

I am proud to note that Armenian immigrants found, in the United States, a country where their culture could take root and thrive. Most Armenians in America are children or grandchildren of the survivors, although there are still survivors amongst us. 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 Hovanessian and her husband, Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, 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. Three other Armenian-American families in my congressional district, Dr. Aram and Seta Semerdjian, 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 past year, with my support, Armenia received \$93 million in U.S. aid to assist economic and military development. In addition I am once again joining with several of my colleagues in signing a letter to President Bush urging him to honor his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

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.

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.

Consistently, I have testified before Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on the important issue of bringing peace to a troubled area of the world. I continued my support for maintaining of level funding for the Southern Caucasus region of the Independent

States (IS), and of Armenia in particular. I also stressed the critical importance of revisiting Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act that restricts U.S. aid for Azerbaijan as a result of their blockade. However, I commend my colleagues on the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee for striking the appropriate balance last year regarding Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which will now allow Azerbaijan to do their part in the war against international terrorism. Unfortunately, Armenia is now entering its fourteenth year of a blockade and I must request that the Congress review the waiver of Section 907 on a yearly basis. The flow of food, fuel, and medicine continues to be hindered by the blockade, creating a humanitarian crisis in Armenia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 88th 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.

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 and include extraneous material on the subject of my special order tonight, the Armenian Genocide.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. WEINER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, 88 years ago, Armenian teachers, clergy, businessmen, writers and doctors were rounded up and killed. The events of April 24, 1915, set the stage for the first genocide of the 20th century, the extermination of more than 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

With one of the largest Armenian expatriate communities in the world, April 24 has become an integral part of America's history—but debate over the genocide is still an annual and bitter conflict.

Even though modern-day Turkey was established in 1923 out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and was not the actual perpetrator of genocide, it spends millions of dollars each year to fight recognition of the Genocide. Despite this well-funded effort, there is no serious academic dispute about the Armenian Genocide. Our own National Archives houses diplomatic dispatches that vividly describe the systematic destruction of an entire people.

News accounts from the American press also provide a trove of primary source evidence. Headlines, such as the following from the New York Times, describe the horrors: "Armenian Officials Murdered by Turks," "Appeal to Turkey to Stop Massacres," "Tales of Armenian Horrors Confirmed," "Wholesale Massacres of Armenians by Turks," "Armenians Are Sent To Perish in Desert," "Turks Depopulate Towns of Armenia," "Million Armenians Killed or In Exile," and "The death of Armenia."

When the Armenian Genocide occurred, the heinous crime had no name. In denouncing what he was witness to, our own U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau chose the words "race murder" to describe the atrocities. Raphael Lemkin, an International law scholar, ultimately coined the term genocide in 1944.

As a Polish attorney, Lemkin was appalled by the Turkish atrocities against the Armenians and tried to get European statesmen to criminalize the destruction of ethnic and religious groups. He was dismissed as an alarmist. Years later, when Hitler invaded Poland, Lemkin lost 49 family members in the Holocaust.

Landing as a refugee on American shores, Lemkin resolved to devise a word to convey the evil under way. In 1944, while working for the U.S. war department, he invented the term "genocide"—citing the Armenian case as an example.

In 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust, the international community responded to Nazi Germany's methodically orchestrated acts of genocide by approving the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The Convention confirms that genocide is a crime under international law and defines genocide as actions committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

The United States, under President Harry Truman, was the first nation to sign the Convention. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan