

**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE -- (House of Representatives - April 27, 2004)**

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last Sunday, I attended a ceremony to remember the victims of the Armenian genocide in Times Square in New York City, and I have to say it was a very moving moment. There were several, I would not say many, because there are not that many genocide survivors that are still around, but I did have a chance to talk briefly with maybe 10 or so.

It was incredible to hear them tell the stories of the families and atrocities that had occurred 89 years ago now. More and more countries and States and even the media are now in the process of recognizing the genocide, and I just wanted to mention specifically that the Canadian House of Commons last week joined France, Italy, the Vatican and a number of other European countries and the European Parliament in acknowledging this crime against humanity as genocide.

Also last week, The New York Times reversed decades of ambiguity by declaring in favor of using the term "genocide" to describe the Armenian cataclysm of 1915. The Boston Globe adopted a similar policy change last year.

Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate thing is, although so many other countries and so many of our own States have recognized the Armenian genocide, we in the Congress continue not to recognize it. I think it is important that we do so.

The gentleman from California (Mr. *Schiff*) was here earlier, and he mentioned the House Genocide Resolution, H. Res. 193, which has now 111 cosponsors. The resolution was adopted unanimously by the House Committee on the Judiciary on May 21, 2003, but it has not been brought to the floor for

consideration. I would urge the Speaker and the leaders on the Republican side of the aisle to bring this resolution to the floor. It is important that they do so. Now, this year, as we do every year, the members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues put together a letter to the President of the United States asking him to acknowledge the Armenian genocide. This year there were 169 signatures, more than we have ever had before in that letter that we sent to the President; and I just wanted to read, if I could, some sections of that letter, because I think it is important.

We say, ``Dear Mr. President: We are writing to urge you to join us in reaffirming the U.S. record on the Armenian genocide in your April 24 commemorative statement.

``By properly recognizing the atrocities committed against the Armenian people as genocide in your statement, you will honor the many Americans who helped launch our first international human rights campaign to end the carnage and protect the survivors. The official U.S. response mirrored the overwhelming reaction by the American public to this crime against humanity and, as such, constitutes a proud, irrefutable and groundbreaking chapter in U.S. diplomatic history.

``Now, more than ever, as your administration seeks to bring an end to global terrorism and to help establish democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq, the memory of the genocide underscores our responsibility to help convey our cherished tradition of respect for fundamental human rights and opposition to mass slaughters. The victims of the Armenian genocide deserve our remembrance and their rightful place in history. It is in the best interests of our Nation and the entire global community to remember the past and learn from these crimes against humanity to ensure they are never repeated."

That is really the essence of what we are trying to achieve here today in asking that the President and this Congress basically reaffirm the Armenian genocide, because we simply do not want it repeated again. We know how many times in the 20th century that genocide occurred.

House Resolution H.R. 193, and also its Senate counterpart, Senate Resolution 164, which I would like to add has 37 cosponsors right now, basically state that the purpose of the resolutions are to strengthen America's commitment to the value of the genocide convention that was implemented 15 years ago.

This convention recognizes essentially a number of the genocides that occurred in the 20th century. And as some of my colleagues mentioned earlier, not only the Armenian genocide, but that in Rwanda, Burundi, and, of course most important, the Nazi Holocaust genocide against the Jews.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about the Armenian genocide, we are simply acknowledging the fact. And we feel very strongly that if at the time the genocide occurred the world and the nations of the world had taken more notice and had tried to prevent it, I think it would have served as a lesson so that the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews and so many other atrocities that took place in the 20th century would not have occurred. If we are going to see a situation in the future, in this 21st century, where we do not repeat the mistakes of the past, we must acknowledge the Armenian genocide.