

COMMEMORATION OF THE
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, a horrific event in world history that took the lives of 1.5 million Armenians and tore the Armenian nation from its historic homeland.

The Armenian Genocide, the first act of genocide in the twentieth century, is emblematic of the high human cost of senseless hatred and prejudice. I join my colleagues today, in solidarity with the Armenian-American community and with Armenians throughout the world, to commemorate this dark period in human history and to ensure we take to heart the lessons learned from this tragedy. The legacy of those who were lost must be our pledge to remember—and to prevent such an episode from happening again.

We have already learned the lessons of forgetting. The indifference of the world to human suffering and the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians set the stage for the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and other tragic events of a massive scale. Today's commemoration comes too late for those who have already fallen victim to blind hatred. But we hope and pray that it is not too late for those in danger around the world.

As we recall the Armenian Genocide and mourn its victims, we renew our pledge to the Armenian nation to do everything we can to prevent further aggression, and we renew our commitment to ensuring that Armenians throughout the world can live free of threats to their existence and prosperity.

Unfortunately, we must still work toward this simple goal. Azerbaijan continues to blockade Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, denying the Armenian people the food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance they need to lead secure, prosperous lives. The United States has taken a leadership role in trying to bring the blockade to an end and crafting a solution to this tragic conflict. As we look forward to a new round of proximity talks in June, we are filled with hope that this year we will see peace and stability in the Caucasus.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian people have shown true resilience in confronting the many obstacles they have faced in the last century. From the ashes of the Genocide, Armenians have become a strong people, making great contributions throughout the world. In the words of Armenian-American author William Saroyan, "when two of them meet anywhere in the world, see if they will not create a New Armenia."

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in hoping that we will soon see a "New Armenia," and in pledging to hasten its arrival.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 96, I inadvertently voted no. I am a cosponsor

of H.R. 10, the Comprehensive Retirement Security and Pension Reform Act of 2001 and strongly support its enactment.

I ask unanimous consent that the RECORD reflect that my vote on final passage should have been "yea."

AN ARTISTIC DISCOVERY

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show my deepest appreciation for some of the most dedicated people I know. This last weekend, I held an art competition for high school students in the 5th Congressional District called "An Artistic Discovery". Eight schools and over 50 children participated in the competition, producing some of the most creative, innovative pieces of art I've ever seen. All of these future artists deserve to be recognized.

Today however, I rise to pay respect to the behind-the-scene heroes of "An Artistic Discovery"—the teachers. The dedication these teachers have for their students, art, and for teaching doesn't come from a textbook, or from years of experience. The pride that radiated from these teachers faces when their students stood next to their artwork came from deep inside their soul.

On this day, Teacher Appreciation Day, I would like to show my appreciation for the teachers who put so much work into making "An Artistic Discovery" a success. Several teachers helped to make this event possible, including: Karin Hughes from South Salem, Lynn Pass from West Linn, John Allgood from Gladstone, John Beck of Dallas, Judy Frohreich of Stayton, Wendy Edginton of Clackamas, John Widder of Tillamook, and Donna Hues of John F. Kennedy High School in Mt. Angel.

Without these teachers, their students would have missed out on the opportunity to display their wonderful artwork and we would have missed the chance to enjoy it.

IN HONOR OF FLORIDA TAX
FREEDOM DAY 2001

HON. ANDER CRENshaw

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, starting today, the average hard-working Floridian starts to work for himself and his family.

Today is Florida's Tax Freedom Day. On average, for the last 128 days, Floridians have been working to earn the money they need to pay their federal, state, and local taxes. In other parts of the country, where state and local taxes are higher, Tax Freedom Day still hasn't come.

Mr. Speaker, last week we hit the American average—May 3 was National Tax Freedom Day. That means it takes 123 days for the average American to earn enough to pay their tax bills. Curiously, it only takes 106 days for them to earn enough to pay for their food, shelter, and clothing combined, proof of the

fact that Americans pay more in taxes than for these necessities. In 1992, National Tax Freedom Day was nearly a whole month earlier—April 18. The hard-working, American taxpayers deserve a break!

Given the significance of the day, it is perhaps fitting that we are considering the budget conference report. That package includes \$1.35 trillion in tax relief for all American taxpayers. With this tax relief, they can begin to earn for themselves a little sooner, and to plan for their priorities and their needs a little earlier.

