

to the south where, if they survived, many were raped and put into concentration camps. Prisoners were starved, beaten, and murdered by unmerciful guards.

This was not a case for everyone, though. Not everyone was sent to concentration camps. For example, many innocent people were put on ships and then thrown overboard into the Black Sea.

The atrocities of the Armenian genocide were still being carried out in 1921 when Kemalists were found abusing and starving prisoners to death. In total, approximately 1.5 million Armenians were killed in a 28-year period. This does not include the half million or more who were forced to leave their homes and flee to foreign countries.

Together with Armenians all over the world and people of conscience, I would like to honor those who lost their homes, their freedom, and their lives during this dark period.

Many survivors of the genocide came to the United States seeking a new beginning, my grandfather among them. The experiences of his childhood fueled his desire for freedom for his Armenian homeland in the First World War, so he returned there, where he was awarded two Russian Medals of Honor for bravery in the fight against fascism.

It is important that we not forget about these terrible atrocities, because as Winston Churchill said, those who do not learn from the past are destined to repeat it.

Since the atrocity, Armenia has taken great strides, achieving its independence over 8 years ago. Then it was a captive Nation struggling to preserve its centuries-old traditions and customs. Today the Republic of Armenia is an independent, freedom-loving Nation and a friend of the United States and to the democratic world.

Monday, April 24, will mark the 85th anniversary of one of the most gruesome human atrocities in the 20th century. Sadly, it was the systematic killing of 1.5 million Armenian men and women. Ironically, Mr. Speaker, it was none other than Adolph Hitler who began to immortalize the Armenian atrocities when he, questioning those who were questioning his own determination to commit his own atrocities and his own genocide, he said, After all, who will remember the Armenians?

As we do not ignore the occurrence of the Nazi Holocaust, we must not ignore the Armenian genocide. Many people across the world will concede this is a very tender and difficult event to discuss, but in order for us to discontinue the mistakes of the past we must never forget it happened, and we must never stop speaking out against such horrors.

As a strong and fervent supporter of the Republic of Armenia, I am alarmed that the Turkish government is still refusing to acknowledge what happened and instead is attempting to rewrite history. It is vital that we do not let political agendas get in the way of doing what is right.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon the Turkish government to accept complete accountability for the Armenian genocide. To heal the wounds of the past, the Turkish government must first recognize its responsibility for the actions of past leaders. Nothing we can do or say will bring back those who perished, but we can honor those who lost their homes, their freedom, their lives, by teaching future generations the lessons of this atrocity.

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 on the subject of my special order tonight, which is the Armenian genocide.

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

There was no objection.

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, I rise today, as my colleagues and I do every year at this time, in a proud but solemn tradition to remember and pay tribute to the victims of one of history's worst crimes against humanity, the Armenian genocide of 1915 to 1923.

This evening my colleagues will be discussing various aspects of this tragedy, including what actually happened, how it affected the victims, the survivors and their descendants, how the perpetrators and their descendants have responded, the reaction of the United States and other major nations, and what lessons the Armenian genocide teaches us today.

Since we are constrained by time limitations, I will also be submitting for the RECORD some additional information.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian genocide was the systematic extermination, the murder of 1.5 Armenian men, women, and children during the Ottoman Turkish empire. This is of the first genocide of the 20th century, but sadly, not the last. Sadder still, at the dawn of the 21st century we continue to see the phenomenon of genocide. Such is the danger of ignoring or forgetting the lessons of the Armenian genocide.

April 24 marks the 85th anniversary of the unleashing of the Armenian genocide. On that dark day in 1915, some 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders from the Turkish capital of Constantinople, now Istanbul, were arrested and exiled in one fell swoop, silencing the leading representatives of the Armenian community in the Ottoman capital.

This was the beginning of the genocide. Over the years from 1915 to 1923, millions of men, women, and children

were deported, forced into slave labor, and tortured by the government of the Young Turk Committee, and 1.5 million of them were killed.

The deportations and killings finally ended with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, although efforts to erase all traces of the Armenian presence in the area continued. To this day, the Republican of Turkey refuses to acknowledge the fact that this massive crime against humanity took place on soil under its control and in the name of Turkish nationalism.

Not only does Turkey deny that the genocide ever took place, it has mounted an aggressive effort to try to present an alternative and false version of history, using its extensive financial and lobbying resources in this country.

Recently the Turkish government signed a \$1.8 million contract for the lobbying services of three very prominent former members of this House to argue Turkey's case in the halls of power here in Washington. While the major focus of their efforts is trying to secure a \$4 billion attack helicopter sale, two of these lobbyists and former Congressmen, according to the April 8 edition of the National Journal, were recently here on Capitol Hill trying to persuade leaders of this House not to support legislation affirming U.S. recognition of the genocide.

Mr. Speaker, the sponsors of that legislation, House Resolution 398, the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), will also be speaking tonight. I want to praise them for taking the lead on this bipartisan initiative which currently has 38 cosponsors and which has obviously caused some concern within the Turkish government.

I regret to say that the United States still does not officially recognize the Armenian genocide. Bowing to strong pressure from Turkey, the U.S. State Department and American presidents of both parties have for more than 15 years shied away from referring to the tragic events of 1915 through 1923 by the word "genocide", thus minimizing and not accurately conveying what really happened beginning 85 years ago.

This legislation is an effort to address this shameful lapse in our own Nation's record as a champion of human rights and historical fact.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian people are united in suffering and the spirit of remembrance with the Jewish people, who were, of course, also the victims of genocide in the 20th century. I wanted to cite a letter from Mrs. Rima Feller-Varzhapetyan, president of the Jewish community of Armenia.

