

mourners gathered on the hilltop over the city of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, to remember the Armenian genocide.

Here in the United States, in the Capitol, we also are remembering. It often seems that the world has not learned the crucial lessons of the past. We have witnessed awful genocides in nearly every corner of the globe, including the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe, and genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia.

We must pause today and say, "Never again." We must, because the cost of the alternative is too high.

Eighty-six years ago in 1915, 1.5 million Armenians were killed; 300 Armenian leaders, writers, thinkers and professionals in Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul, were rounded up, deported and killed. 5,000 of the poorest Armenians were butchered in the streets and in their homes.

Most Armenians in America are children or grandchildren of those survivors although there are still many survivors amongst us today. I sometimes hear voices that ask, "You know, after all of these years, why do we need to keep addressing this?" After all, some of the skeptics say, this was something that ended back in 1915 and the 1920s.

I suppose that someone who thinks of genocide with that kind of detachment, as if it were just something in a textbook, some distant memory, as something that happened far away and long ago to a people that they never knew, that argument might sound reasonable. But the reason we are here today with my colleagues is because we know better, because we know that 1.5 million men, women and children who were murdered in the genocide are not some abstraction, are not some number in a textbook. To those who survived them, they were beloved family members and dear friends. They were our fathers and mothers and grandparents and uncles and aunts and confidants and neighbors. They were individuals who were robbed of their dignity, they were robbed of their humanity; and finally, they were robbed of their lives.

While time has made the events more distant, the pain is no less real today than it has ever been. How can it be otherwise when we hear the stories of the survivors. How can it be when we are haunted by the words of women like Katharine Magarian. Just listen. Three years ago she said, "I saw my father killed when I was 9 years old. We lived in an Armenian enclave in Turkey in the mountains. My father was a businessman. The Turks, they ride in one day, got all of the men together and brought them to the church. Every man came out with hands tied behind them. They slaughtered them, like sheep, with long knives.

"They all die. Twenty-five people in my family die. You cannot walk, they kill you. You walk, they kill you. They did not care who they killed. My husband, who was a boy in my village but

I did not know him then, he saw his mother's head cut off," and she goes on describing the atrocities that befell her and her family.

To most Americans these stories are things that, maybe, you have heard about or read about. But anyone who grew up in an Armenian American family will tell you they knew about these stories their whole life. They may not have always known the specifics, but they always knew about the pain and hurt and tears. They know there were members of their family who died. Why did they die? Because they were Armenian.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we commemorate the genocide. It is not because we cannot let go of history, it is because history will not let go of us. We know that silence does not bind up wounds, it only leaves those wounds to fester. Because we understand if Turkey is never held accountable for the crimes it committed in the past, it only becomes more certain that those crimes will occur again in the future.

Some in Congress and the White House believe that by speaking out on the genocide, America would be betraying the Turkish government. By failing to speak out, we are betraying our own principles as a free people. We cannot sit idle. We cannot let Turkey hide within a fortress of lies.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we will be introducing our resolution on the Armenian genocide. I would like to share an old Armenian saying with you. The saying is: "Many a molehill thinks it is a mountain. But the mountain? Mountains are too busy being mountains, doing mountain-type things and thinking mountain-type thoughts to worry about what being a mountain means."

I think of America as sometimes being a bit like that mountain. We are a Nation that is so busy with our economy, our culture and politics, we sometimes forget what it is like to be really an American, what it means to be an American. And the way I see it, America means standing up for justice. America means speaking out against injustice.

□ 1900

That is what I urge all of my colleagues to do, and join me in recognizing the Armenian genocide and supporting the resolution.

Recognizing inhumanity is the first step toward healing and understanding. The current tensions between Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Armenia are deeply rooted in his history, and achieving a just and lasting peace and cooperation will only be possible if the past is acknowledged. But it will not happen on its own. That's why congressional action on the Armenian Genocide resolution is so important.

I believe that those of us who stand for human rights and dignity have a responsibility to remember the victims and the survivors. We have a responsibility to speak out and to make sure that tragedies like this are never allowed to happen again.

In remembering the Armenian Genocide, we are making a commitment against genocide

and discrimination. We are making a personal commitment to speaking out against injustice wherever we see it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Michigan). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMEMORATING ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RADANOVICH. 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. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here this evening to honor my Armenian friends, particularly on the eve of the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The 20th century was one of historic progress, but also horrible brutality. Throughout the century, America has also been the source of this progress, as well as the nation of first resort to combat brutality around the world. The first great American diplomatic and humanitarian initiative of the 20th century was in response to the attempted extermination of the Armenian people.

As I did last year on this date, I want to associate my comments with the comments of the Jerusalem Post which said, "The 1915 wholesale massacre of the Armenians by the Ottoman Turks remains a core experience of the Armenian nation. While there is virtually zero tolerance for Holocaust denial, there is tacit acceptance of the denial of the Armenian Genocide, in part because the Turks have managed to structure this debate so that people question whether this really did happen."

It is fact that the death of 1.5 million Armenians by execution or starvation really did happen, and we must not tolerate this denial.

Mr. Speaker, I say we must affirm history, not bury it. We must learn from history, not reshape it according to the geostrategic needs of the moment, and we must refuse to be intimidated or other states with troubled pasts will ask that the American record on their dark chapter in history be expunged.

As Members of this body, we have an obligation to educate and familiarize Americans on the Armenian Genocide.

In fact, we must assure that the genocide is remembered so that this human tragedy will not be repeated.

As we have seen in recent years, genocide and ethnic cleansing continue to plague nations around the world and, as a great nation, we must always be attentive and willing to stand against such atrocities. We must do the right thing and call upon our human decency to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. We must take our role as the leader of the Free World seriously and educate people on the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians. We must characterize this as genocide.

A key element of the record of the American response to this crime against humanity consists of the reports of our ambassador and his consular officials throughout what are now central and eastern Turkey. This record is a priceless tool in the hands of any American concerned with or responsible for our Nation's ongoing global role to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing. Therefore, I will tomorrow will be introducing a strong bipartisan resolution to bring together all of the U.S. records on the Armenian Genocide and to provide this collection to the House Committee on International Relations, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

U.S. Archives contain extensive documentation of the widespread opposition to Ottoman Turkey's brutal massacres and deportations. They also contain records of the unprecedented efforts of the American people to bring relief to the survivors of the 20th century's first genocide. In introducing this legislation, we challenge those who will deny the genocide, past or present. I urge my colleagues to please add their names as an original cosponsor.

