AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR A STRONG ALLIANCE WITH THAILAND

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. McMAHON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 2010

Mr. MCMAHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1321, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to resolve the political crisis in Thailand peacefully and through democratic means.

Thailand has proven to be an essential ally of the United States. As a strong democracy in Southeast Asia, Thailand provides assistance to the United States on a number of fronts including in the war in Afghanistan and in curtailing North Korea's nuclear proliferation efforts by intercepting unauthorized shipments.

For these reasons and others (including a robust trading partnership between the U.S. and Thailand), Thailand must continue to be a reliable ally in the Southeast Asia region. The United States must make available all necessary diplomatic tools to re-engage all parties and come to a peaceful, yet decisive end to the domestic turmoil.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me today in support of solving the conflicts in Thailand peacefully and efficiently.

STORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE SURVIVOR: FLORA MUNUSHIAN MOURADIAN

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to memorialize and record a courageous story of survival of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, documented at the time, it was a campaign of "race extermination."

The campaign to annihilate the Armenian people failed, as illustrated by the proud Armenian nation and prosperous diaspora. It is difficult if not impossible to find an Armenian family not touched by the genocide, and while there are some survivors still with us, it is imperative that we record their stories. Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Below is one of those stories:

(Submitted by Kay Mouradian, EdD, Professor Emerita Education, Los Angeles Community Colleges, daughter of Flora Munushian Mouradian)

"As a child growing up in Boston, my mother, Flora, would tell me stories of her childhood in Turkey. 'Hunger is a pain that never sleeps,' she said recalling the trauma she experienced in 1915, when at age 14 she and her immediate family of nine were forced to leave their home in Hadjin, Turkey. She told me of the hardships during the forced march . . . no food or water, the terrifying fear as Turkish soldiers tried to abduct her and her 16-year-old sister, helplessly watching soldiers take away her 18-year-old brother, no sanitation at the outdoor camps, the smell of disease and death in those camps, one of which cramped 150,000 emaciated Armenians before they were allowed to continue on, witnessing the already dead lining the roads, painfully watching her father bury her 70-year-old grandmother, becoming hopelessly traumatized as her father leaves her and her sister in Aleppo, Syria. Can you imagine the painstaking decision made by loving parents to leave vulnerable teenage daughters behind in a strange, huge Arabic city hoping their chance for survival would be greater?

"No longer having the protection of her father and not knowing a word of Arabic, Flora's fear of becoming an orphan explodes and is compounded when working as a 'slave' in a Syrian home, Flora is sold to a wealthy Turk. When her sister learns Flora is in the harem, she stealthily sneaks into the harem and steals Flora to safety. Both girls were the only ones from the family to survive.

"In 1984, at the age of 83, my mother, Flora, having outlived her husband and two of her four children, was hospitalized. She was diagnosed as terminally ill with congestive heart failure and could not feed herself because she suffered from severe hand tremors. Confused, she did not recognize people she once knew. The day I took her to emergency she did not know who I was.

" 'Let her spend her last few days at home,' her doctor said.

"With a heavy heart, I brought her home. Her final moments were near. I did not expect her to survive the night. But I was wrong. As time passed, not only did my mother rebound but she literally recovered! Her hands quieted and no longer trembled and more amazingly, her mind was again clear and alert as if her brain cells had been renewed. I watched as she developed new relationships with friends that only recently she hadn't recognized. The most miraculous and wonderful part of all of this was that my mother had become more loving.

"Until her heart attack, her life had been colored by the Armenian tragedy. She was filled with anger and self-pity, and dwelt on the horrors of the past. She often talked about her family who had perished at the hands of the Turks. Now, incredibly, that dark shadow was gone. It was as though something happened inside Flora's heart, something beyond my ability to understand.

"My mother had three more episodes in the next five years. Each time I was told she would not survive without the help of a respirator and each time we, the family, refused, feeling she needed to move on if it was her time. But my mother's fourth encounter with death really stunned me. In 1988, I went to Aleppo, Syria, to search for the family that gave my mother refuge and found the one remaining descendant. The next day I received a call from home. Mom had another attack, her fourth. I prepared myself for the worst and flew home.

"When I saw Mom in the hospital, she tried to smile but was too weak. 'I don't know why I didn't die,' she said, her voice barely audible.

"I leaned close and gently asked, 'Mom, do you think you will die now?'

" 'It doesn't look like it,' she said, her voice cracking and her face reflecting her own disbelief. Somehow, she knew. Two days later, when I entered cardiac care I was astonished to see my mother sitting up in bed, unattended. A day earlier she couldn't even turn her head without help. When she saw me she shouted something in Turkish, a language she hadn't spoken in more than 50 years!

"I was startled. She was filled with energy and animated. What was she shouting in Turkish? 'Mom, I don't understand you,' I said, trying to calm her. 'Speak to me in English. Repeat everything I say.'

"I went through the entire English alphabet. She repeated each letter dutifully, as if she were in school following a teacher's instructions. We counted numbers and she repeated those in English. But then she started to shout in Turkish again. An occasional English or Armenian word was in the mix. 'They took my education! They took my family! Do you know what it was like? I went crazy!' She looked straight into my eyes and said loud and clear in English, 'The bastards!'—a word not in my old-fashioned mother's vocabulary. I couldn't hold back a laugh.

"Throughout this wild scenario, even when she was shouting in Turkish, she was joyful. 'Mom, are you happy?' I asked trying to understand this phenomenon.

" 'Yes!' she said emphatically.

" 'Why?' I questioned.

" 'Because I'm awake!' she said with authority.

"Had she been given an opportunity to release her own intense hatred of the Turks? Was that hatred released with the strong expulsion of her anger when she shouted, 'The bastards!' I'll never know for sure, but I can state for a fact that my mother was so filled with love after this fourth brush with death she couldn't harbor hatred, even toward the Turks. Love poured out of her heart, like a flower releasing its perfume. Everyone around her felt it.

"Escaping death time and time again, Flora became more alert and loving each time. Her amazing transformation during those last five years of her life taught me a lifetime of understanding. The greatest of these is the fact that when negative matrixes like hatred and anger no longer rule the heart, streams of fragrant love pour out of every cell in the body. She shined like a thousand suns.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE'S CSRS OBLIGATION MODIFICATION ACT OF 2010

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Mr. LYNCH. Madam Speaker, the United States Postal Service's CSRS Obligation Modification Act of 2010, is intended to remedy a unfair and inequitable methodology for allocating the Postal Service's share of Civil Service Retirement System, CSRS, retirement benefit liabilities for employees that provided service to this country under both the Post Office Department and the independent United States Postal Service.

According to a January 2010 report by the United States Postal Service's Office of Inspector General, USPS–OIG, the Postal Service paid more into the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Trust Fund that it would have paid if a more equitable methodology were used to allocate CSRS retirement benefit liabilities between the Federal government and the United States Postal Service.

As a result of the USPS–OIG report's findings, the Postmaster General of the United