

today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Recent history in Rwanda, Congo, Darfur and elsewhere reminds us that genocides and mass atrocities remain with us to this day. And as President Obama has said, "bearing witness is not the end of our obligation—it's just the beginning." He has called for our committing ourselves "to resisting injustice and intolerance and indifference in whatever forms they may take."

Some have sought to deny that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people occurred. But as the Genocide Prevention Task Force, chaired by former Secretary of State Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen, stated, it is "fundamental to address the legacy of past abuses." This is necessary, the task force emphasizes, for the sake of justice, to remove the cause of retribution, and to end the discounting of the costs of violence. Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel has said that the denial of genocide constitutes a "double killing," for it seeks to rewrite history by absolving the perpetrators of violence while ignoring the suffering of the victims.

We need to be clear that marking this Armenian Day of Remembrance is not an indictment of the Republic of Turkey. It occurred before the Republic of Turkey came into existence. With the signing of accords last October, Turkey and Armenia have taken a major step forward in the process of normalizing relations, opening their common border which has been closed for more than a decade and a half, and removing barriers to trade. Ratification of those accords will be important for continuing this process of reconciliation and hopefully will be completed promptly. All friends of Armenia and Turkey should hope that these two nations and peoples can jointly face their shared history and move forward together as fellow members of the community of nations.

In speaking to a joint session of Congress last November, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke eloquently about the importance of tearing down walls, not only between neighbors but also the "wall in people's minds that make it difficult time and again to understand one another in this world of ours. This is why the ability to show tolerance is so important." She added, "Tolerance means showing respect for other people's history, traditions, religion and cultural identity."

So I say to my colleagues that one way we can honor the memory of the 1.5 million Armenian victims of the tragic events of 1915–1923 is by recognizing that we have an obligation to do all we can to stop mass atrocities from occurring, to aid the survivors of such tragedies, and to promote justice, tolerance, and understanding.

RECOGNIZING THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS, on its 75th anniversary.

Even though we are an urban nation, we are still an agricultural land. Nearly 70 percent of the United States, exclusive of Alaska, is held in private ownership by millions of individuals. Fifty percent of the United States—907 million acres—is cropland, pastureland, and rangeland owned and managed by farmers and ranchers and their families.

In the early 1900s, President Roosevelt and other conservationists like John Muir and Gifford Pinchot had the foresight to set aside America's special places as national parks and forests, seashores, and wilderness areas. America's public land became a showcase for some of the most dramatic and beautiful landscapes on the North American continent.

But others also recognized the importance of America's private land to the health of the Nation. It took the seriousness of the Dust Bowl for this message to be accepted. Rooted in our national experience with devastating soil erosion of that time, the conservation movement began with the purpose of keeping productive topsoil—and a productive agriculture—in place.

To lead conservation efforts at the Federal level, Congress created the Soil Conservation Service, SCS, within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, in 1935. SCS was renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS, in 1994. This was the beginning of the Nation's historic commitment to a conservation partnership with farmers and ranchers.

At the same time, the Nation also adopted a remarkable Federal, State, and local partnership for delivering conservation assistance to farmers and ranchers. The concept was that NRCS would deliver technical and financial assistance for conservation, while State governments and local conservation districts would connect with individual landowners and set local priorities.

From the beginning, this was a cooperative approach, drawing on many sources for technical knowledge, financial assistance, and broad-based educational programs for natural resources conservation and management. This partnership remains the pre-eminent model for intergovernmental cooperation today and is admired around the world.

In the 1980s, NRCS's programs began to change as Congress began to increase incentives for farmers and ranchers to practice good conservation. During the 1990s, Congress accelerated the investment in conservation by creating additional programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP, to share the cost of enhancing natural resources on farms, ranches and private forestland.

Congress increased this investment in the 2002 and 2008 farm bills and is expected to continue to support conservation well into the future. However, there are challenges in conservation today. One challenge is how to sustain the ability of NRCS to provide technical, scientifically sound advice and assistance in a time of tight budgets and increased demands. Another challenge is how to maintain the highly successful conservation partnership that works with farmers and ranchers as individuals to address their specific conservation concerns.

W.C. Lowdermilk, the Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service in the 1930s said, "In a very real sense the land does not lie; it bears a record of what men write on it. In a larger sense, a Nation writes its record on the land. This record is easy to read by those who understand the simple language of the land." Conservation leads to prosperous, healthy societies and stable, self-sufficient countries. It sustains the agricultural productivity that allows for division of labor and the growth and longevity of a society.

Careful land stewardship through terracing, crop rotation and other soil conservation measures enables societies to flourish. However, neglect of the land, manifested as soil erosion, deforestation, and overgrazing, helps to topple empires and destroy entire civilizations.

These lessons of history, including our own with the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, are ones we should not forget. America's future is tied to how we treat our land. Today, the Nation's farmers and ranchers deliver safe, reliable, high quality food, feed, and fiber to the Nation and to the world, but also much more. Through their careful stewardship, farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners also deliver clean water, productive wildlife habitat, and healthy landscapes.

Today, we thank all who have made this happen through their service to our country as part of the NRCS. Congratulations on your 75th anniversary.

MIDDLEBURY INTERACTIVE LANGUAGES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the New York Times article, "Middlebury to Develop Online Language Venture," be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 13, 2010]
MIDDLEBURY TO DEVELOP ONLINE LANGUAGE VENTURE

(By Tamar Lewin)

Middlebury College, a small Vermont college known for its rigorous foreign-language programs, is forming a venture with a commercial entity to develop online language programs for pre-college students. The college plans to invest \$4 million for a 40 percent stake in what will become Middlebury Interactive Languages.