Finally, I would like to close by expressing my sincere hope that we will have President Bush's support on this initiative. During his campaign he pledged to properly commemorate the Armenian Genocide. I have every reason to believe that he will honor that pledge and do what is right for both the Armenian people and for our historical record.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating one of the most appalling violations of human rights in all of modern history—the eighty-sixth anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

I want to commend my colleagues Representative JOE KNOLLENBERG of Michigan and Representative FRANK PALLONE of New Jersey, the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, for sponsoring this special order.

Today, I want to acknowledge this dark moment in history and remember the Armenian people who tragically lost their lives. We must always remember tumultuous moments in history when people suffered because they were different.

The Armenian genocide lasted over an eight-year period from 1915 to 1923. During

this time, the Ottoman empire carried out a systematic policy of eliminating its Christian Armenian population. The Armenian genocide was the first of the 20th century, but unfortunately, not the last.

The atrocious acts of annihilation against the Armenian people were denounced by Paris, London and Washington as war crimes. Even the Germans, the Ottoman Empire's ally in the First World War, condemned these heinous acts. Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople at the time, vividly documented the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians.

Winston Churchill used the word "holocaust" to describe the Armenian massacres when he said: "in 1915 the Turkish government began and ruthlessly carried out the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia minor . . . [the Turks were] massacring uncounted thousands of helpless Armenians—men, women, and children together; whole districts blotted out in one administrative holocaust—these were beyond human redress."

This orchestrated extermination of a people is contrary to the values the United States espouses. We are a nation which strictly adheres to the affirmation of human rights everywhere and cannot dispute a horrendous historical fact by ignoring what so many witnessed and survived.

Recognition and acceptance of any misdeed are necessary steps towards its extinction. Without acceptance there is no remorse, and without remorse, there is no catharsis and pardon.

Even as recently as the last year of this millennium, the United States, together with many European nations, took active part in putting a stop to the genocidal events in Kosovo. It demonstrates that we are willing to risk our lives in order to remain true to our long tradition of intolerance to tyranny and injustice. We cannot remain silent and turn our face away from similar events that took place against the Armenian people.

Of course, we all want to forget these horrific tragedies in our history and bury them in the past. However, it is only through painful process of acknowledging and remembering that we can keep similar dark moments from happening in the future.

At the end of my statement, I have included several quotes from prominent world leaders and political figures, including several U.S. presidents, who describe and sadly affirm what happened to the 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire eighty-six years ago.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that as we take a moment to reflect upon the hardships endured by the Armenians, we also acknowledge that 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.

QUOTES REGARDING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE FROM VARIOUS WORLD LEADERS AND PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURES

"The twentieth century was marred by wars of unimaginable brutality, mass murder and genocide. History records that the Armenians were the first people of the last century to have endured these cruelties. The Ar-

menians were subjected to a genocidal campaign that defies comprehension and commands all decent people to remember and acknowledge the facts and lessons of an awful crime in a century of bloody crimes against humanity. If elected President, I would ensure that our nation properly recognizes the tragic suffering of the Armenian people."—George W. Bush Jr., June 2, 2000, letter to the members of the Armenian Assembly.

"[We join] Armenians around the world [as we remember] the terrible massacres suffered in 1915–1923 at the hands of the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. The United States responded to this crime against humanity by leading diplomatic and private relief efforts."—George W. Bush Sr., April 20, 1990, speech in Orlando, Florida.

"Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it, . . . the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten."—Ronald Reagan, April 22, 1981, proclamation.

"It is generally not known in the world that, in the years preceding 1916, there was a concerted effort made to eliminate all the Armenian people, probably one of the greatest tragedies that ever befell any group. And there weren't any Nuremberg trials."—Jimmy Carter, May 16, 1978, White House ceremony.

"The association of Mount Ararat and Noah, the staunch Christians who were massacred periodically by the Mohammedan Turks, and the Sunday School collections over fifty years for alleviating their miseries—all cumulate to impress the name Armenian on the front of the American mind."—Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 1952.

". . . the Armenian massacre 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."—Theodore Roosevelt, May 11, 1918, letter to Cleveland Hoadley Dodge.

"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. . . . I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."—Henry Morgenthau, Sr., U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, 1919.

"These left-overs from the former Young Turk Party, who should have been made to account for the millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse, from their homes and massacred, have been restive under the Republican rule."—Mustafa "Ataturk" Kemal, founder of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923 and revered throughout Turkey, in an interview published on August 1, 1926 in *The Los Angeles Examiner*, talking about former Young Turks in his country.

"Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"—Adolf Hitler, while persuading his associates that a Jewish holocaust would be tolerated by the west.

"It was not war. It was most certainly massacre and genocide, something the world must remember . . . We will always reject any attempt to erase its record, even for some political advantage."—Yossi Beilin, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, April 27, 1994 on the floor of the Knesset in response to a TV interview of the Turkish Ambassador.

"Mr. Speaker, with mixed emotions we mark the 50th anniversary of the Turkish

genocide of the Armenian people. In taking notice of the shocking events in 1915, we observe this anniversary with sorrow in recalling the massacres of Armenians and with pride in saluting those brave patriots who survived to fight on the side of freedom during World War I.”—Gerald Ford, addressing the U.S. House of Representatives.

“Turkey is taking advantage of the war in order to thoroughly liquidate (grundlich aufzaumen) its internal foes, i.e., the indigenous Christians, without being thereby disturbed by foreign intervention.”—Talat Pasha, one of the three rulers of wartime in the Ottoman Empire in a conservation with Dr. Mordtmann of the German Embassy in June 1915.

“What on earth do you want? The question is settled. There are no more Armenians.”—Talat said this after the German Ambassador persistently brought up the Armenian question in 1918.

“In an attempt to carry out its purpose to resolve the Armenian question by the destruction of the Armenian race, the Turkish government has refused to be deterred neither by our representations, nor by those of the American Embassy, nor by the delegate of the Pope, nor by the threats of the Allied Powers, nor in deference to the public opinion of the West representing one-half of the world.”—Count Wolff-Metternich, German Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, July 10, 1916, cable to the German Chancellor.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and the representative of a thriving community of Armenian-Americans, I join many of my colleagues today to recognize the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

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

One and a half million Armenian people were massacred by the Ottoman Turkish Empire between 1915 and 1923. More than 500,000 Armenians were exiled from their ancestral homeland. A race of people was nearly eliminated.

