mr. Speaker, asking for a better future is what we are doing here tonight.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from John Straub, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer:

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 5, 2000.

Hon. DENNIS J. HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena for production of documents to Custodian of Personnel Records, U.S. House of Representatives issued by the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.