In a letter to the Congress of the United States, which I will submit for the RECORD, Mrs. Varzhapetyan wrote, "Had the world recognized and condemned the genocide at the time, it is unlikely that the word Holocaust would have become known to the Jewish people."

She also states, "We believe that what happened to Armenians at the beginning of the century is not an issue

for only Armenians. It is a cruel crime against humanity." She concludes, "Believing that Turkey's membership in the European Union should require its acknowledgment of responsibility for the Armenian genocide, which will benefit the Turkish people as well, the Jewish community of Armenia urges the Congress of the United States to speak up in support of the interests of the Armenians, and to recognize the genocide of Armenians as they recognize the Jewish Holocaust."

Mr. Speaker, there is additional information that I will include in my statement for the RECORD, but I wanted to conclude by praising the work of the Armenian American community in keeping the flame of memory burning. This week members of the Armenian Assembly of America held an advocacy day on Capitol Hill in which they urged the Members of Congress on several key issues, including the recognition of the genocide.

On Sunday, April 16, the annual commemoration will be held in Times Square in New York City, and on Tuesday, May 2, after Congress returns from our spring recess, the Armenian National Committee will host the sixth annual Capitol Hill observance and reception marking the anniversary of the genocide.

I am pleased to report that the Armenian Assembly has recently acquired a building not far from the White House here in Washington to use as the future site of the Armenian Genocide Museum.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the letter from Ms. Varzhapetyan.

The letter referred to is as follows:

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ARMENIA,
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA,
Yerevan 375051, 2/1 Griboyedov St., off. 49.
Congress of The United States of America

On 24 April, 2000, 85-th anniversary of the Genocide of Armenians—a horrifying crime, which occurred at the beginning of this century—will be commemorated.

Had the world recognized and condemned the Genocide at the time, it is unlikely that the word Holocaust would have become known to the Jewish people. Today the world is not safeguarded against genocide. It can be repeated anywhere in the world.

We believe that what happened to Armenians at the beginning of the century is not an issue for only Armenians. It is a cruel crime against humanity.

Taking into consideration that the Armenian Genocide was recognized by the United Nations Human Rights Subcommission in 1985, that it was recognized by member states of the European Union in 1987, and by the Ottoman military tribunal in 1919, the Jewish Community of Armenia believes that the recognition of the 1915-1923 Armenian Genocide will positively impact the resolution of a number of issues in the Caucasus.

Believing that Turkey's membership in the European Union should require its acknowledgment of responsibility for the Armenian Genocide—which will benefit the Turkish people as well—the Jewish Community of Armenia urges Congress of The United States of America to speak up in support of the interests of the Armenians and to recognize the Genocide of Armenians, as they recognized the Jewish Holocaust.

RIMA VARZHAPETYAN,
Chairman of the JCA.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of the one and a half million Armenians who perished in the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923.

The Armenian Genocide was one of the most awful events in history. It was a horrible precedent for other twentieth-century genocides—from Nazi Germany to Cambodia, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

This great tragedy is commemorated each year on April 24. On that day in 1915 hundreds of Armenian leaders in Constantinople were rounded up to be deported and killed.

In the following years, Ottoman officials expelled millions of Armenians from homelands they had inhabited for over 2,500 years. Families—men, women, and children—were driven into the desert to die of starvation, disease, and exposure. Survivors tell of harrowing forced marches and long journeys packed into cattle cars like animals. In 1915, the New York Times carried reports of families burned alive in wooden houses or chained together and drowned in Lake Van.

Mr. Speaker, the murder of innocent children can never be an act of self-defense, as the Ottomans claimed. As Henry Morgenthau, Sr., the United States Ambassador to Turkey, cabled to the U.S. Department in 1915, the actions of the Ottoman Government constituted "a campaign of race extermination * * * under pretence of a reprisal against rebellion."

Documents in the archives of the United States, Britain, France, Austria, the Vatican, and other nations confirm Ambassador Morgenthau's assessment. While the Turkish government claims it resources show otherwise, Turkey has never opened its archives to objective scholars.

It is time for the world to deal honestly and openly with this great blemish on our common history.

The United States can be proud of its role in opposing the genocide while it was taking place.

Ambassador Morgenthau, with State Department approval, collected witness accounts and other evidence of atrocities, calling international attention to the genocide. A Concurrent Resolution of the United States Senate encouraged the President to set aside a day of sympathy for Armenian victims. Congress and President Wilson chartered the organization of Near East Relief, which provided over \$100 million in aid for Armenian survivors and led to the adoption of 132,000 Armenian orphans as foster children in the United States.

Yet the international community failed to take decisive action against the criminals who planned and instigated this tragedy.

After World War I, courts-martial sentenced the chief organizers of the Armenian Genocide to death, but the verdicts of the courts were not enforced. International standards were not asserted to hold Ottoman officials accountable.

I have cosponsored legislation that would help redress this tragedy.

H. Res. 398 would take steps to ensure that all Foreign Service officers and other United States officials dealing with human rights issues are familiar with the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of the failure to enforce judgments on the responsible officials.

It would also recognize the seriousness of these events by calling on the President to refer to the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians following 1915 as "genocide."

In 1939, when Adolf Hitler was issuing orders for German "Death Units" to murder Polish and Jewish men, women, and children, he noted, "After all, who remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"

Mr. Speaker, the Congress of the United States remembers the Armenians. I urge my colleagues to join me in condemning genocide and honoring the memory of 1.5 million innocent victims. Cosponsor H. Res. 398.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join with so many of my colleagues in recalling the horrors visited upon the Armenian people and to take a stand against those who would deny the past in order to shape the future. The Armenian Genocide, which occurred between 1915 and 1923, resulted in the deliberate death of 1.5 million human souls, killed for the crime of their own existence.