It would be an even greater tragedy to forget the Armenian Genocide. To not recognize the horror of such events almost assures their repetition in the future.

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.

I would like to commend the Armenian-American community as it continues to thrive and provide assistance and solidarity to its countrymen and women abroad. The Armenian-American community is bound together by strong generational and family ties, an enduring work ethic and a proud sense of ethnic heritage. Today we recall the tragedy of their past, not to place blame, but to answer a fundamental question, “Who remembers the Armenians?”

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the victims of one of history’s unacknowledged tragedies—the Armenian Genocide. Today marks the 86th anniversary of this tragedy that lasted from 1915 to 1923.

April 24, 1915 is remembered and commemorated each year by the Armenian com-

munity and by people of conscience throughout the world. On this day, 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 a million Armenian men, women, and children had been massacred and more than half a million others had been expelled from the homeland that their forbears had inhabited for three millennia.

The Armenian Genocide is a historical fact. The Republic of Turkey has adamantly refused to acknowledge that the Genocide happened on its soil but the evidence is irrefutable. In 1915, England, France and Russia jointly issued a statement charging the Ottoman Empire with “a crime against humanity.” Professor Raphael Lemkin, a holocaust survivor, is the key historical figure in making genocide a crime under international law. He coined the term “genocide” and was the first to characterize the atrocities of 1915–1923 as the “Armenian Genocide.”

We understand that there is a difference between the Turkish people and the government of the Ottoman Turks. In fact, we know that during the massacres there were Turks who tried to save Armenians at the cost of their own lives. But our alliance with Turkey should not deter us from learning the lessons of past mistakes.

If we ignore the lessons of the Armenian Genocide, we are destined to repeat those same mistakes. The horrible conflicts in Sudan, Sierra Leone, and East Timor remind us that we must do more to prevent the systematic slaughter of innocent people. We must learn from the past and never forget the victims of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. VISCOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solemn memorial to the estimated 1.5 million men, women, and children who lost their lives during the Armenian Genocide. As in the past I am pleased to join so many distinguished House colleagues on both sides of the aisle in ensuring that the horrors wrought upon the Armenian people are never repeated.

On April 24, 1915, over 200 religious, political, and intellectual leaders of the Armenian community were brutally executed by the Turkish government in Istanbul. Over the course of the next 8 years, this war of ethnic genocide against the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire took the lives of over half the world’s Armenian population.

Sadly, there are some people who still deny the very existence of this period which saw the institutionalized slaughter of the Armenian people and dismantling of Armenian culture. To those who would question these events, I point to the numerous reports contained in the U.S. National Archives detailing the process that systematically decimated the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. However, old records are too easily forgotten—and dismissed. That is why we come together every year at this time: to remember in words what some may wish to file away in archives. This genocide did take place, and these lives were taken. That memory must keep us forever vigilant in our efforts to prevent these atrocities from ever happening again.

I am proud to note that Armenian immigrants found, in the United States, a country where their culture could take root and thrive. Most Armenians in America are children or grandchildren of the survivors, although there

are still survivors amongst us. In my district in Northwest Indiana, a vibrant Armenian-American community has developed and strong ties to Armenia continue to flourish. My predecessor in the House, the late Adam Benjamin, was of Armenian heritage, and his distinguished service in the House serves as an example to the entire Northwest Indiana community. Over the years, members of the Armenian-American community throughout the United States have contributed millions of dollars and countless hours of their time to various Armenian causes. Of particular note are Mrs. Vicki Hovanessian and her husband Dr. Raffi Hovanessian, residents of Indiana’s First Congressional District, who have continually worked to improve the life in Armenia, as well as in Northwest Indiana. Three other Armenian-American families in my congressional district, Dr. Aram and Seta Semerdjian and Sonya Doumanian, and Ara and Rosy Yeretsian, have also contributed greatly toward charitable works in the United States and Armenia. Their efforts, together with hundreds of other members of the Armenian-American community, have helped to finance several important projects in Armenia, including the construction of new schools, a mammography clinic, and a crucial roadway connecting Armenia to Nagorno Karabagh.

In the House, I have tried to assist the efforts of my Armenian-American constituency by continually supporting foreign aid to Armenia. This past year, with my support, Armenia received over \$90 million of the \$219 million in U.S. aid earmarked for the Southern Caucasus. In addition, on April 6, 2001, I joined several of my colleagues in signing the letter to President Bush urging him to honor his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian people have a long and proud history. In the fourth century, they became the first nation to embrace Christianity. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by an organization known as the Young Turk Committee, which allied with Germany. Amid fighting in the Ottoman Empire’s eastern Anatolian provinces, the historic heartland of the Christian Armenians, Ottoman authorities ordered the deportation and execution of all Armenians in the region. By the end of 1923, virtually the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and western Armenia had either been killed or deported.

While it is important to keep the lessons of history in mind, we must also remain committed to protecting Armenia from new and more hostile aggressors. In the last decade, thousands of lives have been lost and more than a million people displaced in the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan, over Nagorno-Karabagh. Even now, as we rise to commemorate the accomplishments of the Armenian people and mourn the tragedies they have suffered, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other countries continue to engage in a debilitating blockade of this free nation.

On March 28th of this year, I testified before Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on the important issue of bringing peace to a troubled area of the world. I continued my support for maintaining of level funding for the Southern Caucasus region of the Independent States (IS), and of Armenia in particular. I also stressed the critical importance of retaining Section 907 of the Freedom

Support Act that restricts U.S. aid for Azerbaijan as a result of their blockade. Unfortunately, Armenia is now entering its twelfth year of a blockade, and Section 907 is the one protection afforded it by the Congress. The flow of food, fuel, and medicine continues to be hindered by the blockade, creating a humanitarian crisis in Armenia. A repeal of Section 907 would only serve to legitimize Azerbaijan's illegitimate acts of aggression. I stand in strong support of Section 907, which sends a clear message that the United States Congress stands behind the current peace process and encourages Azerbaijan to work with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group toward a meaningful and lasting resolution. In the end, I believe Section 907 will help conclude a conflict that threatens to destabilize the entire region and places the Armenian nation in distinct peril.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 86th Anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Their efforts will not only help bring needed attention to this tragic period in world history, but also serve to remind us of our duty to protect basic human rights and freedoms around the world.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as we do every year, I rise to mark April 24, the somber anniversary of one of the great crimes of modern history: the beginning of the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. During and after World War I, a government-orchestrated campaign to eliminate the Armenians under Ottoman rule led to the slaughter of about one and a half million people. Entire communities were uprooted, as survivors fled their homes and were forced into exile.