In fact, current forecasts—under the assumption that there are no changes in the tax laws—have National Tax Freedom Day in 2011 falling on May 10. But, if the Bush tax relief package were passed, that date would be pulled back to May 5. In Washington terms, where we throw around numbers in the millions, billions, and trillions everyday, five days may not seem like much. But, to the family living paycheck to paycheck or trying to set aside a little bit in personal savings for the future, it means a lot.

It is in their honor, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased to support efforts to let them keep more of their hard-earned money in their own homes, and to support the \$1.35 trillion in tax relief in our Fiscal Year 2002 budget.

FORT OSAGE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of Fort Osage as a landmark identified and later developed by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during the voyage of the Corps of Discovery.

In June of 1804, the Corps of Discovery passed a high bluff on the Missouri River—which would later become Fort Osage in Jackson County, Missouri. Only four years later, Clark returned to initiate construction on a Fort and trading-house under the direction of the War Department. Clark noted "The River could be completely defended" and he deemed the situation elegant."

Fort Osage (or Fort Clark as it was originally named) played an important role in the exploration and development of the West. Goods were traded with the Osage, Ayauway and Kansas tribes at this site for years to come. Fort Osage proved to be the single most profitable trading post of its kind in the United States and the territories. We are indebted to the legacy of the Fort and the people who lived, worked and defended the Fort. Their courage had a profound effect on the evolution of our nation.

As part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration, Jackson County Parks and Recreation is proposing an innovative education center. The education center would showcase artifacts and exhibit the significance of the Missouri River. I believe this education center is a wonderful addition to the commemoration and will help visitors understand the significance of Fort Osage. It is the only site along the trail where Clark returned to develop a facility that fulfilled the goals of President Thomas Jefferson's dream of commerce and development with the west.

The significance of Fort Osage is not limited to Lewis and Clark. Both the Yellowstone Expedition and the Long Expedition visited the Fort in 1819. The Long Expedition brought the first steamboat, Western Engineer. Only years later, William Becknell arrived at Fort Osage, using the site as mile marker "0" for the Santa Fe trail, again distinguishing the importance of the Fort in relation to commerce in the west.

Due to the area's historical significance, the Fort Osage Education Center was proposed as part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration. The Education Center was recently recognized by the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission as the priority project in Missouri and I am honored to have this historical site in my district. I look forward to the events surrounding the bicentennial commemoration at Fort Osage and in other areas of the 6th District of Missouri. I join the Missouri Bicentennial Commission, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the United States Geological Survey in full support of the proposed Fort Osage Education Center.

RESOLUTION ON KALMYK SETTLEMENT IN AMERICA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution congratulating the Kalmyk people in the United States on the fiftieth anniversary of their settlement in this country. The resolution also encourages continuing scholarly and educational exchanges between the Russian Federation and the United States to encourage better understanding and appreciation of the Kalmyk people and their contributions to the history and culture of both countries.

The Kalmyks were originally an ethnic Mongolian nomadic people who have inhabited the Russian steppes for around 400 years. The present Kalmyk Republic of the Russian Federation is located north of the Caspian sea in southern Russia. During World War II, the Kalmyk people were one of the seven "punished peoples" exiled en masse by Stalin to "special settlements" in Siberia and Central Asia for allegedly collaborating with the Nazis. There were about 170,000 deportees. After World War II, several hundred Kalmyks who managed to escape the Soviet Union were held in Displaced Persons camps in Germany. For several years, they were not allowed to emigrate to the United States because of prejudice against their Mongolian ethnicity.

However, on July 28, 1951, the Attorney General of the United States issued a ruling which cleared the way for the Kalmyk people in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany to enter the United States. In the fifty years since their arrival, the Kalmyk emigres and their descendants have survived and prospered. Moreover, they are the first community of Tibetan Buddhists to settle in the United States. While adapting to much of America's diverse and modern culture, the Kalmyk have also sought to preserve their own unique traditions. Many continue to practice the Tibetan Buddhist religion.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kalmyk community of the United States has

been able to re-establish contact with the Kalmyk people in the Russian Federation. For the past ten years, a wide exchange has been developed between relatives, students and professionals.

