

the 20th century occurred during World War I and was perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people. Concerned that the Armenian people would move to establish their own government, the Ottoman Empire embarked on a reign of terror that resulted in the massacre of over 1.5 million Armenians. This atrocious crime began on April 15, 1915, when the Ottoman Empire arrested, exiled, and eventually killed hundreds of Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders.

Once they had eliminated the Armenian people's leadership, they turned their attention to the Armenians serving in the Armenian Army. These soldiers were disarmed and placed in labor camps where either they were starved or they were executed. The Armenian people, lacking political leadership and deprived of young, able-bodied men who could fight against the Ottoman onslaught, were then deported from every region of Turkish Armenia. The images of human suffering from the Armenian genocide are graphic and as haunting as the pictures of the Holocaust.

Why then, it must be asked, are so many people unaware of the Armenian genocide? I believe the answer is found in the international community's response to this disturbing event. At the end of World War I, those responsible for ordering and implementing the Armenian genocide were never brought to justice, and the world casually forgot about the pain and suffering of the Armenian people. That proved to be a grave mistake. In a speech made at the beginning of World War II, Adolf Hitler justified his brutal tactics with the infamous statement, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

Tragically, 6 years later, the Nazis had exterminated 6 million Jews. Never has the phrase, "Those who forget the past will be destined to repeat it" been more applicable. If the international community had spoken out against this merciless slaughtering of the Armenian people instead of ignoring it, the horrors of the Holocaust might never have taken place.

As we commemorate the 87th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, I believe it is time to give this event its rightful place in history. This afternoon and this evening, let us pay homage to those who fell victim to the Ottoman oppressors and tell the story of the forgotten genocide. For the sake of the Armenian heritage, it is a story that must be heard.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 87TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 87th anniversary of the Armenian genocide and

to commend my colleagues, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), for organizing this Special Order and to remember this solemn occasion.

Over an 8-year period, beginning in 1915, the Ottoman Turkish Empire systematically tortured and murdered 1.5 million Armenians and exiled another half million more. In the years since, Armenian descendants have thrived in the United States and in many other countries, bringing extraordinary vitality and achievement to communities across this Nation and throughout the world.

Tragically, the Turkish Government has refused to acknowledge the Armenian genocide and has made repeated attempts to exonerate itself of any wrongdoing through a shameful propaganda campaign. The victims of the genocide deserve our remembrance and their rightful place in history. It is in the best interests of our Nation and the entire global community to remember the past and learn from these unfortunate events to ensure that they are never repeated.

Earlier this year, the European Union adopted a resolution affirming the Armenian genocide, making it one of the many official bodies, including the Governments of Canada, Argentina, France, Italy, Sweden and Belgium, to do so. Now more than ever, the genocide underscores our responsibility to help convey our cherished tradition of respect for fundamental human rights and opposition to such heinous atrocities. Only through such recognition can the Armenian people hope to feel some measure of compensation for the ultimate injustice perpetrated against their Nation.

As a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues and an ardent supporter of Rhode Island's Armenian American community, I will continue to encourage my colleagues to hold the Turkish Government accountable for its actions and to honor the memory of those Armenians who suffered and perished nearly a century ago.

#### COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in speaking about the genocide, a genocide, unfortunately, that has not been acknowledged by some and, unfortunately, heightens the risk of its repetition. The massacre of Armenians in Turkey during and after World War I is recorded as the first State-ordered genocide against a minority group in the 20th century. Tragically, Mr. Speaker, it was not, as we all know, the last.

In the 87 years since this unspeakable tragedy, the world has witnessed dec-

ades of genocide and ethnic cleansing and wholesale persecution of people simply because of who they are: European Jews, Bosnian Muslims, the Tutsis of Rwanda, Kosovar Albanians, and others.

Mr. Speaker, we undertake this year's commemoration of the Armenian genocide in a world that is forever changed as we reflect on the terrible events of September 11. We understand that confronting irrational hatred and the evil which kindles it remains a constant challenge for us all.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who deny that there was an Armenian genocide, yet there is, of course, no lack of documentation of what occurred during that terrible time. In her powerful new book, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, author Samantha Powers points out that *The New York Times* gave the Turkish horrors steady coverage, publishing 145 stories in 1915 alone. According to Powers, beginning in March 1915, the paper spoke of Turkish "massacres," "slaughter," and "atrocities" against the Armenians, relaying accounts by missionaries, Red Cross officials, local religious authorities, and survivors of mass executions.

The U.S. Ambassador to Turkey at that time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., cabled Washington on July 10, 1950 stating, "Persecution of Armenians assuming unprecedented proportions. Reports from widely scattered districts indicate systematic attempt to uproot peaceful Armenian populations and through arbitrary arrests, terrible tortures, wholesale expulsions, and deportations from one end of the empire to the other, accompanied by frequent instances of rape, pillage, and murder, turning into massacre, to bring destruction and destitution on them." The tragedy, Mr. Speaker, is that similar language could have been applied during the 1990s in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Speaker, those reports came to us, and the West did little. The West did little until the middle of the 1990s and, when we acted, the killing and carnage stopped. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, at that time in 1915, no action, no action was taken to try to save the Armenians because their plight was deemed to be an "internal affair" of their government.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of having chaired for 10 years the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, otherwise known as the Helsinki Commission. It oversees the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act, signed August 1, 1975 in Helsinki, Finland. That act, post-genocide of the 1930s and 1940s, adopted the premise that a nation's mistreatment of its own citizens would never be again an internal affair. To that extent, Mr. Speaker, the international community has, in fact, adopted the premise that we are our brothers' and our sisters' keepers.