Fortunately for them, the United States offered a haven. In turn, Armenian refugees gave this country the best they had to offer. Their contributions in many fields of endeavor have energized and enriched American culture and politics. Surely Turkey's loss has been America's gain, as Armenian refugees in the early part of the 20th century and their progeny have become an inspiring success story.

Turkey has lost in another way: its long-standing campaign of denial that the atrocities perpetrated during 1915–1923 were a genocide has not convinced anyone. More and more representative institutions across the world have openly declared their recognition of the genocide, and their number will grow. By refusing to acknowledge what the rest of the world sees, Turkey has stunted its own development and complicated its ability to come to terms with its own past, present, and future.

As we soberly mark April 24 this year, there is at least reason to hope for progress on a front important to all Armenians. The OSCE-brokered negotiations over Nagorno-Karabakh finally seems to be making headway. Though the details remain confidential, the recent meeting between Armenia's President Kocharyan and Azerbaijan's President Aliev in Key West, Florida apparently went well enough for the OSCE Minsk Group to prepare a new peace proposal that will be presented to the parties in Geneva in June. Much hard bargaining surely lies ahead. Nevertheless, for the first time in years, we can allow ourselves of bit of optimism about the prospects for peace in a very troubled and important region.

Mr. Speaker, nothing can compensate for the loss of so many Armenians last century.

But a prospering Armenia, at peace with its neighbors, and giving free rein to the natural abilities of this talented people, would mitigate the pain and sorrow we feel today.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, to lend my voice to this important debate remembering the Armenian Genocide. While Turkey's brutal campaign against the Armenian people was initiated almost a century ago, its impact lives on in the hearts of all freedom-loving people. That is why we must continue to speak about it. We must remind the American people of the potential for such atrocities against ethnic groups, because history lessons that are not learned are too often repeated.

The Armenian Genocide, conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923, resulted in the deportation of 2 million Armenians from their homeland and the ultimate slaughter of 1.5 million of those people. The continued tensions in the Caucasus region are rooted in this history, and until they are forthrightly acknowledged among world leaders, the prospects for resolution remain dim.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize history, and to demonstrate that history is unkind to that abuse either rules of war or basic human dignity. I have fought in a war and understand each side feels compelled for its own reasons to fight. When that fight extends to civilian populations it is justifiable to both examine and condemn such occurrences.

The U.S. has some of the most extensive documentation of this genocide against the Armenian people, and there has been no shortage of corroboration by other countries. The Armenian genocide has been recognized by the United Nations and nations around the globe, and the U.S. came to the aid of the survivors. But perhaps we were not vociferous enough in holding the perpetrators of this genocide accountable, and for shining the light of international shame upon them. For it was only a few decades later that we saw another genocide against humanity: the Holocaust. That is why we must continue to tell the story of Armenian genocide. It is a painful reminder that such vicious campaigns against a people have occurred, and that the potential for such human brutality exists in this world. We must remain mindful of the continued repression of Armenians today, and challenge those who would persecute these people. If we do not, future generations may be destined to relive such horrors against humanity.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, today, I join my colleagues in commemoration of the 86th anniversary of beginning of the Armenian genocide. On April 24, 1915, under the direction of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, a campaign of Armenian extermination began. Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders from Istanbul were arrested and exiled—silencing the leading representatives of the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire. From 1915 until 1923, 1.5 million Armenians were murdered, with another 500,000 forced into exile in Russia, ending a period of 2,500 years of an Armenian presence in their historic homeland. Today we remember this terrible period in human history, and commend the Armenian people for their ongoing struggle to live peacefully in their historic homeland.

Like the Jewish and Cambodian holocausts, and more recently, the Serbian ethnic cleans-

ing in Kosovo, the Armenian genocide stands out as one of the world's most morally reprehensible acts. Unfortunately, some American Presidents have chosen not to recognize this atrocity as what it truly was—the attempted extermination of an ethnic group. Continuing our good relationship with Turkey has repeatedly been cited as the reason not to use the word genocide. Mr. Speaker, there is no word other than genocide to describe the systematic murder of a million and a half people.

Earlier this month, I joined 107 of my colleagues in asking President Bush to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide by using the word genocide, and I hope that Mr. Bush will become the first American president in 20 years to do that.

On this day, we remember those Armenians who died 86 years ago and send a message to the world that we will never forget what happened during that terrible period in history and that we reaffirm our resolve to ensure that no nation will ever again have the opportunity to participate in mass genocide.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, today, April 24, 2001, we solemnly mark the 76th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On this day in 1915, three hundred Armenian leaders, writers, thinkers and professionals in Constantinople (present day Istanbul) were rounded up, deported and killed on the orders of the Ottoman Imperial Government. By 1923, one and a half million Armenians had been killed and roughly two million deported.

Our country was one of the first major powers of the day to condemn the acts of the Ottoman Empire. Other nations lent their voices to the outcry. Nations allied to the Ottoman Empire, such as Germany and Austria, and those who found themselves politically opposed to the Empire, like Great Britain, France, and Russia, expressed their consternation at the clear policy of genocide.

Today, the United States should reassert its condemnation of the ignominious acts of over three quarters of a century ago. The Armenians Genocide has an infamous place in history as the first mass genocide of the 20th century. Tragically, it was not the last act of genocide the world witnessed that century. Had the Armenians Genocide been fully investigated and condemned in the years after its duration, perhaps, citizens of the world would have reacted sooner to the mass ethnic cleansing that followed.

I am sure that the victims of the Armenian Genocide would want us to not simply remember the historic travesty that befell them, but would want us to learn from these lessons of xenophobia and inhumanity. We remember the Armenian genocide, today, and we affirm its historical existence, not to inflame the passions of our friends in the modern day Republic of Turkey, but to remind all Americans of the horrible consequences of ethnic violence. Turks of all backgrounds heroically fought against the policy of genocide adopted by extremist elements controlling the Ottoman government during World War I. We commemorate their heroism and humanity just as firmly in our act of remembrance today.