A shocking forerunner of still greater slaughter to come in the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide marked a critical point in history, when technology and ideology combined with the power of the state to make war on an entire people. The Ottoman Empire's campaign to eliminate the whole of the Armenian population existing within its borders was no accident, no mistake made by a minor functionary. Genocide was official policy and 1.5 million corpses were the result. The innocent, the harmless, the blameless, without regard to age, sex or status, they were the victims of deportation, starvation and massacre.

When we here, in the House of Representatives, recall the deaths of the innocent of Armenia, we stand as witnesses to history and recognize the common bond of humanity. We acknowledge not just Armenians, but all the victims of vicious nationalism, ethnic and religious hatred, and pathological ideologies. The double tragedy of the Armenian Genocide, is first, that 1.5 million lives were snuffed out, and second, that the world, including the United States, not only did nothing, but again stood by as genocide took place on an even vaster scale across Europe only 16 years later.

"Never again." This is the simple lesson we as a nation have learned from the unprecedented slaughter of the innocent in the last century. Our armed forces are serving nobly around the world to make this dictum more than just words. If we are to be a just and honorable nation, we must do more than shrug our shoulders at atrocities. We, as a nation, must bear witness to history, and having acknowledged the horrors of the past, commit ourselves to preventing their repetition.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today for one simple reason: to recall publicly that eighty-five years ago one-third of the Armenian people were put to death for the crime of their own existence. To deny this reality is to murder them again. We can not, we must not, allow their deaths to be stripped of meaning by allowing the crime committed against them to slowly slip into the mists of lost memory.

Thanks to the strength and commitment of America's citizens of Armenian descent, their memory will not be lost. The victims of the Armenian Genocide will not be forgotten. I'd also like to commend and thank my colleagues Congressmen JOHN PORTER and FRANK PALLONE, the co-chairmen of the Congressional Caucus of Armenian Issues. Thanks to their leadership, this House has again honorably fulfilled America's commitment to memory and justice.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored that my colleagues have invited me to join in today's special order commemorating the tragic events that began in 1915.

I know how important this commemoration is to those Armenian-Americans descended from the survivors of the massacres carried out during World War I, almost eighty-five years ago.

Indeed, hundreds of thousands of Armenians died at that time as a result of brutal actions taken by the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

While the men and women who died during those tragic days would not live to see it, the Armenian nation has now re-emerged, despite the suffering its people endured under the Ottoman Empire and during the following eight decades of communist dictatorship under the former Soviet Union.

As I have said before, the independent state of Armenia stands today as clear proof that indeed the Armenian people have survived the challenges of the past—and will survive the challenges of the future as well.

Through assistance and diplomatic support, the United States is helping Armenia to build a new future.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join us in looking to the past and in commemorating those hundreds of thousands of innocents who lost their lives some eighty-five years ago.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. 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.

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 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 country-

men 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.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

After decades of ethnic and religious persecution, Armenians living within the Ottoman Empire joined together with the purpose of restoring freedom and self-determination to the Armenian people. In retaliation, the Sultan ordered the mass deportation of over 1,750,000 Armenians from their villages and homes and towards Mesopotamia. They left behind all they had known for a dozen generations and began a horrifying trek across an uninhabitable desert. These innocent families were either slaughtered by their captors, or died from dehydration and exhaustion by the hundreds of thousands. An estimated 1,500,000 men, women and children died during the course of this deadly exodus.

This upcoming April 24 we will pause, as we do each year, to remember those innocents who were so viciously murdered. We will join with all Armenian Americans and Armenians throughout the world in recognizing this horrifying genocide of their people, and by remembering we will make the promise to Armenians everywhere that this atrocity will never be repeated.

I have introduced H. Res. 398, commemorating the Armenian Genocide Resolution and insuring that no one further will deny this brutal chapter in human history. I ask that you join with me as I express my profound sorrow for the lost lives of millions, and as I celebrate the lives of their children and grandchildren who live on today. For by honoring the living, we most faithfully remember those who suffered a merciless death in the desert some 85 years ago.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I want 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.

After suffering three decades of persecution, deportation and massacre under the Ottoman Turks, the Armenian people were relieved when the brutal reign of Ottoman Turks Sultan Abdul Hamid came to an end in 1908. But that relief was short-lived, as the successor Young Turk dictators were working on a far more aggressive plan to deal with the Armenian people. By 1914, they were laying plans to eliminate the country's minorities—starting with the Armenian people. Segregating Armenians in the military, the Turks were able to work these

people to death. That year, the government also organized other military units comprised of convicts for the express purpose of annihilating Armenian people.

By the spring of 1915, the Turkish dictators were ready to execute their final solution: they began ordering massive deportation and massacres of Armenian people. April 24 marked the fruition of this plan, with the murder of nearly 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders—which set off the full scale campaign to eliminate the Armenian people. Men, women, and children alike were subjected to torture, starvation and brutal death—and every kind of unspeakable act against humanity—in the name of Turkish ethnic cleansing. 1.5 million Armenian people perished at the hands of this brutal regime.

The U.S. has some of the most extensive documentation of this genocide against the Armenian people, but there has been no shortage of corroboration by other countries. The Armenian genocide has been recognized by the United Nations and 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. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of those who lost their lives during the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenians are an ancient people, having inhabited the highland region between the Black, Caspian, and Mediterranean seas for almost 3,000 years. Armenia was sometimes independent under its national dynasties, autonomous under native princes, or subjected to foreign rulers. The Armenians were among the first groups of people to adopt Christianity and to have developed a distinct national-religious culture.