Decades later, 6 million Jews would perish in the Holocaust before the community of nations would adopt the universal declaration of human rights. Then, as I have said, the Helsinki Final Act, some years later.

The declaration on human rights captured the world's revulsion of that traditional view of international relations and made clear a new norm: how a State treats its own people is of direct and legitimate concern to all States and is not simply an internal affair of the State concerned.

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Mr. Speaker, I trust that all of us will urge our Turkish friends who were not involved in this genocide, but who now head their governments, to acknowledge and express their own horror at those acts taken in 1915.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I, too, join my colleagues and commend my colleagues this evening for working towards educating the world about the Armenian genocide. I am a proud member of the Armenian Caucus, and, Mr. Speaker, I come with some qualifications in that I am one of two Members of Congress from Armenian ancestry.

We continue to take important steps every day, like the planned establishment of an Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial here in Washington, D.C., but more needs to be done to further educate our citizens about these atrocities.

As we are all well aware, since the latter part of the 21st century, our Nation has been focused on a hotbed of activity in the Middle East. During the past 7 months, we have seen the level of commitment the Nation has dedicated toward the war on terror, but it is vital that the United States recognize, in particular, the 20th century's first instance of genocidal terror, the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, our country appreciates the importance of a strong partnership with Armenia in these trying times. Armenia continues to move forward alongside our country by pledging assistance as we progress on the war on terror. Now we must move forward with Armenia hand-in-hand by recognizing the past atrocities for what they truly are: a genocide.

I cannot stress enough, Mr. Speaker, that the historical record is clear. From at least 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Empire succeeded in systematically eliminating the Armenians from the historical homeland where they lived for more than 2000 years.

I would take this moment to point out that this is a particularly personal message from my family to the rest of the world. My grandfather, Oscar Chaderjian, emigrated from Armenia

at the beginning of the 21st century, but only after he had been witness to and forced to be involved in the execution of one of his own uncles, a schoolteacher. He was forced to hold one arm with his cousin, whose dad was attached to the other arm, while the Ottoman Turks executed him in front of a classroom full of Armenian children.

Recognizing the severity of the Ottoman Empire's actions, England, France, and Russia jointly issued a statement on May 24, 1950, explicitly charging a government for the first time with a crime against humanity. The Armenian genocide has been acknowledged by not only these nations but also Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon, and Uruguay, as well as by international organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament.

Furthermore, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration has broad and thorough documentation of the Armenian genocide; in particular, Record Group 59 of the United States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40.

America must take another step and acknowledge the Armenian genocide in history so that we may begin to educate the world as to its effect, and therefore avoid, and serve as a means of avoiding, similar kinds of atrocities in the future.

We must bring awareness of the atrocities that have plagued history in areas such as Armenia, Europe, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone. Acknowledging these events of the past will provide us with the proper tools to ensure peace and stability in the future. Peace and stability must always be a goal of a civilized world.

As always, I am proud to stand with Armenians, and even prouder to be one of them. Mr. Speaker, we call on our friends, the Turks, to recognize that recognizing the actions of the past by other people not of this generation of Turks, not of this Turkish government, is not to condemn the current, but to recognize the past so that we may never repeat it.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE 1915 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize April 24th, 1915 as one of the darkest days of the 20th century. On this day 300 Armenian leaders, writers, religious figures and professionals in Constantinople were gathered together, deported, and brutally murdered. Thousands of Armenian citizens were dragged out of their homes and murdered in the streets. What few citizens remained were taken from their communities and marched off to concentration camps in the desert, where

most died of starvation and thirst. 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. The Armenian Genocide is a historical fact. The United States and the international community must overcome this denial and recognize the horror that took place between 1915 and 1923.

The Armenian people have spent the last ten years courageously establishing an Independent Republic of Armenia. These efforts are a testament to the strength and character of the Armenian people. I strongly support the United States' continued efforts with Armenia to ensure a safe and stable environment in the Caucasus region.

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.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian-Americans, I rise today to join my colleagues in the sad commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

Today, we continue the crusade to ensure that this tragedy is never forgotten. This 87th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is an emotional time. The loss of life experienced by so many families is devastating. But, in the face of the systematic slaughter of 1.5 million people, the Armenian community has persevered with a vision of life and of freedom.

Armenian Americans are representative of the resolve, bravery, and strength of spirit that is so characteristic of Armenians around the world. That strength carried them through humanity's worst: Upheaval from a homeland of 3,000 years, massacre of kin, and deportation to foreign lands. That same strength gathers Armenians around the world to make certain that this tragedy is never forgotten.

Without recognition and remembrance, this atrocity remains a threat to nations around the world. I've often quoted philosopher George Santayana who said: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." And to remember, we must first acknowledge what it is—Genocide.

As another scholar stated: "Denial of genocide is the final stage of genocide; it is what Elie Wiesel has called "double killing." Denial murders the dignity of the survivors and seeks to destroy the remembrance of the crime."

Tragically, more than 1.5 million Armenians were systematically murdered at the hands of the Young Turks. More than 500,000 were deported. It was brutal. It was deliberate. It was an organized campaign and it lasted more than 8 years. We must make certain that we remember.

Now, we must assure that the world recognizes that Armenian people have remembered, and they have survived and thrived.