Mr. Speaker, we must hope and pray that genocide never again is visited upon the human race. As we grow closer in commerce and communication, may we also grow wiser in our understanding of world history. May we heed the lessons that are there to be learned. And may we never forget the worst aspects of

that history, so that tomorrow's history may be all the better.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, for the third consecutive year, to commemorate a people who despite murder, hardship, and betrayal have persevered. April 24, 2001, marks the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide; unbelievably, an event that many still fail to recognize.

Throughout three decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, millions of Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homeland of three thousands years and deported or massacred. From 1894 through 1896, three hundred thousand Armenians were ruthlessly murdered. Again in 1909, thirty thousand Armenians were massacred in Cilicia, and their villages were destroyed.

On April 24, 1915, two hundred Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arbitrarily arrested, taken to Turkey and murdered. This incident marks a dark and solemn period in the history of the Armenian people. From 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Empire launched a systematic campaign to exterminate Armenians. In eight short years, more than 1.5 million Armenians suffered through atrocities such as deportation, forced slavery, and torture. Most were ultimately murdered.

I have had the privilege of joining my colleagues in a letter to the President asking that the U.S. officially commemorate the victims of the Armenian Genocide and honor its 1.5 million victims. As a cosponsor and proponent of H. Res. 596 during the 106th Congress, I was deeply disturbed by the decision that prevented the House of Representatives from considering this resolution last October. This resolution recognized the suffering of nearly two million Armenians from 1915 through 1923, as the Ottoman Empire strove to wipe out an entire race of men, women, and children. Those who were not murdered were effectively removed from their homes of 2,500 years in what is now modern day Turkey.

The resolution called upon the President of the United States to do three things: (1) Ensure that U.S. foreign policy reflects consideration and sensitivity for human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in U.S. records relating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of the Turkish court's failure to enforce judgments against those responsible for committing genocide; (2) recognize, during his annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on April 24th, that this was a systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million people, and reflect upon the United States' effort to intervene on behalf of Armenians during the genocide; and (3) in his annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, emphasize that the modern day Republic of Turkey did not conduct the Armenian Genocide, which was perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire. This was the second time H. Res. 596 had been pulled from consideration, despite pledges by the leadership that the U.S. would go on record to affirm their support for the Armenian genocide.

We should exhibit the same support as many of our friends in the international community who have refused to be bullied into silence. The European Parliament and the United Nations have recognized and reaffirmed the Armenian genocide as historical fact, as have the Russian and Greek parliaments, the Canadian House of Commons,

the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, and the French National Assembly. It is time for America to venerate Armenians who suffered at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. And let me stress that I am not speaking of the government of modern day Turkey, but rather its predecessor, which many of Turkey's present day leaders helped to remove from power.

As I have in the past, as a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I will continue to work with my colleagues and with the Armenian-Americans in my district to promote investment and prosperity in Armenia. And, I sincerely, hope that this year, the U.S. will have the opportunity and courage to speak in support of the millions of Armenians who suffered because of their heritage.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to take part in an important annual event in the House of Representatives, the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. I am proud that dozens of Members gather each year to mark this dark chapter in human history. Such devotion to memory is not a trivial matter. We know this to be true because, even today, there are those who would vainly try to deny the past, in order to influence the future.

We, as a moral people, cannot allow such wicked efforts to prosper. Even passive acceptance of such lies would be tantamount to participating in a second genocide. As we all know, surely and irrefutably, the first Armenian Genocide, occurred between 1915 and 1923, and resulted in the deliberate death of 1.5 million human souls, killed for the crime of their own existence. The second Armenian Genocide, which every year we must struggle against, is the ongoing effort by some to deny reality, to deny history, to deny one of humanity's darkest hours.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian Genocide marked a critical point in history. We can look back now, with the wisdom of hindsight, and see in the deaths of a million and a half Armenians the first signs of the breathtaking cruelty of the last century. We can see technology and hatred converging toward the creation of a new phenomenon in human history, the apotheosis of evil, the creation of genocide, the organized attempt to annihilate an entire people.

The Ottoman Empire's campaign to eliminate the entire Armenian population existing within its borders was no accident, no mistake made by a bureaucrat. Genocide was official policy and 1.5 million Armenians died as a result. They were starved and shot, deported and humiliated. They were old and young, innocent and blameless. They were killed, not for what they had one, but for who they were.

Mr. Speaker, when we assemble here, in the House of Representatives, and remember the Armenian Genocide, we stand as witnesses to humanity's worst potential and promise to do better. To not stand by, impasse and confused in the face of horror. We commit ourselves to our common humanity and the precious rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. Genocide is incomprehensible, but not unstoppable.

For genocide to be removed from our world and banished forever, we must begin with teaching our children what has happened, and recalling, publicly and clearly, the unprecedented slaughter of the innocent in the 20th century; first in Armenian and then throughout Europe. As a just and honorable nation, we

must do more than shrug our shoulders at atrocities. We must bear witness, year after year, and in doing so, commit ourselves to preventing history's repetition.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are here today for one simple reason: to remind our nation that eighty-five years ago one-third of the Armenian people, 1.5 million men, women and children, were put to death for the crime of their own birth. To deny this reality is to deny that genocide can happen again.

I want to thank America's citizens of Armenian descent for their unfailing commitment to their people's history and their unwavering struggle to ensure that the memory and history of their peoples' darkest hour is never lost. Thanks to them, the Armenian Genocide and its lessons will not be forgotten in our time and in our nation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank and commend my colleagues, Congressmen JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, the co-Chairmen of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. Thanks to their leadership, this House will again honorably fulfill America's commitment to memory and justice.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in this commemoration of the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Each year, I join Members of Congress from both sides of the political spectrum to take part in this commemoration. We join together to raise awareness of a chapter in history so brutal and violent that it sadly deserves the horrific title of "Genocide."

Each year, as I rise to pay tribute to over 1.5 million Armenians who were killed in this tragedy, I am amazed at how the news of the Armenian Genocide was suppressed at the time and then shrouded from public view for generations. We all remember the question posed by Adolf Hitler at the beginning of World War II—he said "who remembers the Armenians?" Today, for the sake of justice and human rights, we answer: "We do."

The events that took place between 1915 to 1923, when Armenian men, women and children were systematically mistreated and killed, represent one of the darkest chapters of human history. Armenians were tortured, had their property confiscated, and died from malnutrition and starvation during long, forced marches from their homeland in Eastern Turkey.

When tragedies of this magnitude take place, we must ensure that they are not forgotten. Let us teach our children that attempted systematic annihilation of a people must be a fixture of the past. Let us teach our children to value diversity and promote peace and understanding. There can be a better world than the world of the Armenians between 1915 and 1923—but only if they truly understand the cruelty that humankind can wreak upon its own.

There are survivors of the Armenian Genocide in my district, and the horror of this ordeal is forever etched in their collective memories. Every year, survivors participate in commemoration ceremonies in Boston, Lowell, and other parts of Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley. The commemoration offers participants an opportunity to remind the media and citizens around the world of the tragedy suffered by the Armenians at the hands of the Turkish empire.

I represent a large and active Armenian community in my Congressional district. They

are hard-working and proud of their heritage. With great respect for them and for Armenians throughout the world, let us renew our commitment here today that the American people will oppose any and all instances of genocide.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, we join here today to honor the memory of the Armenians who were massacred and the Armenian survivors who fled into exile during the Ottoman Empire's genocide from 1915 to 1923. On April 24th 1915, the Ottoman Empire began what can be called nothing less than a policy of ethnic cleansing. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, stated that he was confident the treatment he observed of the Armenian people from 1915 to 1923 was the greatest atrocity the human race had ever seen. "I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this," Morgenthau stated.

We are very fortunate and blessed to have so many Armenian people connected to our Nation. In my home state, the Armenian community is great, and so too are the gifts and talents they bring to Rhode Island. Our Nation must continue to take the time to educate and remember the atrocities suffered by over one and a half million Armenians during the Armenian Genocide. Future generations must understand what the community has been through to truly appreciate and honor all the talents they share with our Nation.

Over eighty-six years later after the tragedy began, Turkey still denies the Armenian Genocide despite overwhelming documentation of these atrocities. We cannot allow such ethnic violence and genocide to simply be covered up or ignored. Continued Congressional support to provide assistance to the people residing in Nagorno-Karabagh and upholding section 907 of the Freedom Support Act sends a strong, powerful message to Turkey that we will not allow Armenian communities to be threatened again.

The Armenian Genocide serves as a reminder to us all that we must do more to protect peace and human rights for all those around the world.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I join voices with my colleagues today to recognize the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Between 1894 and 1923, approximately two million Armenians were massacred, persecuted, and exiled by the Turk government of the Ottoman Empire. Despite all the facts, eyewitness accounts, recognition by countries throughout the world, and the findings of their own post-war courts, the government of Turkey still refuses to acknowledge the genocide ever occurred. We cannot allow such blatant disregard and denial to go on. Earlier this year, France's National Assembly passed legislation labeling the Armenian Genocide as genocide. We in the United States should do no less.

I well remember a speech made by Elie Wiesel at the White House in which he described the perils of indifference to suffering: "In a way, to be indifferent to that suffering is what makes the human being inhuman. Indifference, after all, is more dangerous than anger or hatred. Anger can at times be creative. One writes a great poem, a great symphony . . . because one is angry at the injustice that one witnesses. But indifference is never creative. Even hatred at times may elicit a response. You fight it. You denounce it. You

disarm it. Indifference elicits no response . . . Indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees—not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity we betray our own.

Let us all take a moment to reflect on the anniversary of the genocide of the Armenian people. We have a duty to those who have died and to those who survived to help preserve this memory forever. We must raise our thoughts and our voices on behalf of those who have suffered and died, and pray that such suffering is never again visited on any people anywhere on the Earth.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian genocide, who were systematically slaughtered solely because of their race. While there is never a justification for genocide, in this case there also regrettably has never been an apology, and the criminals were never brought to justice. Such an unconscionable act, however, can never be forgotten. It is our duty to remember.

I also rise in tribute to the Armenian people who have fully recovered from this atrocity by maintaining their proud traditions and culture, becoming an integral part of America, and nine years ago, forming the Republic of Armenia.

The Ottoman Empire's last, desperate act was one of profound cruelty, tragic and gruesome beyond description. During World War I—a tumultuous, revolutionary time of great societal transformations and uncertain futures on the battlefields and at home—desperate Ottoman leaders fell back on the one weapon that could offer hope of personal survival. It is a weapon that is still used today, fed by 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. Wrongly directed, nationalism can easily result in ethnic strife and senseless genocide, committed in the name of false beliefs preached by immoral, irresponsible, tyrannical 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. In this case, as in the case of Nazi Germany, nationalism became a weapon of cruelty and evil. Let us never forget the 1.5 million Armenians who died at the whim of wicked men and their misguided followers.

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, Cambodia, Rwanda, or Bosnia. It is our duty that by remembering the millions who have been victims of genocide, we pledge ourselves to preventing such acts from repeating themselves.

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 is 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.

The Armenian people have faced great trials and tests throughout their history. They have proved their resilience in the face of tragedy before, and I have no doubt that they will endure today's tragic occurrence, recognize that a madman's bullet can never put an end to a people's dreams, and keep moving forward on the path of peace and freedom.

Mr. Speaker, let no one, friend or foe, ever deny that the Armenian genocide occurred. Let us not forget the heinous nature of the crimes committed against the Armenian people. Let us promise to the world, as American citizens and citizens of the world, that we will never again allow such a crime to be perpetrated, and will not tolerate the forces of misguided nationalism and hate.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memories of those who perished in the Armenian Genocide.

April 24, 1915 is remembered and solemnly commemorated each year by the Armenian community. On this date, eighty-six years ago, a group of Armenian political, religious, and intellectual leaders were arrested in Constantinople, sent further inland, and killed. In the following years, Armenians living under Ottoman rule were deprived of their freedom, property, and ultimately, their lives. By 1923, over a million Armenians had been massacred, and another half a million more people had been deported.

This genocide, which was preceded by a series of massacres in 1894–1896 and in 1909 and was followed by another series of massacres in 1920, essentially dispersed Armenians and removed them from their historic homeland. The persecution of the Armenian people left psychological scars among the survivors and their families. No person should have to endure the trauma and horrors that they did.

