

(Mr. McCOTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my special order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentleman from Ohio? There was no objection.

IN SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN PARITY ACT

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the American Parity Act sponsored by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL), and I would like to thank him for his leadership on this particular piece of legislation and also thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for articulating such a fine point that none of us here believe that we should somehow rob the Iraqi people from the taste of democracy or from the taste of a free society. But the argument that we are trying to make tonight is that we want this to happen. We want healthcare for the Iraqi people. We want infrastructure. We want schools. We want them to read and experience all the best that the democracies have to offer around the world. But we cannot do this, we should not do this, and forget along the way the priorities of the United States of America and the citizens that we have here.

I want to share with the American people here tonight a study that was recently done by Goldman Sachs, not exactly a liberal think tank. They said, and this is their forecast, if the President's proposed new tax cuts are enacted, a Medicare prescription drug benefit approved, the alternative minimum tax adjusted, and appropriations grow modestly, the deficits over the next 10 years will total \$4.2 trillion. And that is if the Social Security surplus is included. If it is not included, the deficit would be \$6.7 trillion.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) suggested maybe we offer this tax cut to the people of Iraq and allow them to grow their economy, but the problem with the tax cuts and having normal priorities is that the burdens with the baby boom generation needing support in their later years, the children and grandchildren of the citizens of this country's payroll tax will be 33 percent, 33 percent payroll taxes for their children and grandchildren, long-term deficits. We will not be investing in alternative energy sources. We are going to raise the interest rates. We are going to raise the interest payments. We are going to tie our hands with the international problems that we need to be committed to. We are not fully funding IDEA where

the disabled children in this country are not getting the full 40 percent that was promised, and worse yet, we are cutting veterans' benefits by \$28 billion. So we are sending our soldiers out, asking them to achieve these goals, and when they come back, they are going to have \$28 billion less in services and healthcare benefits that will be a smaller and more diminished American dream for our soldiers when they return back to this country.

Mr. Speaker, this is a question of priorities. This is the wealthiest country on the planet.

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This is the freest society on the planet. If we want to create democracy in Iraq, we will. If we want the young school children to have 12,500 more schools, enroll 4 million more children, rebuild or renovate 3,000 schools, we will, because we have the power and the ingenuity and the spirit to make it happen. But we should not do it at the expense of the people and the children of this country, the veterans of this country, the seniors of this country, the disabled children in this country.

This is eerily similar to the administration of 1990 and 1991, where we have completely taken our eye off the domestic ball and we keep it on foreign policy at the expense of the American people. And we are over there because we believe in the Iraqi people. We believe that when the sweet taste of democracy touches their lips, that they will respond in kind.

But let me just say this in closing, Mr. Speaker, that maybe if we were making the investments in this country and gave the faith and the devotion to the people of this country, like we have for the citizens of Iraq, maybe one day the citizens of the United States of America will be up cheering in the streets, saying yes, our government is responding to the needs of the people of this country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMEMBERING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, April 24 will mark the 88th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. On April 24, 1915, 250 Armenian intellectuals and political leaders were arrested and later executed as the rulers of the Ottoman Empire implemented their plan to eradicate their Armenian

subjects. This action against the Armenian community's elite marked the beginning of one of the most horrendous events in the history of humankind.

Two weeks from now, Armenians will gather worldwide to remember their martyrs and survivors and to seek universal affirmation of this crime against humanity. Because we are out of session this year on April 24, I would like to comment on the Armenian Genocide tonight. I do so to honor the memory of those innocent victims killed for only one reason, because they were Armenian.

One and a half million men and women, young and old, able-bodied or not, were driven from their ancestral homeland and brutally massacred.

Mr. Speaker, this week over 160 Members of the House of Representatives, including myself, will send a letter to President Bush asking that he fulfill his campaign promise and use the word "genocide" in his annual April 24th address. He fell short of that promise last year, but with this strong showing of Congressional support it is my hope that he will do the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide justice in this year's address.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, more than 60 of my colleagues will join the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH), the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and myself in introducing a resolution on the issue of genocide. This resolution reaffirms the support of the ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and anticipating the 15th anniversary of the enactment of the Genocide Convention Implementation Act of 1987.