Turkey invaded Armenia in the beginning of the 11th century, AD and conquered the last Armenian kingdom three centuries later. Most of the territories which had formed the medieval Armenian kingdoms were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. While the Armenians were included in the Ottoman Empire's multi-national and multi-religious state, they suffered discrimination, special taxes, prohibition to bear arms, and other second-class citizenship status.

In spite of these restrictions, Armenians lived in relative peace until the late 1800's. When the Ottoman Empire started to strain under the weight of internal corruption and external challenges, the government increased oppression and intolerance against Armenians. The failure of the Ottoman system to prevent the further decline of its empire led to the overthrow of the government by a group of reformists known as the Young Turks. It would be under the Young Turks' rule between 1915 and 1918 that Armenians would be forcibly taken from their homeland and killed.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenian men were rounded up and deported to Syria by way of train and forced caravan marches. Armenian women and children were subjected to indescribable cruelties prior to losing their lives as well. While many Armenians survived the conditions of the packed cattle cars, they did not survive the Syrian desert. Killed by bandits or conditions from desert heat and exhaustion, most victims of the forced caravan marches did not even reach the killing centers in Syria. While others perished in the concentration camps in the Syrian desert where disease, starvation, and other health conditions brought about their demise.

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 has left psychological scars among the survivors and their families. No person should have to endure the trauma and horrors that they have.

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 honor the memory of those who lost their lives during this time. We must never forget this horrific and shameful time in world history so that it will never be repeated again.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The spirits of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children who perished at the hands of the Ottoman Turks cry out for justice. The collective weight of their deaths hangs like the Sword of Damocles over Turkey's refusal to recognize the sins of its past.

Mr. Speaker, eighty-five years after the brutal decapitation of the political, religious and economic leadership of Armenian society; eighty-five years after the forced marches of starvation; eighty-five years after its genocidal campaign against its Armenian population, the Turkish Government continues to deny the undeniable.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian Genocide is an historical fact—a fact that has been indelibly etched in the annals of history. It cannot be wiped away from our collective conscience. It cannot be denied. The systematic slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians stands as one of the darkest and bloodiest chapters of the twentieth century. From 1915 to 1923, the government of the Ottoman Empire carried out a calculated policy of mass extermination against its Armenian citizens.

The Turkish Government has a moral obligation to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Just as Germany has come to grips and atoned for the Jewish Holocaust, Turkey must recognize and atone for the Armenian Genocide. To heal the open wounds of the past, Turkey must come to terms with its past. Turkey must also come to terms with its present

hostile actions against the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Turkey should immediately lift its illegal blockade of Armenia. In addition, Turkey must stop obstructing the delivery of United States humanitarian assistance to Armenia. This is not only unconscionable but it also damages American-Turkish relations. Turkey is indeed an important ally of the United States. However, until Turkey faces up to its past and stops its silent but destructive campaign against the republic of Armenia, United States-Turkey relations will not rise to their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must continue to be a strong ally of Armenia. We must target our assistance to promote Armenian trade, long-term economic self-sufficiency, and Democratic pluralism. We must also continue to support section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which is aimed at penalizing countries like Azerbaijan that prevent the transshipment of United States humanitarian relief through their territory.

Finally, our government must speak with one voice when it comes to the matter of the Armenian Genocide. While Congress has used the word genocide to describe the actions of the Ottoman Government against its Armenian population, the United States Government has not been as forthcoming. It is time for the President to put diplomatic niceties and Turkish sensitivities aside, and speak directly to the American people and to the world. Genocide is the only word that does justice to the memory of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children that were victimized by the implementation of a deliberate, premeditated plan to eliminate them as a people from the face of the Earth. I stand here tonight to say that they have not been forgotten.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I come before you today to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Over a period of nine years, more than one million Armenians were systematically persecuted, expelled, and displaced from their homeland in eastern Turkey. The horrific shadows of this prejudicial, killing campaign continues to haunt us. May this day of remembrance and the stories shared here reverberate through the Nation so that history is not able to repeat itself.

Unfortunately, too few Americans know much about the suffering of the Armenian people from 1915 to 1923. During these years, the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire attempted to eradicate all traces of the Armenian people and their culture from Turkey. To expedite their demise, the government ordered direct killings, instituted starvation initiatives, participated in torture tactics, and forced death marches. By all accounts, this persecution was purposeful and deliberative. Such outrageous behaviors and insurmountable prosecution can only be deemed appropriately by the term "genocide", for a genocide implies complete annihilation and destruction. For political reasons, the United States government has long refused to accept this extermination and expulsion as such, fortunately that is rapidly changing.

As we remember those whose lives were lost, let us also pay tribute to those whose lives continue to thrive in spite of this dark history. The individuals that constitute the large Armenian-American population in our country continue to offer their communities valuable services and significant contributions both lo-

cally and nationally. The Armenian people continue to aggressively transform tragedy into triumph, and I salute the power of their spirit.

