

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.

Out of the crumbling Soviet Union, the Republic of Armenia was born, and independence was gained. But, independence has not ended the struggle.

To this day, the Turkish government denies that genocide of the Armenian people occurred and denies its own responsibility for the deaths of 1.5 million people.

In response to this revisionist history, the Republic of France passed legislation that set the moral standard for the international community. The French National Assembly unanimously passed a bill that officially recognizes the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey during and after WWI as genocide.

Several nations have since joined in the belief that history should be set straight.

Canada, Argentina, Belgium, Lebanon, The Vatican, Uruguay, the European parliament, Russia, Greece, Sweden and France, have authored declarations or decisions confirming that the genocide occurred. As a country, we must join these nations in recognition of this atrocity.

Two years ago I joined numerous Members in support of the International Relations Committee's Armenian Genocide Resolution. As may of you remember, the resolution passed and was sent to the full House for a vote. Though the resolution was withdrawn, the Congress had taken its stand. We must demand that the United States officially acknowledge the forced exile and annihilation of 1.5 million people as genocide.

Denying the horrors of those years merely condones the behavior in other places as was evidenced in Rwanda, Indonesia, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Iraq. Silence may have been the signal to perpetrators of these atrocities that they could commit genocide, deny it, and get away with it.

As Americans, the reminder of targeted violence and mass slaughter is still raw. We lost nearly 3,000 people on September 11th. I cannot imagine the world trying to say that this did not occur. The loss of 1.5 million people is a global tragedy.

A peaceful and stable South Caucasus region is clearly in the U.S. national interest. Recognizing the genocide must be a strategy for this goal in an increasingly uncertain region. One of the most important ways in which we honor the memory of the Armenian victims of the past is to help modern Armenia build a secure and prosperous future.

The United States has a unique history of aid to Armenia, being among the first to recognize that need, and the first to help. I am pleased with the U.S. involvement in the emphasis of private sector development, regionally focused programs, people-to-people linkages and the development of a civil society.

Other reform has included the 1998 five part Comprehensive Market Reform Program, tax and fiscal reform, modernization of tax offices, land registration, capital markets development, and democratic and legal reforms.

Armenia has made impressive progress in rebuilding a society and a nation in the face of dramatic obstacles.

I will continue to take a strong stand in support of Armenia's commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and a market economy—I am proud to stand with Armenia in doing so. But there is more to be done. Conflict persists in the Nagorno-Karabagh region.

Congress has provided funding for confidence building in that region, and I will con-

tinue in my support of that funding and the move towards a brighter future for Armenia. But in building our future, we must not forget our past. That is why I strongly support the efforts of the Armenian community in the construction of the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum. Because so many Armenians have spoken of the destruction they have made certain that we remember.

Last Sunday, I met with Vickie Smith Foston, the author of *Victoria's Secret: A Conspiracy of Silence*. Through this story, we learn about the historical journey of a lifetime that preceded her grandmother's leap to her death on March 9, 1950 and the danger of silence though her family tried desperately to hide and conceal their identity. Vickie discovers a past that was to be buried with Victoria—her family's Armenian heritage and the horrors of the Armenian Genocide.

This book forces the reader to remember. Now we must make certain that the world remembers.

87TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 87th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 24, 1915, the government of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire rounded up approximately 600 leaders and intellectuals of the Armenian community and executed them. This was the beginning of the first genocide of the 20th Century.

Shortly after that, the Ottoman-Turkish government disarmed all of the Armenian soldiers in the Turkish army, separated them from their units and executed them, too.

From 1915 to 1923 the Ottoman-Turkish government, on a systematic campaign to wipe out the Armenians, killed more than 1.5 million men, women, and children.

Despite the eyewitness accounts from then U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, detailing the events in 1915, the U.S. government did nothing. And if that isn't bad enough, since 1915 the U.S. has refused to recognize that the Armenian Genocide even occurred.

Elie Wiesel has called the denial of the genocide a "double killing": "denial of genocide," he wrote, "seeks to reshape history in order to demonize the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators and is, in effect, the final stage of genocide."

And Elie Wiesel was right. But what is most horrific, is that today, 87 years after the Armenian Genocide began, the United States still has yet to officially recognize this tragedy.

We came close in the 106th Congress when a vote was scheduled on House Resolution 398. This resolution would have acknowledged the Armenian Genocide and provided training for our Foreign Service officers so they would be able to recognize and react to ethnic cleansing and genocide. But a vote never occurred. We chose not to act.

Last year, in April 2001, the President called the events of 1915 a "forced exile and annihilation" but he would not call this a genocide.

Some listening to this debate may wonder why it is so important that we bring this mes-

sage to the House floor year, after year, after year. Simple. It is important for two reasons. The first is that we must honor those who lost their lives during the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The second reason is that while the Armenian Genocide was the first Genocide of the 20th Century, it was not the last. In Germany in the 1930s, Cambodia in the 1970's, Yugoslavia in the 1990s, and Rwanda in 1994 we saw history repeat itself again, and again and again and again.

Until the United States is willing to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and take concrete steps to acknowledge this tragedy, we cannot say that we are any closer to preventing this from happening again.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey and the gentleman from Michigan for arranging this very important special order today and yield back the balance of my time.

REMEMBERING THE 87TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

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-seventh anniversary of the Armenian genocide. I want to commend my colleagues Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, for once again sponsoring this special order.

Each year, we join the world in the commemoration of the Armenian genocide because the tragedy of lost lives through ethnic cleansing must not be forgotten. By remembering the bloodshed and atrocities committed against the Armenian people, we hope to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

On April 24, 1915, 200 Armenian leaders, scholars, and professionals were gathered, deported, and killed in Constantinople. Later that day, 5,000 more Armenians were butchered in their homes and on the streets of the city. By 1923, two million men, women, and children had been murdered and another 500,000 Armenian survivors were homeless and exiled. The Armenian genocide was the first of the twentieth century, but unfortunately as we all know, it was not the last.

Talat Pasha, one of the Ottoman rulers, stated that the regime's goal was to "thoroughly liquidate its internal foes, the indigenous Christian." The regime called the mass murder a mass relocation, masking its horrendous acts from the rest of the world. The Ottoman Empire was fully aware that the possibility of foreign intervention was minimal considering the world was preoccupied with World War I at the time.

However, the massacre was immediately denounced by representatives from Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. Even Germany and Austria, allies of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, condemned the Empire's heinous acts.

Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople at the time, vividly documented the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians with the statement, "I am confident that the whole