This resolution is an extremely important and timely measure, in my opinion. It not only speaks to the immeasurable wrongs done to the Armenian people, but also to the Jewish people during the Holocaust and the genocides in Rwanda and Cambodia. In the last two years, we have all seen example after example of the disregard for human life. This resolution would reaffirm that Congress recognizes the horrors of the last century, and strives to prevent further genocides through vigilant education.

Mr. Speaker, the message of the broad, bipartisan support of the letter to the President and the legislation is clear: Turkey must recognize the genocide of its past and accept that Armenia is an integral and necessary sovereign neighbor. It must drop the illegal blockade against Armenia and establish full and normal diplomatic and economic relations. Reconciliation with its past and normalization of relations with Armenia is the only way for Turkey to step out of the dark shadows of its history of genocide. The entire western world, which Turkey so desires to be part of, demands it.

Mr. Speaker, let me say in conclusion, as we embark on a new century,

we must make sure that we have learned the lessons of humankind's capacity for brutality, and combat this with truth about the past, compassion for our common man, and a refusal to let these crimes against humanity be repeated.

We must remember and learn from tragic events the tragic events that befell the Armenians. That is the only way we can be certain that this horrific event, which almost destroyed one of the oldest cultures on the planet, does not happen again.

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, between 300 and 1,000 people were killed in attacks on more than a dozen villages in northeastern Congo last week. According to witnesses on the ground, the coordinated attacks started with a whistle blow and lasted between five and eight hours. UN and International Red Cross observers say that they have witnessed the results of the killing, 20 mass graves.

Mass killings such as this have become a regular occurrence in the Congo Civil War, which killed more than 50,000 last year. Yesterday, up to one thousand people were killed in the span of a few hours, yet these stories don't even make the front page of the papers here in the States.

How many people have to die before we will take action? How many lives need to be shattered before we will stand up and say, "Enough!" How many more massacres can we sit by and watch before we will realize our mistakes?

The United States' failure as a world leader in human rights is demonstrated in our lack of will to stop massacres that have occurred in places like Congo, Kosovo, Rwanda, Iraq, and many others. But it is also seen in our denial of those massacres that we know have taken place.

Every year since I was elected to Congress, I have joined my colleagues in the House of Representatives to hold this annual vigil commemorating the Armenian Genocide for a simple reason, because there are those out there who deny that it ever occurred.

Eighty-eight years ago, 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 mass slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire.

We know this happened, and we know how many people were killed and we know how it was done and by whom. Yet the official U.S. government position on this atrocity is that it was not a genocide, that there was no deliberate attempt by the Ottoman Turks to wipe out the Armenian population.

We here on the floor today know better. And we know that by denying the truth surrounding this tragic chapter of history, we are only providing cover for the next genocide to begin.

The events in Africa last week provide yet another chilling example: If we fail to act, these types of terrible crimes will persist.

Eighty-eight years of denials are enough. We in Congress need to pass an Armenian Genocide Resolution and put to rest this campaign to deny the Armenian genocide. I urge all my colleagues in the House to join with me under the leadership of our Armenian Caucus co-chairs, Joe Knollenberg and Frank Pallone, and cosponsor a resolution to finally put this denial to an end.

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-eighth 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, 300 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 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."

Winston Churchill used the word "holocaust" to describe the Armenian massacres when he said that, "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."

The orchestrated extermination of people is contrary to the values the United States espouses. We are a nation which strictly adheres to the affirmation of human rights everywhere. No one can erase a horrendous historical fact by ignoring what so many witnessed and survived.

Recognition and acceptance of misdeeds are necessary steps toward its extinction. Without acceptance, there is no remorse, and without remorse, there is no catharsis and pardon. We all want to forget these horrific tragedies in our history and bury them in the past.

However, it is only through the painful process of acknowledging and remembering that we can prevent similar iniquity in the future.

The survivors of the Armenian genocide and their descendants have made great contributions to every country in which they have settled, including the United States where they have made their mark in business, the professions and our cultural life.