As we mark the anniversary of these horrific events, we need to heed the lessons learned and accept nothing less than absolute intolerance for this sort of behavior. Not only will we continue to remember and mourn the loss of so many Armenians, but we must also take notice and cease this action immediately worldwide. We must ensure that such a tragedy will never again be visited upon any people in the world.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring the memory of the 1.5 million martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. I want to begin by thanking the co-chairs of the Armenian Caucus, Representatives JOHN PORTER and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order which pays tribute to the victims of one of history's most terrible tragedies.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 398, the "United States Training on and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution." This bill rightly calls upon the President of the United States to provide for appropriate training and materials to all U.S. Foreign Service officers, officials of the Department of State, and any other executive branch employee involved in responding to issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide by familiarizing them with the U.S. record relating to the Armenian Genocide. Further, H.R. 398 calls on the President to issue an annual message commemorating the Armenian Genocide on or about April 24, to characterize in this statement the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide, and also to recall the proud history of U.S. intervention in opposition to the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, since my election to Congress in 1966, I have worked to affirm the historical record of the Armenian Genocide and have sought to respond directly to those who deny what was the first crime against humanity of the 20th century. As the eminent historian Professor Vahakn Dadrian wrote in a brief prepared on the Armenian Genocide last year for the Canadian Parliament, "When a crime of such magnitude continues to be denied, causing doubt in many well-meaning and impartial people, one must refute such denial by producing evidence that is as compelling as possible." I share this belief and for that reason I strongly support the goals laid out in H.R. 398. I look forward to working hard to secure this worthwhile bill's passage by the House International Relations Committee and further, by working to ensure that it secures broad, bipartisan support when it is considered by the full House of Representatives.

Again, I thank Representatives PORTER and PALLONE for organizing this special order and I urge all my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 398.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I join today with many of my colleagues in remembering the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

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.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. 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 United States 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. 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 Hovanesian and her husband, Dr. Raffi Hovanesian, 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. Two other Armenian-American families in my congressional district, 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 last year, with my support, Armenia received over \$100 million of the \$240 million in U.S. aid earmarked for the Southern Caucasus. I strongly oppose the Administration's efforts to increase aid to other Southern Caucasus nations at the expense of Armenia.

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.

In order to help preserve the memory of these dark years in Armenian history, I am a proud supporter of efforts by Representatives GEORGE RADANOVICH and DAVID BONIOR to promote the use of the recorded history of these events to demonstrate to America's Foreign Service officers and State Department officials the circumstances which can push a nation along the path to genocide. Their measure, H. Res. 398, the United States Training on and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution, would also call upon the President to characterize this policy of deportation and execution by the Ottomans as genocidal, and to recognize the American opposition and attempts at intervention during this period.

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.

Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act restricts U.S. aid for Azerbaijan as a result of this blockade. Unfortunately, as Armenia en-

ters the eleventh year of the blockade, the Administration is again asking Congress to repeal this one protection afforded the beleaguered nation. 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 JOHN PORTER and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 58th 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. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I am a proud cosponsor of H. Res. 398 which commemorates the victims of the Armenian Genocide by calling on the President to honor the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide and to provide educational tools for our Foreign Diplomats responsible for addressing issues of human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

Throughout three decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homeland of three thousand years, and millions were 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.

The tragedy of the Armenian Genocide has been acknowledged around the world, in countries like Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon, Russia, the United States, and Uruguay, as well as international organizations such as the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the United Nations.

Yet, despite irrefutable evidence, Turkey has refused, for over 85 years, to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Even in present day, Turkey continues to have inimicable relations with Armenia. In addition to denying the crimes committed against the Armenian people, Turkey continues to block the flow of humanitarian aid and commerce to Armenia.

I personally admire the dedication and perseverance of the Armenian-American community, and their ever present vigil to educate the world of their painful history. In spite of their historic struggles, children and grandchildren of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide have gone on to make invaluable contributions to society, while at the same time preserving

their heritage and unique identity. Over 60,000 Armenian-Americans live in the greater Boston area. Within Massachusetts, many of these Armenians have formed public outreach groups seeking to educate society about Armenia's culture.

I made the observation last year about how sad and frustrating it was that at the beginning of this century, Armenians were murdered en masse and now, at the end of the 20th century, the same type of brutal killing of innocent people continues. The human race has now entered a new millennium, and we must be more vigilant about holding governments accountable for their actions. Last September, in East Timor, thousands of men, women, and children were mercilessly slaughtered; in Sierra Leone, thousands of children have been brutally maimed; and in Chechnya, hundreds of women and children have been forced to flee their homes, the number of deaths remain unknown. By acknowledging and commemorating the Armenian Genocide, the U.S. and many other countries are sending a message that governments cannot operate with impunity towards our fellow man.

Let me end by saying, that 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. We must continue to be vigilant, we must preserve the rich identities of Armenians, and we must work towards ending crimes against all humanity.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues in Congress to commemorate the 85th 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. This campaign of murder and oppression, perpetrated by the Turk government attempted to systematically wipe out the Armenian population of Anatolia, their historic homeland.

Even though the Turk government held war crime trials and condemned to death the chief perpetrators of this heinous crime against humanity, the vast majority of the culpable were set free. To this day, the Turk government denies the Armenian Genocide ever took place.

Indeed, the government of Turkey goes even further calling the Armenians "traitors" who collaborated with the enemies of the Ottoman Empire during war. We cannot permit such blatant disregard and denial to continue. Genocide is genocide, no matter how, when, or where it happens.

Mr. Speaker, there are many living survivors in my district. The memory of their tragedy still haunts them. They participate each year in commemoration ceremonies with the hope that the world will not forget their anguish. They hope that one day the Turkish government will show signs of remorse for a crime committed by their ancestors.

To me, Mr. Speaker, the Armenian Genocide is not just a footnote in history. It is something that people all over the world feel very deeply about. It is an issue above politics and partisanship. It is a question of morality.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that each of us works to ensure that our generation and future generations never again witness such inhuman behavior and suffering. The crime of genocide must never again be allowed to mar

the history of mankind, and today we stand with our Armenian brothers and sisters, to remember and commit ourselves to a better future in their memory.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to join with my colleagues in this solemn remembrance of the Armenian genocide. It is vitally important that we never forget the Armenian people who died in that tragedy, and all those who were persecuted in those difficult years that followed.