On May 2, 1995, I had the honor of meeting the former Armenian Ambassador to the United States, Rouben Robert Shugarian, at a Congressional reception commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Ambassador Shugarian introduced me to several survivors of the 1915 genocide. This experience was a deeply moving and personal reminder of the 1.5 million Armenians who perished during the systematic extermination by the Ottoman Empire.

It is important that we not only commemorate the Armenian Genocide, but also honor the memory of others who lost their lives during this time. We must remember this horrific and shameful period in world history so that it will never be repeated again.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 86th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. I rise today to commemorate this terrible chapter in human history, and to help ensure that it will never 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 after 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.

The U.S. Ambassador in Constantinople at the time, Henry Morgenthau, stated "I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."

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.

Sadly, we cannot say that such atrocities are history. We have only to recall the "killing fields" of Cambodia, mass 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.

The Armenian struggle continues to this day. 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 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. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in commemorating the Armenian Genocide.

Today we solemnly remember the April 24, 1915 onslaught of the Ottoman Government's eight-year campaign of terror against its Armenian population. We mourn the systematic destruction of Armenian communities, the murder of one and a half million men, women, and children, and the forced deportation of over nearly one million others.

This somber anniversary, however, also bears a stark warning. Eighty-six years ago, the world's willingness to ignore the bloodshed against Armenians set the stage for its complacency during Hitler's attempt to annihilate the Jews. Today, the world's resolve against

historical revisionism of the Armenian Genocide will be a key determinant of our ability to stand against similar attempts at Holocaust denial.

I am proud to acknowledge the Armenian Americans in my district and across the country who have dedicated themselves to preserving the memory of those who were persecuted, and to publicizing the United States records documenting this period. I join them and my colleagues in renewing our commitment to stand against governments that persecute their own people, and to insuring that no act of genocide will ever again go unnoticed or unmourned.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join my colleagues in commemorating the Armenian Genocide, one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century. I also want to thank Representatives Pallone and Knollenberg for calling special orders tonight to remember this terrible event.

Eighty-six years ago, in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian Genocide began with the arrest and murder of many of the Armenian community's religious, political, and intellectual leaders. Their deaths would be followed by the massacre of one and a half million men, women, and children, and the displacement and deportation of hundreds of thousands more.

Today, we pause to remember and mourn their loss. As we enter a new century, we carry with us, seared into our memories, the bloodshed of the last hundred years. That century added a new and terrible word to our vocabularies—genocide, the attempt to wipe out not merely a life, but a people and a culture. The Armenian Genocide stands as the first chilling example of that crime against humanity.

History matters. It must be remembered, and it must be acknowledged. If our past is a blank slate, we have no identity, no sense of place or of self, and nothing from which to learn. Failure to remember, acknowledge, and learn from the Armenian Genocide would only increase the scope of this terrible tragedy. The murders of a million and half people must not be compounded by the erasure of their memory. That would be one more act of genocide, and that we can never allow.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the Armenian victims of the genocide brought upon them by the Ottoman Turkish Empire and to commend my colleagues, the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman FRANK PALLONE, and the gentleman from Michigan, Congressman JOE KNOLLENBERG, for organizing this special order today so that Members of the House may take the time to remember this solemn occasion.

April 24th marks the beginning of the systematic and deliberate campaign of genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish Empire in 1915. Over the following 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians were tortured and murdered, and more than half a million were forced from their homeland into exile. Regrettably, in the years since, the Turkish Government has refused to apologize for these atrocious acts, or even acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, despite overwhelming documentation.

By recognizing the victims of the genocide, we commemorate both those who perished and those who were able to begin a new life in communities like my home State of Rhode Island, where many Armenian families con-

tinued to thrive today. I hope that recognition of this atrocity will help erase the remnants of an era in which propaganda and deceit held precedence over truth and human dignity. Our nation must never allow oppression and persecution to pass without condemnation.

Armenians are a strong, resilient people, struggling to heal the wounds of the past. However, until the Armenian genocide is officially acknowledged, these wounds will remain. We should not deny the Armenian people their rightful place in history. To do so would dishonor them, and blight our understanding of the past. It is the best interests of our nation and the entire global community to remember the past and learn from history.

Even as we remember the tragedy and honor the dead, we also honor the living. Out of the ashes of their history, Armenians all across the world have clung to their identity and have prospered in new communities. The State of Rhode Island is fortunate to be home to such an organized and active community, whose members contribute and participate in every aspect of civic life.

As an ardent supporter of the Armenian-American community throughout my public service career, I am proud to honor the victims of the genocide by paying tribute to their memory, showing compassion for those who have suffered from such heinous prejudice, and never forgetting the pain that they have endured. Let us never forget their tragedy, and ensure that such crimes are never repeated.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our two distinguished cochairmen of the Caucus on Armenian Issues, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for arranging this special order today. I also want to extend my concerns to the Armenian-American community on this somber occasion.

Armenian-Americans have every reason to be proud of their heritage and their accomplishments in this country as well as their efforts in preserving their culture their attention to the memory of their martyrs. I join Armenians and their friends throughout the world who gather this week to honor the memories of the countless men, women, and children who perished 86 years ago in the Armenian Genocide.

Future generations should not be around to forget such horrible crimes, much less to deny their existence. Moreover, we can not say with any certainty that the atrocities of the American Genocide are left to history. We only have to recall the Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia, the massacres in Rwanda, and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnian and East Timor. That is why, in addition to never forgetting the first genocide of the 20th century, we must make certain that the fate that befell the Armenian people will never again be repeated.

Yet there are many governments which fail to acknowledge the existence of the Armenian Genocide which is a great disservice to all peoples who have suffered persecution and attempted annihilation. It is important therefore that our nation recognizes the Armenian Holocaust as an historical fact and history is preserved.

Accordingly, it is fitting that we pause and join in this commemoration, and asking all Americans to join in it. We must understand the lessons of the tragedies of this century such as the Armenian Genocide, and most important to resolve to prevent their repetition.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the victims of one of history's most terrible tragedies, the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian community commemorates this atrocity each year on April 24, the day in 1915 when 300 Armenian leaders, intellectuals, and professionals were rounded up in Constantinople, deported, and killed. From 1915 through 1923, one and a half million Armenians had been massacred, 500,000 more had been deported, and the survivors were systematically deprived of their property, freedom, and dignity.