Mr. Speaker, our country is so much richer for the presence of our Kalmyk-American citizens. I urge my colleagues to join me and my colleagues Mr. HOYER, Mr. PITTS, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WAMP, and Mr. HASTINGS, in congratulating the Kalmyk-American community on the fiftieth anniversary of their settlement in the United States by cosponsoring and supporting this resolution.

IN HONOR OF THE MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC TECHNICAL DIRECTORATE COMMANDOS FAMILY TORRANCE, CA

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to pay tribute to a very extraordinary group of members who are being commemorated for the Presidential Unit Citation. These heroic members of the Strategic Technical Directorate Commandos Family passionately and diligently sacrificed their lives for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" for the people of Southeast Asia.

During the Vietnam War, the people of Southeast Asia and the fighting soldiers of the United States faced many challenges that jeopardized their lives. But in 1964, the Strategic Technical Directorate (the U.S. joint services command) was created to help the U.S. and Southeast Asian soldiers to fight for freedom. The Strategic Technical Directorate included the best selected group of officers. The members showed their intelligence, commitment, and bravery in combat. They selflessly risked their own lives in hopeless situations to save others. For example, in 1974, the North Vietnamese Army attacked the city of Phuoc Long. 250 Airborne Rangers came to the rescue, but they faced brutal assaults from the North Vietnamese Army and lost contact with the Strategic Technical Directorate. After a four-day search, the Strategic Technical Directorate found only 50 percent of their surviving members in the city. Another example is during April 1975. The Strategic Technical Directorate's Special Missions Services went to the city of Phan Rang, where the North Vietnamese were attacking the city. 100 of their additional commandos were captured by the North Vietnamese Army. Then the remaining Strategic Technical Directorate units went to defend Saigon. By the final days of April, the North Vietnamese Army surrounded the capital. The Strategic Technical Directorate did not give up. 500 SMS commandos, the headquarters personnel, and the Liaison Service barged in and fought until capitulation on April 30. These two examples prove how the members of STD risked their lives and put 100 percent of their diligence and commitment in winning the freedom for Southeast Asia.

The members of the Strategic Technical Directorate Commandos Family will not be forgotten, but be remembered and honored, for their survival, courage, and dedication in fighting for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

They risked their lives to help the people of Southeast Asia because they were in danger and had their human rights taken away. I ask you to join me today in recognizing these heroic figures who proved to us the meaning of bravery and diligence.

VAISAKHI DAY

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the Sikhs recently celebrated their important holiday of Vaisakhi Day. It is the 302nd birthday of the Sikh Nation. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the Sikh gurus, formed the Khalsa Panth. He blessed them with the blessing "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," which means, "the Khalsa shall rule."

The Sikhs consider Vaisakhi a very important holiday. It is effectively the Sikh national holiday. As this Vaisakhi Day passed, however, the Sikh Nation still lives in slavery.

Sikhs ruled Punjab from 1765 to 1849. They ran a secular state with religious tolerance. Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus participated in the government. When the British vacated the subcontinent, the Sikhs were to receive sovereign power, but they were taken in by the false promises of Nehru and Gandhi that they would have freedom in Punjab. No Sikh representative has ever signed the Indian constitution, and many Sikhs are demanding their independence, as declared on October 7, 1987. Although they seek this peacefully, India considers anyone who speaks out for a separate Sikh state, called Khalistan, to be a "terrorist." Instead, it is India that has used the tools of terrorism.

A new report from the Movement Against State Repression shows that the Indian government holds, by its own admission, at least 52,268 political prisoners under the illegal and expired "Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act," called TADA. Both the Movement Against State Repression and Amnesty International have confirmed that tens of thousands of political prisoners are being held without charge or trial. Some of them have been in jail since 1984. According to The Politics of Genocide by respected human-rights worker Inderjit Singh Jaijee, the Indian government since 1984 has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs. They join thousands of Christians, Muslims, Dalits, and others who have been killed at the hands of the Indian government.

In the spirit of Vaisakhi, the U.S. Congress should support freedom for the Sikh Nation and the other nations of South Asia who are seeking their sovereignty and independence. We must support a free and fair plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan, on the question of independence and also plebiscites for Kashmir, as India promised in 1948, for Nagaland, and for all the nations living under Indian occupation. We should also cut off American aid until India learns to respect its own laws and the basic human rights of all people. Let the Sikhs, celebration of Vaisakhi remind us that the freedom is the birthright of all peoples and nations.