As we know, on April 24, 1915, Turkish officials arrested and exiled more than 200 Armenian political, intellectual and religious leaders. This symbolic cleansing of Armenian leaders began a reign of terror against the Armenian people that lasted until 1923, and resulted in the death of more than 1.5 million Armenians. Over that eight year period another 500,000 Armenians were displaced from their homes.

Mr. Speaker, many of the survivors of the Armenian genocide came to the United States, and have made countless contributions to our society. We know them well as our friends and neighbors. For years, these survivors and their descendants have told the painful story of their past, which often fell on deaf ears. I am glad to lend my voice, along with so many other of my colleagues today, to show the world how important the Armenians' story is to our history—and our future. It is amazing how often history will repeat itself, and how often we don't listen to the past. The memory of the Armenian Genocide, no matter how cruel and brutal, must serve as a lesson to us all to never ignore such actions again.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with solemn reflection to remember one of the most inhumane episodes of the 20th Century, the Armenian Genocide. From 1915 to 1922, the Ottoman Empire, ruled by Muslim Turks carried out a policy to exterminate its Christian Armenian minority. The genocide started with a series of massacres in 1894–1896, and again in 1909. This was followed by another series of massacres, which began in 1920. By 1922 the Armenians had been eradicated from their historic homeland.

There were three prevailing aspects of the Armenian Genocide: the deportations, the massacres, and the concentration camps. The deportations affected the majority of Armenians in the Turkish Empire. From as far north as the Black Sea and as far west as European Turkey, Armenians were forcibly removed and transported to the Syrian Desert. At many of these relocation sites, large-scale massacres were carried out. The few survivors were dispersed across Syria, Iraq, and as far south as Palestine.

Winston Churchill once observed that "In 1915 the Turkish Government began and ruthlessly carried out the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia Minor. There can be no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reasons."

Our former Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (1913–16) Henry Morgenthau stated that "when the Turkish authorities gave the orders for those 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 this fact."

We must keep in mind the historical perspective of this terrible tragedy. Over 1.8 million Armenian civilians perished at the hands

of their Turkish persecutors. We must educate our children to tolerate each other's differences and embrace a healthy respect for humanity. Only by instilling future generations with an understanding of these terrible events in the past may we prevent them from reoccurring in the future. We must not fail to live up to our collective responsibilities; the victims of this terrible tragedy deserve nothing less.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, today, we commemorate the Armenian Genocide of April 24th 1915, and in so doing honor the memories of those who survived and those who were killed on that tragic night. It is hard to talk about that date and many would prefer not to, but if we cannot recognize the tragedies of the past, how can we avoid them in the future? Ethnic violence and genocide have marred our collective history from its earliest days, challenging generations throughout time. Yet we cannot forget these events; we cannot cover up, ignore, or rewrite history so that these crimes against humanity disappear.

Our Nation's connection to the Armenian people is great, as has been their contribution to the United States. In my home state of Rhode Island, we have one of the largest populations of Armenians in the country and the State is blessed with the gifts of the Armenian community. To truly honor those gifts, we must take time every year to understand what that community has been through, and the part of their history that is the Armenian Genocide. That is why on this day we remember the unjustifiable, unprovoked, and undeniable massacre of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire. What the Ottoman Empire began that night 85 years ago was a policy of ethnic cleansing. It can be called nothing else.

Today, brave American men and women serve in our Armed Forces across the globe. They do more than protect nations, they serve as reminders to the world and ourselves of what our country stands for. The Armenian Genocide should also serve as a reminder, of what will happen if we do nothing in the face of potential tragedies. It serves as a reminder that we must do better to protect peace and stability and human rights around the world.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, the sick man of Europe had been dying a slow death. It was a particularly dark time in Europe when the sick man finally succumbed, and an empire collapsed. 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, reprehensible 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. We gather in solemn remembrance of the result of that decision, remembering the loss of one-and-a-half million Armenians.

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, Rwanda, or Bosnia. Today, on this grim anniversary, we must remember why our armed forces fought in the skies over Yugoslavia last year.

We must not sit idly by and be spectators to the same kind of violence that killed so many Armenians; we must not watch as innocent people are brutalized not for what they have done, but simply for who they are. Ethnic cleansing is genocide and can not be ignored by a just and compassionate country. We owe it to the victims of past genocides to stamp out this form of inhumanity.

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 has done in communities across the country. And so I also rise today to honor to the triumph of the Armenian people, who have endured adversity and bettered our country.

But again, Mr. Speaker, it is also my hope that in honoring the victims of the past, we learn one fundamental lesson from their experience: Never Again!

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to honor the memory of the one and a half million Armenians who were massacred and the over 500,000 Armenian survivors who fled into exile during the 1915–to–1923 genocide carried out by Ottoman Turkey.

As Henry Morgenthau, Sr., the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire 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 suffering of the Armenian race in 1915."

The new century marks the 85th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I would have liked to proclaim that the United States and the international community now recognize this tragic historic event with official commemorations. I would have liked to announce that the Government of Turkey officially acknowledges the Genocide. Unfortunately, we enter the year 2000 with continuing acts of denial that this Genocide took place, efforts to re-write the historical record, and the refusal by many governments, including the United States, to use officially the word "genocide" to describe the deliberate murder of hundreds of thousands of Armenians.

Entire villages were destroyed. Entire families were exterminated. There can be no forgiveness, no peace for the dead, no comfort for the families of survivors, until Turkey and the nations of the world officially acknowledge this Genocide.

