

MESSAGE OF PRIME MINISTER
ERDOĞAN ON THE EVENTS OF 1915**HON. STEVE CHABOT**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of my colleagues to a statement made by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in which he noted the importance of April 24th to Armenian communities around the world, and expressed his condolences to the descendants of those Armenians who died in the violence nearly a century ago. The Prime Minister renewed Turkey's offer to participate in a joint historical commission, where Turkish, Armenian, and international scholars would come together to document those terrible events.

In his weekly parliamentary address to his party's legislators on April 23rd, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated Turkey's willingness to "confront" the historical events, and again called upon Armenia and the Armenian diaspora to join this effort.

I believe a process in which both parties are active participants will enable Turkey and Armenia to resolve many of the issues of conflict between them, and will allow them to move deeper into the 21st Century while building a constructive relationship, as neighbors should.

I hope my colleagues will join me in encouraging all parties to engage in the process.

The statement issued by Prime Minister Erdoğan follows:

THE MESSAGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN ON THE EVENTS OF 1915.

The 24th of April carries a particular significance for our Armenian citizens and for all Armenians around the world, and provides a valuable opportunity to share opinions freely on a historical matter.

It is indisputable that the last years of the Ottoman Empire were a difficult period, full of suffering for Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, Armenian and millions of other Ottoman citizens, regardless of their religion or ethnic origin.

Any conscientious, fair and humanistic approach to these issues requires an understanding of all the sufferings endured in this period, without discriminating as to religion or ethnicity.

Certainly, neither constructing hierarchies of pain nor comparing and contrasting suffering carries any meaning for those who experienced this pain themselves.

As a Turkish proverb goes, "fire burns the place where it falls."

It is a duty of humanity to acknowledge that Armenians remember the suffering experienced in that period, just like every other citizen of the Ottoman Empire.

In Turkey, expressing different opinions and thoughts freely on the events of 1915 is the requirement of a pluralistic perspective as well as of a culture of democracy and modernity.

Some may perceive this climate of freedom in Turkey as an opportunity to express accusatory, offensive and even provocative assertions and allegations.

Even so, if this will enable us to better understand historical issues with their legal aspects and to transform resentment to friendship again, it is natural to approach different discourses with empathy and tolerance and expect a similar attitude from all sides.

The Republic of Turkey will continue to approach every idea with dignity in line with the universal values of law.

Nevertheless, using the events of 1915 as an excuse for hostility against Turkey and turning this issue into a matter of political conflict is inadmissible.

The incidents of the First World War are our shared pain. To evaluate this painful period of history through a perspective of just memory is a humane and scholarly responsibility.

Millions of people of all religions and ethnicities lost their lives in the First World War. Having experienced events which had inhumane consequences—such as relocation—during the First World War, should not prevent Turks and Armenians from establishing compassion and mutually humane attitudes among towards one another.

In today's world, deriving enmity from history and creating new antagonisms are neither acceptable nor useful for building a common future.

The spirit of the age necessitates dialogue despite differences, understanding by hearing others, evaluating means for compromise, denouncing hatred, and praising respect and tolerance.

With this understanding, we, as the Turkish Republic, have called for the establishment of a joint historical commission in order to study the events of 1915 in a scholarly manner. This call remains valid. Scholarly research to be carried out by Turkish, Armenian and international historians would play a significant role in shedding light on the events of 1915 and an accurate understanding of history.

It is with this understanding that we have opened our archives to all researchers. Today, hundreds of thousands of documents in our archives are at the service of historians.

Looking to the future with confidence, Turkey has always supported scholarly and comprehensive studies for an accurate understanding of history. The people of Anatolia, who lived together for centuries regardless of their different ethnic and religious origins, have established common values in every field from art to diplomacy, from state administration to commerce. Today they continue to have the same ability to create a new future.

In is our hope and belief that the peoples of an ancient and unique geography, who share similar customs and manners will be able to talk to each other about the past with maturity and to remember together their losses in a decent manner. And it is with this hope and belief that we wish that the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early twentieth century rest in peace, and we convey our condolences to their grandchildren.

Regardless of their ethnic or religious origins, we pay tribute, with compassion and respect, to all Ottoman citizens who lost their lives in the same period and under similar conditions.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
APPROPRIATIONS ACT (H.R. 4487)**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, due to a prior commitment in my district, I had to miss votes on May 1, 2014. On April 9, 2014, I joined my colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee in approving the Fiscal Year 2015 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill. Had I been present for the vote before the Full House, I would have voted for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act (H.R. 4487).

This appropriation bill supports the functions of the United States House of Representatives and those agencies that we rely on to best serve our constituents. Today's bill maintains level funding for Members' offices and Committee staff. While not ideal, it does not impose further reductions that would harm the ability of Congressional offices to respond to the needs of our constituents and our district. The bill also provides funding for the Library of Congress, Capitol Police, Botanical Garden, Architect of the Capitol, and Government Printing Office, which support for work of Congress and the American public. It is important that Congress ensure these agencies have the resources and funding they need to best serve our constituents and offices.

On Mr. NUGENT's amendment, I would have voted "no".

On Mr. GOSAR's amendment, I would have voted "no".

On Mr. BROWN's amendment, I would have voted "no".

On Mr. HOLT's amendment, I would have voted "yes".

THE KIDNAPPING OF GIRLS AND
YOUNG WOMEN FROM A SCHOOL
IN NIGERIA**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand in solidarity with the families of the approximately 300 young women kidnapped by a radical Nigerian Islamist group. I lend my voice to the chorus of outrage and condemnation directed at this extremist group, which has forcefully separated young women from their families and devastated an entire community. There is no place in our world community for a group that displays such disregard for the tenets of Islam, human dignity, and international law.

All people and governments of good will should do all that is appropriate to assist Nigerian authorities in the safe recovery of these young women. I am heartened that Secretary Kerry has announced that a U.S. security team will be sent to Nigeria to assist in the efforts to bring these young women home to their families.

As a Member of Congress, I will continue to monitor this situation and speak out against such atrocious acts. The outcry against this gross human rights violation must not fade before these young women are recovered and all guilty parties are brought to justice.

HONORING BOB HAMMERSCHMIDT

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2014

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bob Hammerschmidt of Springfield, Missouri on receiving the 2014 Distinguished Citizen Award from the Ozarks Trails Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Distinguished Citizen Award was created by the Boy Scouts of America in order to