

I dedicate this statement to those who did not survive the first genocide of the 20th century. They must never be forgotten.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to the Armenian people on the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, marked the beginning of the systematic elimination of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire by the Turks. It is important to recall this horrible chapter in history not only to commemorate the courage, strength, and energy of the Armenian people, but also to ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Beginning in 1915, the Ottoman Empire carried out a genocidal plot against its Armenian minority. From 1915 to 1923, approximately 1.5 million Armenian people, including religious, political, and intellectual leaders, lost their lives due to starvation, torture, and disease. More than 500,000 Armenians were exiled from their homes and by the end of 1923, the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and Western Armenia had been killed or deported.

During this bleak period for the Armenian people, hope was temporarily restored on May 28, 1918, when Armenian refugees, with the help of volunteers from abroad, defeated a Turkish attack and gained freedom. Unfortunately, in 1920 the Soviet Union joined with Ottoman Empire forces to attack and defeat Armenia, whose people were subjugated by these foreign powers for the next 70 years. It was not until 1991, after the break up of the Soviet Union, that the independence of the Armenian people was restored and the Republic of Armenia was born.

Although independence has been gained, Armenia's struggle still continues. There have been many efforts to deny the Armenian genocide and to discredit scholarship on this historical event. However, the suffering inflicted upon the Armenian people—one of the oldest Christian nations in the world—must not be forgotten or denied. The horror of these events must not be concealed, because only through education and remembrance can the wounds inflicted by this tragic incident in history be healed.

It is our duty to salute the Armenian people, for it reminds us that we all must work together to discourage prejudice and discrimination, to hold steadfast to the view that genocide will not be tolerated, and to make certain that it is never again repeated.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak of a triple commemoration of horror. April 1995 marked the anniversary of both the first and the most recent genocide of the 20th century. The first, of course, was the mas-

sacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915. The most recent was last year's slaughter of the Tutsis of Rwanda.

Chronologically between these two grisly events stand the decimation of the Ukrainian people by Stalin's collectivization, the Jewish Holocaust, the killing fields of Cambodia, and most recently the unspeakable ethnic cleansing of Bosnia's Moslems.

The precedent for this inhuman chain was the Armenian genocide, the world's failure to prevent it, and the inability to ensure that it not be denied by future generations.

From 1915 to 1923, 30 percent of the Armenian people were massacred by the brutal hand of the Ottoman Turks, beginning with the Armenian intellectual and religious elite on April 24, 1915. Armenian men who had already been conscripted into the Ottoman Army were put into work battalions and then murdered.

Other Armenians—mostly helpless, elderly, women, and children—were driven on forced marches into the desert. Many of those who withstood unimaginable suffering finally succumbed to starvation or illness.

Sadly, the Armenian massacres have been labeled the "forgotten genocide" as a result of a concerted effort to rewrite history. Some who should know better assert that the horrid events were merely a regrettable sidelight of war, not genocide.

Mr. Chairman, we must not let unseemly quarrels over semantics cloud our moral vision or distract us from the fundamental point: The world must not allow human beings to be killed because of their race, religion, or ethnic group.

It matters little whether or not in every case of genocide in this century the perpetrators had a master plan for annihilation. The crucial, horrifying truth is that Armenians were killed because they were Armenians; Jews were killed because they were Jews; Gypsies were killed because they were Gypsies; Tutsis were killed because they were Tutsis; and Bosnian Moslems were killed because they were Moslems.

In the 1930's the international community should have been alerted by Hitler's cynical comment, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" Just as Hitler saw lack of historical memory of the Armenian genocide as a signal that he could carry out with impunity his demented genocide of Jews and Gypsies, so too must the Hutus in Rwanda have been emboldened by the world's failure to stop the vile ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

On this 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide; the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and other Nazi death camps; and the first anniversary of the Tutsi genocide, I stand here to tell you that this chain must be broken once and for all.

We must not only remember and honor the martyrs, but must also solemnly swear: "This will never happen again."

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, last Monday, April 24, marked the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. I rise today to acknowledge and commemorate this terrible chapter in our history, to help ensure that it will never be forgotten.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman authorities began rounding up hundreds of Armenian political and religious leaders throughout Anatolia. Over the ensuing months and years, some 1.5 million Armenians were killed at the hands of the Ottoman authorities, and hundreds of thousands more were exiled from their homes. For its devastation and barbarism, the Armenian genocide stands out as one of the most horrific events in human history.

As the 80th anniversary of the Armenian genocide passes, it is vital that we remember and speak out about the systematic persecution and murder of millions of Armenians by the Ottoman government. I urge my colleagues to join me, the Armenian-American community, and people across the United States in commemorating the genocide and paying tribute to the victims of this crime against humanity.

Americans, who are blessed with freedom and security, can never allow oppression and persecution to pass without condemnation. By commemorating the Armenian genocide, we renew our commitment always to fight for human dignity and freedom, and we send out a message that the world can never allow genocide to be perpetrated again.

Even as we remember the tragedy and honor the dead, we also honor the living. Out of the ashes of their history, Armenians all across the world have clung to their identity and have prospered in new communities. Their strength and perseverance is a triumph of the human spirit, which refuses to cede victory to evil. The best retort to the perpetrators of oppression and destruction is rebirth, renewal, and rebuilding. Armenians throughout the world have done just that, and today they do it in their homeland as well. A free and independent Armenia stands today as a living monument to the resilience of a people. I am proud that the United States, through our friendship and assistance, is contributing to the rebuilding and renewal of Armenia.

Let us never forget the victims of the Armenian genocide; let their deaths not be in vain. We must remember their tragedy to ensure that such crimes can never be repeated. And as we remember Armenia's dark past, we can look with hope to its future, which is bright with possibility.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to