Surely as we enter the new millennium, the United States, Turkey and the international community should make this simple, but profound, statement of fact.

I'm very proud to say that Central Massachusetts, and especially the City of Worcester,

has been diligent in keeping the history of the Armenian Genocide alive and contemporary. A series of lectures to study genocide issues and present them to the general public have been organized over the past year by the Center for Holocaust Studies of Clark University, the Center for Human Rights at Worcester State College, and the Armenian National Committee of Central Massachusetts. It was my pleasure to participate in one of these forums looking at the tragedy of East Timor and its relation to past genocides.

Last month, the forum brought Dr. Israel Charny, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, and professor of psychology and family therapy at Hebrew University in Israel, to speak at Worcester State College.

Dr. Charny is recognized as a leading Holocaust and genocide scholar. He is credited as one of the primary figures in the development of the field of Comparative Genocide Studies, which approaches particular genocides, including the Holocaust, as part of an ongoing history of many genocides. This field strives to understand and prevent genocide as a human rights problem and a social phenomenon that concerns all people.

In his lecture at Worcester State College, Dr. Charny spoke of his growing concern about denials of known genocides. He describes denial as "the last stage of genocide," "political and psychological warfare," and "a killing of the record of history."

Charny goes on to describe some of the methods of denial. For example, there is "malevolent bigotry," or a sloppy out and out expression of hateful denial. Another tactic is "definitionalism," which insists on defining particular cases of mass murder as not genocide. And yet another is "human shallowness," or a dulling of the genuine sense of tragedy and moral outrage toward such acts. Sadly, we have seen all of these, even on American college campuses, used to undermine the historical record of the Armenian Genocide.

We are blessed in Worcester to have the united efforts of Clark University, Worcester State College and the Armenian National Committee of central Massachusetts to combat such attempts to deny history.

Last Sunday, on April 9th, ANC of Central Massachusetts sponsored a lecture in Worcester by Dr. Hilmar Kaiser, who is a noted scholar on the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Hilmar also spent the weekend in Franklin, Massachusetts, at Camp Haiastan to participate in the Genocide Educational Weekend for the Armenian Youth Federation.

I am also looking forward to attending the memorial service on April 24th, organized by the Worcester Armenian churches, to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. That service will be held at the Church of Our Savior on Salisbury Street in Worcester.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just for our past, but for our future, that we remember and commemorate the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide—and not just annually, but every day of the year. I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Res. 398, introduced by my colleagues Congressman RADANOVICH and Congressman BONIOR, to ensure that U.S. diplomatic personnel and other executive branch officials are well-trained in issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of H. Res. 155 to have the U.S. government share its

collection and records on the Armenian Genocide with the House International Relations Committee, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Armenian Genocide Museum in Armenia.

We must all share the information, share the history, and keep the memory of the Armenian Genocide alive. Central Massachusetts is doing its part. I call upon my President to ensure the U.S. government does all it can to honor and officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and join with my colleagues in remembering the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I would like to thank the other members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and particularly the co-chairmen, Mr. PORTER and Mr. PALLONE, for their tireless efforts in organizing this fitting tribute.

Eighty-five years ago Monday, April 24, 1915, the nightmare in Armenia began. Hundreds of Armenian religious, political, and educational leaders were arrested, exiled, or murdered. These events marked the beginning of the systematic persecution of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire, and also launched the first genocide of the 20th century. Over the next eight years, 1.5 million Armenians were put to death and 500,000 more were exiled from their homes. These atrocities are among the most cruel and inhumane acts that have ever been recorded.

As we reflect today on the horrors that were initiated 85 years ago, I cannot help but be disturbed by those who wish to deny that these deeds occurred. Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary—eyewitness accounts, official archives, photographic evidence, diplomatic reports, and testimony of survivors—they reject the claim that genocide, or any other crime for that matter, was perpetrated against Armenians. Well, History tells a different story.

Let me read a quote from Henry Morgenthau, Sr., U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time: "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. . . ."

The world knows the truth about this tragic episode in human affairs. We will not allow those who wish to rewrite History to absolve themselves from responsibility for their actions. This evening's event here in the House of Representatives is testament to that fact. We can only hope that the recognition and condemnation of this, and other instances of genocide, will prevent a similar instance from happening again in the 21st Century.

In addition, I also encourage my colleagues to join me and the 37 other members who have cosponsored H. Res. 398, offered by Representative RADANOVICH. This resolution will help affirm the record of the United States on the Armenian Genocide and will play a role in educating others about the atrocities that were committed against the Armenian people. It is critical that we continue to acknowledge this terrible tragedy to ensure that it is neither forgotten nor ignored.

I would like to once again thank the organizers of this event and I would like to once again reaffirm my sincere thanks for being given the opportunity to participate in this solemn remembrance.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman government unleashed an eight-year assault against its Armenian population. During this brutal campaign, one and a half million innocent men, women, and children were murdered, Armenian communities were systematically destroyed, and over one million people were forcibly deported.

The pain of these atrocities is only compounded by the Turkish government's revisionism and denial of the tragic events that took place. This is what Elie Wiesel has called a "double killing"—murdering the dignity of the survivors and the remembrance of the crime. It is incumbent upon us to stand up against these efforts and make United States records documenting this period available to students, historians, and the descendants of those who survived.

This somber anniversary is a tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and a painful reminder that the world's inaction left a tragic precedent for other acts of senseless bloodshed. The road from Armenia to Auschwitz is direct. If more attention had been centered on the slaughter of these innocent men, women, and children, perhaps the events of the Holocaust might never have taken place.

