

the Flood Prevention and Family Protection Act of 1997; H.R. 3, the Juvenile Crime Control Act of 1997; and the Fiscal Year 1997 Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Mr. Speaker, we should finish legislative business and have Members on their way home to their families by 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 8.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. SALMON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SALMON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE KURDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my colleagues' attention this evening on the plight of the Kurds, an ancient people living in the Middle East in a land that should be a nation called Kurdistan, a proud people numbering some 30 million, perhaps the largest people in the world today lacking in the exercise of their right to self-determination.

The Kurds have resided in their present homelands for thousands of years. Kurdish Guti kings ruled Persia and Mesopotamia over 4,000 years ago. Before that, the Neolithic revolution probably first took place in Kurdistan, around 7000 B.C., 3,500 years before similar developments in Europe.

Some of the earliest towns and villages, as well as other human settlements, have been discovered in Kurdistan. Yet, one of the largest nations in the Middle East is prevented from exercising sovereignty over any part of its own land. It is an international colony, governed over by the states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

The Kurdish people suffer from ghastly atrocities committed by all four regimes. Over one half of Kurdistan and nearly two-thirds of the Kurdish population are under Turkish control, an occupation legitimized in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which reneged on a promise to Kurds and Armenians in the earlier 1920 Treaty of Sevres. That promise envisioned the creation of a Kurdish state on Kurdish territory in the aftermath of World War I. The Lausanne Treaty legitimized the Turkish massacres against the Armenians which had already taken place and set the stage for a stepped-up campaign of genocide against the Kurds in subsequent years.

Turkish states have been responsible for a long string of ethnic cleansings ever since. Historian James Tashjian has estimated that over 2½ million people perished in a 100-year period between 1822 and 1922.

□ 1800

Among them were Greeks, Nestorians, Maronites, Syrians, Bulgarians, Yezidis, Jacobites, and Armenians. He acknowledged that these figures did not include over 500,000 Kurds murdered, deported, or displaced in the same period.

Between 1925 and 1938, an additional 1 million Kurds were reported slaughtered. Almost the entire Armenian population under Turkish control had previously been exterminated, over 1½ million people.

Today, Turkish Special Komandos actually collect rewards for the severed heads of Kurdish guerrillas and others, casually referring to their victims as Armenians, leaving no doubt as to what is in store for the Kurds and their national aspirations.

"Special action teams," as they are called, color their faces green and white. The paint, as well as 80 percent of Turkey's military hardware and equipment, is furnished by the United States, much of it at the taxpayer's expense.

Today, seven Kurdish members of parliament are in prison in Turkey. Most prominent among them is Leyla Zana, the recipient of the Sakharov Freedom Award. Andrei Sakharov came to the defense of the Kurds in 1989, when he declared, and I quote, "The tragic struggle of the Kurdish people, which has continued for so long, originates in the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, and for this reason, it is a just struggle."

Human Rights Watch, Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International and a variety of other human rights groups have devoted much attention to Turkish depredations against the Kurds in recent years. They note that over 20,000 people have been killed since 1984, over 3,000 villages destroyed with rampant torture, murder, displacement and imprisonment directed at the Kurdish population.

The repression by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq has been more widely publicized. Over 200,000 Kurds were killed in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war, and over 4,000 Kurdish villages have been destroyed over the past three decades by Iraqi forces. Three tons of documents and other materials related to the post-Iran-Iraq war "Anfal" campaign are stored away by the U.S. Government. I call upon the State Department to release them for general inspection by interested parties. I believe they would confirm the crimes against humanity carried out by the Iraqi regime in Kurdistan.

It is imperative that we affirm a human rights linkage with any foreign aid given by the United States and to oppose the furnishing of lethal equipment to those who would use it for repressive purposes. Never again should United States-made chemical weapons be used against the Kurds or against anybody else, as they were at the ancient Kurdish city of Halabia, where

over 5,000 Kurdish civilians, mostly women and children, were gassed to death in March 1988.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to reverse our longstanding policy and recognize the existence of Kurdistan and the rights of its citizens to exercise the prerogatives and liberties which every people without exception should and must enjoy.

We should use our influence to help resolve the Kurds' internal conflict and support their unity in the effort to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination. We must stop looking at whole nations in terms of the profitability of oil companies and as assets to be deployed in big power maneuvering. We must ban the export of chemical weapons. Both Iraq and Turkey have used lethal weapons against the Kurds which were furnished by the United States. Cluster bombs are continuing to be sold to Turkey and continuing to be used in bombing runs against Kurdish villages and areas.

Iran also continues to oppress the Kurds in its territory. The Shah's father, a Fascist sympathizer who was removed from his throne by the Allies in 1941, oversaw what was called the "sedentarization" policies which resulted in the disappearance of many Kurdish and other tribes. Khomeini's regime went after the Kurds almost immediately upon assuming power over Iran in 1979. Leaders of the major Kurdish party resisting Iranian domination have been repeatedly assassinated by agents of the government, often in European settings.

The Kurdish plight at the hands of Iran has received surprisingly little notice in America, given our oft-stated concerns over the human rights violations of that regime.

We must stop viewing freedom for the Kurds as being some kind of threat to stability and instead welcome such freedom.

As was stated by Michael van Walt van Praag, an adviser to the Dalai Lama of Tibet, and again I quote, "The potential for explosive disintegration lurks in all states where the people are prohibited from exercising their right to self-determination. We must move away from our misguided view of stability premised on immediate short-term economic and political considerations to a long-term perspective which will ensure the peaceful coexistence of all peoples. Universal recognition is the cornerstone and, indeed, the sine qua non of a truly peaceful and stable world."

According to Justice William O. Douglas, who visited the Kurds nearly 50 years ago, "The Kurds have a saying: The world is a rose; smell it and pass it to your friends."

The source of such resources as water, oil, gas and agricultural wealth, Kurdistan has much to share with neighboring peoples in the world, once the pall of oppression has been lifted and they can manage their own affairs and control their own resources and their own destiny.