

leadership, vision and inspiration not seen since World War II, we cannot afford to dissemble about crimes against humanity.

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Euphemisms, vague terminology or calls for discussions to get at the truth are just some of the dodges used to avoid Turkish discomfort with its Ottoman past. What is there to discuss about the Armenian Genocide? What facts are there left to discover? What is to be gained by referring to the systematic slaughter of an entire people without using the word most appropriate for those grotesque circumstances?

The short answer is that there is nothing to discuss, nothing to discover, nothing to be gained by denial—and much to be lost. The United States is fighting an unconventional enemy in the war on terrorism, and one against whom our overwhelming military might provides only one necessary weapon. Winning the war on terrorism will also require a level of moral clarity that can provide a vision for struggling people and nations everywhere. Only military force accompanied by an equally strong moral force will provide the essential combination to route out terrorism and prevent its reemergence.

So let us call genocide, genocide. Let us not minimize the deliberate murder of 1.5 million people. Let us have a moral victory that can shine as a light to all nations. These people lived. They dreamed of their futures, as we dream about ours. They loved their family and life. Their voices were silenced in the desert, but we can respect their memory. And we must.

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COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow on the remarks of my distinguished colleague from California.

The Armenian genocide has been called the most “colossal crime of all ages.” It has been called a “campaign of race extermination,” similar to the Holocaust.

Every year on the 24th of April, the citizens of Armenia gather, as they did just this past day in Yerevan on top of a hill, to remember all of the people that perished, the 1.5 million. And although we are halfway around the world away, we remember with them today. Today we pause and we say, “never again.” We do so in order to prevent history from repeating itself as it has often done in our lifetime.

It happened in Armenia between 1915 and 1923. Ambassador Morgenthau told our government what was happening, and not a very good response was received. It happened during the Holocaust, and not a very good response in reaction to what was happening was received. It happened in Bosnia and

Rwanda and Cambodia. The world did not learn the harsh lessons of the past.

Today we stand up and we speak because silence betrays our principle as a freedom-loving people. One and a half million Armenian men, women, and children were victims of a brutal genocide at the hands of the Turkish Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923. The intent of the genocide was to destroy all traces of a thriving and cultured civilization over 3,000 years old.

On the 24th of April 1915, 300 Armenian leaders and intellectuals and professionals were rounded up, deported, and killed. Also on that day 5,000 of the poorest Armenians were slaughtered in the street. And the names that were read by my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), they were real people with families. We must never forget.

Some think of the genocide in abstract terms, but it is not. We are here today speaking out on the House floor, Democrats and Republicans, because we know that 1.5 million men, women, and children killed in the genocide were husbands and wives and mothers and fathers and sons and daughters and friends. Those who survive them know this: They were innocent individuals. They were robbed of their dignity, of their humanity, and ultimately their lives.

A professor once observed that the denial of genocide strives to reshape history in order to demonize the victims and rehabilitate the perpetrators. Because of the work of historians, advocates, the Armenian American community, lawmakers and other people of conscience, this is not possible in the case of the Armenian genocide. It will never be possible because we will always be here, every April 24 and the week preceding it, speaking to the country, speaking to the world community about what happened. And make no mistake about it, those who are responsible, those who fight against recognizing this for what it was, a genocide, hear our voices.

While the attempts of denial continue to strengthen our resolve to remember and speak out, we recognize the anniversary of this massacre and condemn these crimes against an entire people in order to ensure that similar atrocities are not committed against any people or any civilization again. We must never forget. We recognize the anniversary in order to show our support for all Armenian Americans and the horrific suffering they or their families endured.

We recognize the anniversary in order to stand up for freedom and condemn injustice across the world. I have recently joined with 161 of my colleagues in asking President Bush to recognize the Armenian genocide for what it is: a genocide. And we will continue our collective efforts to achieve proper commemoration of the Armenian genocide because we must never forget.

ARMENIANS STILL SEEK JUSTICE FOR 1915 GENOCIDE

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today Members of this House have come to the floor to remember and commemorate the 87th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

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

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

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

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

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

Rather than supporting Turkey's denials, Mr. Speaker, I hope that President Bush will officially recognize the Armenian genocide and encourage Turkey to come to terms with its past.

Rather than creating tension in the region, I believe such actions would decrease the tension and suspicions that have long inhibited cooperation in that region.

Thirty-one of our States, including my own State of Massachusetts, have recognized the Armenian genocide. And I want to thank the cochairs of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for their outstanding work to ensure that we never forget those who perished and those who survived the Armenian genocide. In their names and in their memory, we must demand recognition.