In closing, I would like to ask that we all take a moment to reflect upon the hardships endured by the Armenians, and acknowledge that in the face of adversity, the Armenian people have persevered. Today, we commemorate the memories of those who lost their lives in the genocide, as well as the resilience of those who survived.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, April 24—two weeks from today—will mark the 88th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, when the government of Turkey systematically massacred 1.5 million Armenians and exile over one million more. This unanswered event set a historical precedent that has allowed governments to continue to commit crimes against humanity without remorse or punishment. While we are fighting a war in Iraq, I believe that now is the time for our government to formally recognize the Armenian Genocide and to send a strong message to the world that crimes against humanity will not be tolerated. That is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Congressional Genocide Resolution, which is scheduled to be introduced tomorrow morning. This resolution commemorates the 15th anniversary of the U.S. implementation of the Genocide Convention and includes the events of the Armenian Genocide, Cambodia, Rwanda, and the Jewish Holocaust as examples of crimes against humanity that should never be forgotten.

Additionally, I have also joined over 150 other members of Congress in signing a letter to President Bush urging him to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide.

As a member of the International Relations Committee, and representing a district with a large Armenian-American community, I believe that the United States must continue to help the government in Yerevan to guarantee its security, develop its economy and infrastructure, strengthen its parliamentary process and advance democratic elections.

My district includes a large Armenian-American community, especially in Sunnyside, Woodside and Jackson Heights, Queens and I have listened to their needs and concerns many times. I have worked tirelessly to promote the interests of Armenia and the Armenian-American community.

I have worked closely with Aram Sarafian of the Armenian National Committee of New York. Aram is an officer in the US Army, who has served in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and is now serving in Iraq—a mission to both liberate the people of that nation as well as stop the government massacres against its own people. Conversations with him on the situation in Armenia, their recent past and the current situation in Iraq have many parallels.

That is why I have urged the Congress to reject proposed cuts in Armenia's bilateral foreign assistance aid, which totaled \$90 million last year. By maintaining previous foreign assistance levels, Armenia can offset the devastating effects of the Turkish and Azerbaijani blockades and help to continue its political and

economic transition. The costs of these blockades are estimated by the World Bank at up to \$700 million a year, essentially a third of Armenia's entire economy. I believe that, by maintaining assistance levels, an economically viable Armenia will be a catalyst for stability and development in a strategically important region of the world.

I am also a cosponsor of extending Permanent Trade Relations to Armenia, now that it has joined the World Trade Organization. This measure permanently waives the Jackson-Vanik provision of requiring the President to deny normal trade relations to those countries that restricted free emigration. Armenia has had free emigration for over a decade and successive Presidents have waived the Jackson-Vanik restrictions. It is time to make this waiver permanent.

As a close ally and reliable friend, the United States has an obligation to the Armenian people to help them address the challenges of the future—from nation-building, and enhancing regional security to reconstructing critical economic infrastructure. I will continue to work tirelessly to promote the interests of the Armenian-American community, from recognizing the past to building a strong and stable future.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in remembering the victims of the Armenian Genocide. April 24 will be the 88th anniversary of this human tragedy.

From 1915 to 1923, the world witnessed the first genocide of the 20th century. This was clearly one of the world's greatest tragedies—the deliberate and systematic Ottoman annihilation of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children.

Furthermore, another 500,000 refugees fled and escaped to various points around the world—effectively eliminating the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

From these ashes arose hope and promise in 1991—and I was blessed to see it. I was one of the four international observers from the United States Congress to monitor Armenia's independence referendum. I went to the communities in the northern part of Armenia, and I watched in awe as 95 percent of the people over the age of 18 went out and voted.

The Armenian people had been denied freedom for so many years and, clearly, they were very excited about this new opportunity. Almost no one stayed home. They were all out in the streets going to the polling places. I watched in amazement as people stood in line for hours to get into these small polling places and vote.

Then, after they voted, the other interesting thing was that they did not go home. They had brought covered dishes with them, and all of these polling places had little banquets afterward to celebrate what had just happened.