Today, we vow once more that genocide will not go unnoticed and unmourned. We pledge to stand up against governments that persecute their own people, and declare our commitment to fight all crimes against humanity and the efforts to hide them from the rest of the world.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, today I join with my colleagues in what has become an annual event in which none of us take great joy in. Today, the Turkish government still denies the Armenian genocide and it does so to its own detriment. All of us would like to see the denial in Ankara end. The Armenian genocide happened. The historic fact, Mr. Speaker, is that 1.5 million Armenians were killed and over 500,000 deported from 1894 to 1921.

On April 24, 1915, 300 Armenian leaders, writers and intellectuals were rounded up, deported and killed. 5000 other poor Armenians were killed in their homes. The Turkish government continues to deny the Armenian genocide and claims that Armenians were only removed from the eastern war zone. America has been enriched in countless ways from the survivors of the Armenian genocide who have come here. As a representative from Michigan, I want to especially highlight that we have been blessed by the contributions of the Armenian communities.

Today I rise to call upon the Republic of Turkey, an ally of the United States, to admit what happened. Mr. Speaker, we want Turkey to see its history for what it is so it can see its future for what it can be. Let us all rise today to commemorate the Armenian genocide and hope that events like it never happen again.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to acknowledge the horrific events that occurred during the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1923, the final days of the Ottoman Empire.

The horror of the Genocide is seared in the minds of Armenians around the world. Beginning in 1915 the Ottoman Empire, ruled by

Muslim Turks, carried out a series of massacres in order to eliminate its Christian Armenian minority. By 1923, 1.5 million Armenians were brutally killed, while another 500,000 were deported. Stateless and penniless. Armenians were forced to move to any country that afforded refuge. Many found their way to the United States, while others escaped to countries such as Russia and France.

Future generations must be made aware of this historic event in our world history. It is unfortunate that the Republic of Turkey refuses to acknowledge the genocide against the Armenians. Innocent people were deprived of their freedom and senselessly killed because of their religious or political beliefs.

Armenia has made great strides to become an independent state. In 1992 the newly independent republic of Armenia, became a member of the United Nations, and in 1995 held their first open legislative elections.

Since the genocide, various acts of human rights violations have continued to take place around the world. If we ever hope to prevent further genocides we must never forget the atrocities endured by the Armenian people.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, today I come to the floor to commemorate the anniversary of one of the darkest stains on the history of Western Civilization—the genocide of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Turkish Empire. I greatly appreciate the strong support of so many of our colleagues in this effort, especially the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. PALLONE, my fellow co-chairman of the Armenian Issues Caucus.

I wish, as every Member does, that this Special Order did not have to take place. But every year, I return to the floor in April to speak out about the past. To fail to remember the past, not only dishonors the victims and survivors—it encourages future tyrants to believe that they can commit such heinous acts with impunity. Unfortunately, we have seen over and over the tragic results of hatred and ignorance: the Holocaust, the Rwandan Genocide, the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, the continued mass killing in the Sudan and the massacres in East Timor last fall. And far too often the so-called civilized nations of the world turned a blind eye.

On April 24, 1915, over 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were arrested in Istanbul and killed, marking the beginning of an 8-year campaign which resulted in the destruction of the ethnic Armenian community which had previously lived in Anatolia and Western Armenia. Between 1915 and 1923, approximately 1.5 million men, women and children were deported, forced into slave labor camps, tortured and eventually exterminated.

The Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the modern age and has been recognized as a precursor of subsequent attempts to destroy a race through an official systematic effort. Congress has consistently demanded recognition of the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide. The modern German Government, although not itself responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust, has taken responsi-

bility for and apologized for it. Yet, the Turkish Government continues to deny that the Armenian genocide ever took place.

The past year has seen small steps of progress concerning Turkey's relationship with its neighbors. The devastating earthquakes of last summer in Turkey and subsequently Greece, allowed various nations in the region, including Armenia, to work together on humanitarian grounds. Turkey's EU candidacy is forcing it to face its problems both with its neighbors Greece, and Cyprus as well as internal problems such as its continuing human rights violations.

Although I am encouraged by these small steps, Turkey has yet to show the world that it is serious about solving the human rights problems within its borders. Remaining in jail are the Kurdish parliamentarians who were arrested over six years ago as well as numerous human rights workers. At the end of 1999, Turkey had the second highest number of journalists in jail—eighteen—the only country in the world with more was China. I sincerely hope Turkey's desire to become part of the EU community will require Turkey to improve its internal human rights problems as well as face its past and acknowledge its role in one of the 20th centuries greatest tragedies—the Armenian Genocide.

Armenians will remain vigilant to ensure that this tragic history is not repeated. The United States should do all that it can in this regard as well, including a clear message about the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide. We do Turkey no favors by enabling her self-delusion, and we make ourselves hypocrites when we fail to sound the alarm on what is happening today in Turkey.

Armenia has made amazing progress in rebuilding a society and a nation—a triumph of the human spirit in the face of dramatic obstacles. Armenia is committed to democracy, market economics and the rule of law. Even in the face of the tragedy which befell the Armenian Government last October, where eight people were murdered in the parliament including the Prime Minister Sarkisian, the Armenian Government and its people remain committed to freedom and democracy. I will continue to take a strong stand in Congress in support of these principles and respect for human rights, and I am proud to stand with Armenia in so doing. We must never forget what happened to the Armenians 85 years ago, just as we must never overlook the human rights violations which are happening today in all corners of the world.

1730

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN HOLOCAUST

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

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate one of the most tragic events in the 20th century and that is, of course, the Armenian Genocide of 1915 to 1923. It ranks amongst the most tragic episodes. It was the first but unfortunately not the last of the incidents of ethnic genocide that the world experienced during the last