

During the second half of the nineteenth century, between the years 1915 and 1923, the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire became a target of heightened persecution by the Ottoman Turks. These persecutions culminated in a 3-decade period during which more than 1.5 million Armenians were systematically uprooted from their homelands of 3,000 years and eliminated through massacres and deportation.

Mr. Speaker, this historic event can no longer be denied. Vast amounts of documentation exist in the United States archives, as well as in the public domain, which lend proof that the horrific event surrounding this period did in fact take place. It is important that we, as Members of Congress, continue to officially recognize the genocide because it is an important part of our world history, just as historically important as World War II, and a prelude to the Holocaust that followed. It is a shame and an outrage that the Genocide is still not recognized by many, many nations.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important that we continue to mark this event on an annual basis. Although most of the survivors of the Genocide are unfortunately no longer with us, their relatives continue to remember and to mourn them to this day. I am proud that the State of New York is one of the few States which has offered a human right/genocide curricula for teachers and students to use at their discretion, which includes the Armenian Genocide. I was a sponsor of that curricula, and I believe educational programs such as this allow our children to learn more about the tragic events such as the Armenian Genocide, hopefully ensuring a peaceful existence for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot forget that the persecution and mistreatment of the Armenian people continues today in Nagorno-Karabagh. Since 1988, fighting there has left more than 1,500 Armenians dead and uprooted hundreds more, forcing them to flee to other parts of this unstable region. As a member of the Congressional Armenian Caucus, I will work to end the repression of the Armenian people in Nagorno-Karabagh and will continue to support their efforts to ensure a stable future for their people.

COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, as a Coloradoan and as an American, I am profoundly shocked and saddened by the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, yesterday. My thoughts and prayers go

out to the families who have been victims of this terrible crime.

I can hardly imagine the horror and pain experienced by the families who lost loved ones in this tragedy, and as the father of two school aged children, I am deeply distressed by the prospect that our schools have become places where this kind of violence can take place.

Today, however, is not a time to rush to judgment about the causes or cures for this tragedy. I do believe, however, that parents, community leaders and policymakers at all levels, including school boards, State legislators and our national government need to come together in coming weeks and reflect upon this tragedy. We need a fuller discussion of the values we share as Americans, and we need to work more actively than ever before to make our schools safe and to ensure that our Nation's classrooms are places for learning and for nurturing the full potential of our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that as a Nation we will respond to this incident by looking beyond our prejudices and political leanings. My concern is that the violence that took place in Colorado has deeper implications for our future than we can fully fathom at this moment. I fear it goes deeper than observations about a decline in our values or moral decay as a society.

Ultimately, this tragedy will challenge us to carefully explore our understanding of rights and freedoms, whether it is access to the Internet or access to guns. Moreover, it will challenge us to place an even greater priority on the quality of our lives and the lives of our children.

COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian Americans, I rise today to join my colleagues in the sad remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.

First, I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER), cochairs of the Caucus, for all of their hard work on this issue and other issues of human rights.

April 24, 1999 marks the 84th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. It was on that day in 1915 that over 200 Armenian religious, political and intellectual leaders were arrested and murdered in central Turkey. This date marks the beginning of an organized campaign by the young Turk

government to eliminate the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire. Over the next 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians died at the hands of the Turks, and a half million more were deported.

As the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. has written, and I quote, "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race. They understood this well and made no particular attempt to conceal the fact."

As a supporter of human rights, I am dismayed that the Turkish government is still refusing to acknowledge what happened and, instead, is attempting to rewrite history.

In a sense, even more appalling than Turkey's denial is the willingness of some officials in our own government to join in rewriting the history of the Armenian Genocide. It is vital that we do not let political agendas get in the way of doing what is right.

Mr. Speaker, the issues surrounding the Armenian genocide should not go unresolved. I call upon the United States Government to demand complete accountability by the Turkish Government for the Armenian genocide of 1915-1923.

To heal the wounds of the past, the Turkish Government must first recognize the responsibility of its country's leaders at that time for the catastrophe. Nothing we can do or say will bring those who perished back to life, but we can require them and bring everlasting meaning by teaching the lessons of the Armenian genocide to future generations.

The noted philosopher George Santayana has said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We should heed this wise principle and do all we can to ensure that those that died, the people of the Armenian genocide, that these people are not forgotten.

VICE-PRESIDENT GORE'S VIEWS ON ENVIRONMENT

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

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today marks the first in a series of special orders members of the Conservative Action Team and Western Caucus hope to hold on the record of Vice President AL GORE.

For the past 6½ years AL GORE has been Bill Clinton's point man on the environment and on a number of key issues. He has been particularly aggressive in attacking the work of congressional Republicans, often portraying the positions of congressional Republicans as being very extreme and very anti-people, if you will.

The members of the Conservative Action Team believe it is important for