In my district, there is a significant population of Armenian survivors and their families that showed heroic courage and will to survive in the face of horrendous obstacles and adversities. These survivors are an important window into the past. It is through their unforgettable tragedy that we are able to share in their history and strong heritage.

Mr. Speaker, in the Armenian consciousness, the events of 1915 through 1923 are a vivid and constant presence. I am pleased my colleagues and I have the opportunity to pay tribute to the Armenian community in order to ensure the legacy of the genocide is remembered.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, today, we remember April 24, 1915 as one of the darkest days of the 20th century. It was on this day that 300 Armenian leaders, writers, religious figures and professionals in Constantinople were gathered together, deported, and brutally murdered. In addition, thousands more Armenian citizens were dragged out of their homes and murdered in the streets. Remaining citizens were taken from their homes and marched off to concentration camps in the desert, where many died of starvation and thirst. Following the horrific events of April 24, 1915, the Ottoman Empire systematically deprived Armenians of their homes, property, freedom, and ultimately, their lives. By 1923, 1.5 million Armenian citizens had been murdered, while half a million had been deported.

Today, we must overcome the obstacle of denial. To this day, the Turkish Government continues to deny that the Armenian genocide ever took place. It is the responsibility of the United States and the international community to overcome this denial and recognize the horror that took place between 1915 and 1923. In addition, it is the duty of all nations of the world to ensure that such atrocities are never repeated.

The Armenian people have spent the last 10 years courageously establishing an Independent Republic of Armenia. These efforts are a testament to the strength and character of the Armenian people. The United States will continue to work with Armenia to ensure the establishment of a safe and stable environment in the Caucasus region. Recently, President Robert Kocharian met with Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev and international mediators from France, Russia and the United States to discuss peace options on the Karabagh conflict. I am confident that Albania will work towards a positive outcome in the Nagorno Karabagh Peace Talks.

Today, I join my colleagues in recognizing the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and while this is indeed a day of mourning, we must also take this opportunity to celebrate Armenia's commitment towards democracy in the face of adversity.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On this day I call on my colleagues and on the President to remember the words of author, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, ". . . to remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all . . ."

While few would disagree with these words, we in the U.S. Government have failed to heed the warning contained within. It is time for the Government of the United States to do what it failed to do 86 years ago and to officially recognize the slaughter of more than 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman-Turkish Empire from 1915 to 1923 as a deliberate and systematic attempt to destroy the Armenian people, their culture and their heritage, as genocide.

It began with the killing of the community leaders and intellectuals 86 years ago today. That was followed by the disarming and murder of Armenians serving in the Ottoman-Turkish army. And this was followed by attacks on Armenian men, women and children, whom the Ottoman-Turks drove into the desert where they were left to either die of dehydration or starve.

This deliberate and systematic assault on the Armenian population would continue for 8 years. Then-U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman-Turkish Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., witnessed these events first hand and reported them back to Washington. Later he would write that "the great massacres and persecutions of the past are insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."

Despite reports such as this, the United States failed to intervene. As horrible as not coming to the aid of the Armenian people in 1915 was, what strikes me today is that the United States, 86 years later, still fails to recognize these events for what they were, genocide.

Last year I joined with 143 of my colleagues in sponsoring H. Res. 398, which would have acknowledged the events in Turkey of 1915 to 1923 as genocide and called on the President to do the same. Yet this resolution was not allowed to come to a vote on the floor. Even today, when President Bush issued a statement to commemorate what he called "one of the great tragedies of history," he did not use the word genocide.

Mr. Speaker, if we fail to acknowledge these events for what they truly were, we are, as Elie Wiesel has said, "committing the most dangerous sin of all." In Turkey, Germany, Yugoslavia and Rwanda, we have either acted too slowly or failed to act at all. How many more genocides are going to occur before we raise our own awareness of these events and condemn them for what they truly are.

Mr. Speaker, finally I would like to thank Mr. KNOLLENBERG and Mr. PALLONE, the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, for organizing this special order tonight. Recognition and acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide is an important step toward defeating that indifferent spirit which has allowed events such as these to occur again and again. I am glad that I am joined by so many of my colleagues who share this view tonight.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues tonight in somber remembrance of

the Armenian Genocide. Early in the 20th century, during World War I and its aftermath, the Ottoman Empire attempted the complete liquidation of the Armenian population of Eastern Anatolia.

We must come down to the House floor tonight not only to remember this tragic event, but we must also proclaim that the Armenian Genocide is an historical fact. There are many who deny that this first genocide of the 20th century actually took place.

The American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1919 was an eyewitness. In his memoirs, he said, "When the Turkish authorities gave the order for these deportations they were merely giving the death warrant to an entire race. They understood this well and in their conversations with me made no particular attempt to conceal this fact."

He went on to describe what he saw at the Euphrates River. He said, as our eyes and ears in the Ottoman Empire, "I have by no means told the most terrible details, for a complete narration of the sadistic orgies of which they, the Armenian men and women, are victims can never be printed in an American publication. Whatever crimes the most perverted instincts of the human mind can devise, whatever refinements of persecution and injustice the most debased imagination can conceive, became the daily misfortune of the Armenian people."

We can never forget that 8 days before he invaded Poland, Adolf Hitler turned to his inner circle and said, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" The impunity with which the Turkish Government acted in annihilating the Armenian people emboldened Adolf Hitler and his inner circle to carry out the Holocaust of the Jewish people.

It is time for Turkey to acknowledge this genocide, because only in that way can the Turkish Government and its people rise above it. The German Government has been quite forthcoming in acknowledging the Holocaust, and in doing so it has at least been respected by the peoples of the world for its honesty. Turkey should follow that example rather than trying to deny history.

It is also time—indeed it is far overdue—for our Congress to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I again call on my colleagues to recognize the Armenian Genocide and to urge my fellow Americans to remember this tragic event.

EARTH DAY

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I take this moment to acknowledge Earth Day. We have made great strides in protecting our treasures, protecting our natural resources, and in protecting our environment. So, Mr. Speaker, since the first Earth Day in 1970, Americans have found many ways to promote the preservation of our environment and to focus a great deal of attention on the work that is left to be done.

Earth Day has always been a day to celebrate the environment and our natural heritage. It has also served to