

April 26, 2001

COMMEMORATING ARMENIAN
GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2001

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I join with my colleagues in commemorating the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Along with the Armenian-American community in my district and with people of goodwill throughout the country, Congress today is observing the death of 1.5 million Armenians from the years 1915–1923.

As we gather today, many of my constituents over the weekend participated in solemn services held in the memory of the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide. Whether at St. Leon Armenian Apostolic Church in Fair Lawn, Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Ridgefield, or at Saint Thomas Armenian Apostolic Church in Tenafly, thousands of Americans of Armenian descent will be joining together in Northern New Jersey this evening to ensure that the world does not forget the first crime against humanity of the 20th century.

And so let me offer my solidarity with those remembering the Armenian Genocide today. And let me also emphasize that we should today not only remember the martyred, but as well, the survivors of the Armenian genocide. Though few survivors of the Armenian Genocide are still living today, those who endured the horrors of 1915, are heroes for all time.

Today, the people of Armenia and her Diaspora are proudly looking to rebuild their country. From the ashes of despair born of the genocide, and from the ravages of seven decades of Communist rule, Armenians the world over are striving to secure a safe and prosperous future for Armenian and Nagorno-Karabagh.

As Armenian-Americans rebuild their homeland, and as they seek to secure an economically prosperous state, founded on firm democratic principles, I will stand by them.

Let me conclude my brief remarks today by encouraging the young people of America to never forget the tragedy and lessons of 1915. Because as George Santayana once remarked, “Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.” And if no clearer evidence of these prescient words are necessary let us remind one another today that before commencing the Holocaust, Hitler himself stated, “Who today remembers the Armenians?”

As a Jewish-American and being ever mindful of the Holocaust, I join with my colleagues today in observing the Armenian Genocide. And I promise to stand firm against the shameful efforts of those who today seek to deny the Armenian Genocide.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING ARMENIAN
GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2001

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues to remember a dark chapter in history and to honor and remember the 1.5 million Armenian Christians victims who lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Empire during 1915 to 1923. I would like to thank the Co-Chairs of the Armenian Caucus, the gentlemen from New Jersey, Representative FRANK PALLONE and the gentlemen from Michigan, Representative JOE KNOLLENBERG for organizing this special order commemorating the 86th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide—of one of the greatest tragedies of history and the first genocide of the 20th century.

Today, I join with Armenian-Americans in my congressional district, the Armenian-American community throughout the United States and the Armenian community abroad in mourning the loss of so many innocent lives. It is important that we remember and learn from history, because if we ignore the lessons of the past, we are destined to repeat history. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in the Preface to the Encyclopedia of Genocide, published in 1999 by the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, writes: “It is sadly true what a cynic has said, that we learn from history that we do not learn from history. And yet it is possible that if the world had been conscious of the genocide that was committed by the Ottoman Turks against the Armenians, the first genocide of the twentieth century, then perhaps humanity might have been more alert to the warning signs that were being given before Hitler’s madness was unleashed on an unbelieving world.”

The facts of the Armenian Genocide are clear and amply documented as demonstrated by official reports and accounts by the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. In a July 1915 report to the Department of State, U.S. Ambassador Morgenthau, Sr., reported: “a campaign of race extermination is in progress under a pretext of reprisal against rebellion.” In describing the events in the Ottoman Empire during 1915 to 1923, Henry Morgenthau stated “I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.”

As we gather on this day to remember the past and mourn those who lost their lives, their homes, their families and their freedom, let us pledge to do all that we can to ensure that the Armenian Genocide is properly recognized and remembered to prevent such atrocities from occurring in the future.

6461

U.S. MARINE OFFICERS’ GOLDEN
ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2001

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, this week, fifty veterans and retirees are gathering in Washington to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of their commissioning as officers of the United States Marines. Although their officers’ class (11th SBC) was a relatively small one at a little over 200 members, their backgrounds portray a remarkable tapestry of Americana. They came from hometowns in 34 States of the Union, the District of Columbia, and the Territory of Guam; and, they earned their baccalaureate degrees came from over 100 colleges and universities throughout the land.

In 1951, against the backdrop of a raging war in the Korean Peninsula, they volunteered to serve and took the oath to support and defend the United States of America. And defend it they did, sustaining their share of combat casualties, both wounded and killed in action. One of their members, Sherrod E. Skinner, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously; another, John Word, received the nation’s second highest combat award, the Navy Cross. Others still, received the medals and decorations for heroism and valor shown on the awards list.

Although only a relatively few members of the class became career officers, many served and retired from the Marine Corps Reserve while pursuing careers in law, education, religious ministry, athletics, engineering, business, and politics. Among those who went into politics is someone well known to many of us, my predecessor, General Ben Blaz, who was elected to the Congress after retiring from the Marines. As a former Member of Congress, Ben will be escorting his comrades to this chamber where deliberations and decisions were made that committed them to combat in Korea and Vietnam.

There is a marvelous irony in my having the privilege to call my colleagues’ attention to the contributions that these courageous men of the Corps have made to our country, both in war and peace. During the Spanish-American War, a young man from Gastonia, North Carolina joined the Marines and was part of the contingent that was sent to Guam to formally occupy the island. He was so enchanted by the island and, I hasten to add, its lovely *senoritas*, that he chose to stay in Guam. In time, he married a native girl and started a family. His name was James Underwood. He was my grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for extending me the honor of paying tribute to these veterans and retirees of the Corps and to salute them, in behalf of our grateful nation, on the Golden Anniversary of their commissioning as officers of Marines.

(Roster of members/wives of deceased members of the 11th SBC Marines celebrating the 50th Anniversary of their commissioning as Officers of Marines, May 3–5, 2001):

Robert Altick, Al Bailey, Robert Beezer, Gene Benbow, Charles Bentzen, John Bickley, Ben Blaz, Ted Brothers, Charles