What a great thrill it was to join them the next day in the streets of Yerevan when they were celebrating their great victory. Ninety-eight percent of the people who voted cast their ballots in favor of independence. It was a wonderful experience to be there with them when they danced and sang and shouted, "Ketse azat ankakh Hayastan"—long live free and independent Armenia! That should be the cry of freedom-loving people everywhere.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues to affirm the existence of the

Armenian Genocide and urge our nation's leaders to do the same.

Beginning in 1915 and throughout the First World War, the Armenian people of the Ottoman Empire were systemic targets of deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and genocide.

The existence of genocide—the organized and systematic killing of a people based on their racial or cultural affiliation—is a terrible reflection of humanity and must be confronted and condemned.

April 24 is commemorated as the initiation of the Armenian Genocide that took the lives of one and a half million Armenian men, women, and children.

It was on April 24, 1915, that over 200 Armenian community leaders were brutally arrested, imprisoned, and executed.

As we approach the 88th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, it is time that the United States of America recognizes this dishonorable part of history.

More than one million people of Armenian descent live in the United States.

We must recognize and honor their personal histories, as well as our collective world history.

Our children need to learn the truth—that during World War I this world experienced the Armenian Genocide, genocide is wrong, and it is wrong to deny the occurrence of any genocide.

Our nation must serve as the example of acknowledging and condemning such horrific actions.

I urge my colleagues and this administration to do the right thing and join me in affirming the existence of the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today to remember a horrific atrocity in history—the Armenian Genocide. April 24 is recognized as the anniversary date of the genocide, when Armenian intellectuals and professionals in Constantinople were rounded up and deported or killed.

From 1915 to 1923, 1.5 million Armenians were killed and countless others suffered as a result of the systematic and deliberate campaign of genocide by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire. Half a million Armenians, who escaped death, were deported to the Middle East. Some were fortunate enough to escape to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I am thankful that more than a million Armenians managed to escape the genocide and establish a new life here in the United States. In my Seventh District of New Jersey, I am proud to represent a number of Armenian Americans. They have enriched every aspect of New Jersey life, from science to commerce and the arts.

Our statements today are intended to preserve the memory of the Armenian loss and to honor those descendants who have overcome the atrocities that took their grandparents, children and friends. We mark this anniversary each year to remind our nation and teach future generations about the horrors of genocide and oppression endured by the Armenian people. We must commit ourselves to ensuring that America remains a beacon of tolerance, openness and diversity.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the commitment of Armenian Americans who continue to strive for world recognition of one of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century.

Mr. DOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in remembrance 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.

The Ottoman Turkish Empire between 1915 and 1923 massacred one and a half million Armenian people. More than 500,000 Armenians were exiled from a homeland that their ancestors had occupied for more than 3,000 years. A race of people was nearly eliminated.

It would be an even greater tragedy to forget that the Armenian Genocide ever happened. To not recognize the horror of such events almost assures their repetition in the future. Adolf Hitler, in preparing his genocide plans for the Jews, predicted that no one would remember the atrocities he was about to unleash. After all, he asked, "Who remembers the Armenians?"

Our statements today are intended to preserve the memory of the Armenian loss, and to remind the world that the Turkish government—to this day—refuses to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. The truth of this tragedy can never and should never be denied.

And we must also be mindful of the current suffering of the Armenian, where the Armenian people are still immersed in tragedy and violence. The unrest between Armenia and Azerbaijan continues in Nagorno-Karabakh. Thousands of innocent people have already perished in this dispute, and many more have been displaced and are homeless.

In the face of this difficult situation we have an opportunity for reconciliation. Now is the time for Armenia and its neighbors to come together and work toward building relationships that will assure lasting peace.

Meanwhile, in America, the Armenian-American community continues to thrive and to 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 replace 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.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, today we solemnly commemorate the 88th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, in remembrance of the Ottoman government's campaign of devastation and destruction against its Armenian population.

We commemorate this somber anniversary to honor the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and pay tribute to the survivors who rebuilt their lives. We join together to renew our conviction to fight the sources of bigotry, intolerance, and historical revisionism that have tried to distort and diminish Armenian suffering.

Over the course of 8 years, beginning in 1915, Armenian communities were terrorized and systematically destroyed. One and a half million men, women, and children were murdered and nearly one million other were deported.

If the world had cried out at the bloodshed of Armenians, it may not have been silent during the Holocaust. The road from Armenia to Auschwitz was direct. Only by shedding light on this dark chapter of history, can we vow once more that genocide will never again go unnoticed or unmourned.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today Members of this House have come to the floor to remember and commemorate the 88th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 24, 1915, hundreds of Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were rounded up, exiled and eventually murdered by Turkish order in remote areas of Anatolia. Over the next 8 years, hundreds of thousands of Armenian men, women and children perished at the hands of the Ottomans.

By recognizing and commemorating the Armenian Genocide each year, this House helps ensure that the lessons of this terrible crime against humanity are not forgotten, cannot be denied, and hopefully, might help prevent future genocide of other peoples.

The single greatest obstacle to the official recognition of the Armenian Genocide is the Republic of Turkey. In spite of overwhelming evidence documenting the Genocide—most of it housed at the United States Archives—modern-day Turkey continues to pursue a campaign to deny and to ultimately erase from world history the 1.5 million victims of Ottoman Turkey's deliberate massacres and deportations of the Armenian people between 1915 and 1923.

Successive Turkish governments have also deliberately destroyed the immense cultural heritage of Armenians in Turkey, carrying out a systematic campaign to erase evidence of the historic Armenian presence in Eastern Anatolia.

Since 1982, successive U.S. Administrations, reluctant to offend Turkey, have in effect supported the Turkish government's revisionist campaign and opposed passage of the Congressional Armenian Genocide Resolution. These Administrations have objected to the use of the word "genocide" to describe the systemic destruction of the Armenian people.

Rather than supporting Turkey's denials, I hope that President Bush will officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and encourage Turkey to come to terms with its past. Rather than creating tension in the region, I believe such actions would decrease the tension and suspicions that have long inhibited cooperation in that region.

Thirty-one of our states, including my own Massachusetts, have recognized the Armenian Genocide.

I want to thank the co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, Representatives KNOLLENBERG and PALLONE, for their outstanding work to ensure that we never forget those who perished and those who survived the Armenian Genocide. In their names and memory, we must demand recognition.

Armenian-Americans are deeply engaged in many issues, nationally, internationally and in their local communities. In prize-winning film and books, the Armenian Genocide has been portrayed and widely-discussed. Coordinated campaigns to provide U.S. economic and trade assistance to Armenia are moving forward.

This year is also an important year for many Armenian-Americans who live in Worcester, Massachusetts. Beginning last October and extending through October 2003, the Church of the Savior is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. In addition, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Grove Street continues to provide celebrating Armenian cultural and the contribution of the Armenian-American community.

Mr. Speaker, it is past time for the United States to recognize officially the Armenian Genocide. There can be no justice without the truth. In the name of all humanity, let it happen now.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this month marks the 88th 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.

April 24, 1915, the Turkish government began to arrest Armenian community and political leaders. Many were executed without ever being charged with crimes. Then 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.

We hope the day will soon come when it is not just the survivors who honor the dead but also when those whose ancestors perpetrated the horrors acknowledge their terrible responsibility and commemorate as well the memory of genocide's victims.

Sadly, we cannot say humanity has progressed to the point where genocide has become unthinkable. The "killing fields" of Cambodia, the Iraqi regime's gassing of the Kurds, mass ethnic killings in Bosnia and Rwanda, and "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo remain recent memories. We must renew our commitment never to remain indifferent in the face of such assaults on innocent human beings.

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 United States has an ongoing opportunity to contribute to a true memorial to the past by strengthening Armenia's democracy. Through trade and aid, we can support the efforts of the Armenian people 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. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the victims of one of history's most terrible tragedies, the Armenian Genocide.

On April 24, 1915, 300 Armenian leaders, intellectuals, and professionals were rounded up in Constantinople, deported, and killed. From 1915 through 1923, Armenians that lived under Ottoman rule were systematically deprived of their property, freedom, and dignity. In addition, one and a half million Armenians had been massacred and 500,000 more had been deported. The Armenian community saw its culture devastated and its people dispersed. This date is remembered and commemorated each year by the Armenian community.

In my district, there is a significant population of Armenian survivors and their families that showed heroic courage and a will to survive in the face of devastating obstacles and adversities. These survivors are an important window into the past and an invaluable part of our society. With faith and courage, generations of Armenians have overcome great suffering and proudly preserved their culture, traditions, and religion. It is through their unforgettable tragedy that we are able to share in their history and strong heritage. The history of the Armenian Genocide must never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, genocide is the most potent of all crimes against humanity because it is an effort to systematically wipe out a people and a culture as well as individual lives. Denying that genocide took place when there are recorded accounts of barbarity and ethnic violence is an injustice. Instead, we must ensure the lessons of the Armenian genocide are properly understood and acknowledged by paying tribute to the Armenian community on this solemn occasion. I am pleased my colleagues and I have this opportunity to ensure this legacy is remembered.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. 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. Raffy Hovanessian, residents of Indiana's First Congressional District, who have continually worked to improve the quality of life in Armenia, as well as in Northwest Indiana. Three other Armenian-American families in my congressional district, Dr. Aram and Seta Semerdjian, Heratch 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 \$93 million in U.S. aid to assist economic and military development. In addition I am once again joining with several of my colleagues in signing a 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.

Consistently, I have 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 revisiting Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act that restricts U.S. aid for Azerbaijan as a result of their blockade. However, I commend my colleagues on the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee for striking the appropriate balance last year regarding Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which will now allow Azerbaijan to do their part in the war against international terrorism. Unfortunately, Armenia is now entering its fourteenth year of a blockade and I must request that the Congress review the waiver of Section 907 on a yearly basis. The flow of food, fuel, and medicine continues to be hindered by the blockade, creating a humanitarian crisis in Armenia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 88th 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order tonight, the Armenian Genocide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 88 years ago, Armenian teachers, clergy, businessmen, writers and doctors were rounded up and killed. The events of April 24, 1915, set the stage for the first genocide of the 20th century, the extermination of more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

With one of the largest Armenian expatriate communities in the world, April 24 has become an integral part of America's history—but debate over the genocide is still an annual and bitter conflict.

Even though modern-day Turkey was established in 1923 out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and was not the actual perpetrator of genocide, it spends millions of dollars each year to fight recognition of the Genocide. Despite this well-funded effort, there is no serious academic dispute about the Armenian Genocide. Our own National Archives houses diplomatic dispatches that vividly describe the systematic destruction of an entire people.

News accounts from the American press also provide a trove of primary source evidence. Headlines, such as the following from the New York Times, describe the horrors: "Armenian Officials Murdered by Turks," "Appeal to Turkey to Stop Massacres," "Tales of Armenian Horrors Confirmed," "Wholesale Massacres of Armenians by Turks," "Armenians Are Sent To Perish in Desert," "Turks Depopulate Towns of Armenia," "Million Armenians Killed or In Exile," and "The death of Armenia."

When the Armenian Genocide occurred, the heinous crime had no name. In denouncing what he was witness to, our own U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau chose the words "race murder" to describe the atrocities. Raphael Lemkin, an International law scholar, ultimately coined the term genocide in 1944.

As a Polish attorney, Lemkin was appalled by the Turkish atrocities against the Armenians and tried to get European statesmen to criminalize the destruction of ethnic and religious groups. He was dismissed as an alarmist. Years later, when Hitler invaded Poland, Lemkin lost 49 family members in the Holocaust.

Landing as a refugee on American shores, Lemkin resolved to devise a word to convey the evil under way. In 1944, while working for the U.S. war department, he invented the term "genocide"—citing the Armenian case as an example.

In 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust, the international community responded to Nazi Germany's methodically orchestrated acts of genocide by approving the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention confirms that genocide is a crime under international law and defines genocide as actions committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

The United States, under President Harry Truman, was the first nation to sign the Convention. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan