



Armenian National Committee of America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Foreign Affairs L.A.
*The Capitol Hill Observance of the Armenian
Genocide is on Wednesday April 28th from 5:30 -
8:30 pm in the Cannon Caucus Room, 345 CHOB*

To: Foreign affairs aide
From: Abraham Niziblian, Government Affairs Director
Date: April 16, 2004

Re: Background material for remarks on the Armenian Genocide

Attached please find background materials that may be useful to you as you prepare remarks commemorating April 24th, the 89th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Please consider using this opportunity to reaffirm your support for the adoption of the Genocide Resolution. As you know, the House version of this legislation, H.Res.193, was introduced in the House in April of 2003 by Representatives Radanovich, Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI). It has 111 cosponsors and was adopted unanimously by the House Judiciary Committee on May 21, 2003. The Senate version of the Genocide Resolution, S.Res.164, was introduced in June of 2003 by Senators John Ensign (R-NV) and Jon Corzine (D-NJ) and currently has 37 cosponsors.

As always, please feel free to drop me a note or to call me at (202) 775-1918 or (202) 431-3806 (cell) if I can be of any assistance.

Please know how much we appreciate your support and value the time and energy you devote to issues of special concern to Armenian Americans.

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The Congressional Genocide Resolution

The House version of the Genocide Resolution, H.Res.193, was introduced in the House in April of 2003 by Representatives Radanovich, Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI). It has 111 cosponsors and was adopted unanimously by the House Judiciary Committee on May 21, 2003. The Senate version of the Genocide Resolution, S.Res.164, was introduced in June of 2003 by Senators John Ensign (R-NV) and Jon Corzine (D-NJ) and currently has 37 cosponsors.

*** The purpose of the Genocide Resolution is to prevent future genocides**

At its heart, the goal of the Genocide Resolution is to prevent future genocides. It stresses the importance of remembering and learning the lessons of past crimes against humanity, including the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust, and the Cambodian and Rwandan genocides, in an effort to stop future atrocities. Supporters of this legislation recognize that silence in the face of genocide only encourages those who would commit such atrocities in the future.

The resolution strengthens America's commitment to the universal values of the Genocide Convention and calls on the United States to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the U.S. implementation of the Genocide Convention. The law implementing the Convention, known as the Proxmire Act, was named after the Wisconsin Senator who led a tireless 20-year campaign to attain U.S. adoption of the Genocide Convention. Senator Proxmire, noted for his unswerving commitment to human rights, delivered over 3,200 speeches during his Senate career to ensure passage of this measure.

*** Broad-based coalition supports adoption of the Genocide Resolution**

Support for the Genocide Resolution has been widespread, with a diverse coalition of over one hundred (100) ethnic, religious, civil and human rights organizations calling for its passage, including American Values, National Organization of Women, Sons of Italy, National Council of Churches, NAACP, Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and the National Council of La Raza.

*** House Judiciary Committee supports passage of the Genocide Resolution**

The report prepared by the House Judiciary Committee upon its unanimous approval of the Genocide Resolution described the Armenian Genocide in the following terms: "Beginning in 1915, the Islamic Turkish state of the Ottoman Empire sought to end the collective existence of the Christian Armenian population. From 1915 through 1918, during World War I, the Ottoman Empire subjected the Armenian people to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation. The atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923. It is estimated that one and a half million Armenians were killed out of over two million Armenians who had lived in the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that these activities ceased with the institution of the new Republic of Turkey in October, 1923."

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*** Bi-partisan Congressional letter urges passage of the Genocide Resolution**

This March, a bi-partisan group of over sixty (60) U.S. Representatives co-signed a Congressional letter to Speaker Dennis Hastert to bring the Genocide Resolution, H.Res.193, to a vote in the U.S. House. The letter, which was initiated by Genocide Resolution author Rep. George Radanovich, stressed that: “As we saw in Rwanda a decade ago, and as we witness today the signs of a possible new genocide emerging around the world - as a government and a people - we must make sure that we apply the lessons of past genocide to prevent future crimes against humanity.”

*** Pulitzer Prize Winning Author Supports adoption of the Genocide Resolution**

Samantha Power, the Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author of “A Problem from Hell” - America and the Age of Genocide, supports the Genocide Resolution. Ms. Power, who formerly served as Executive Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, has said that, “For too long American leaders and citizens have reflexively uttered the phrase “never again” without taking concrete steps to give the slogan meaning. This legislation marks the beginning of a twenty-first century campaign to get the U.S. government to commit itself politically and operationally to prevent future genocide.”

*** Capitol Hill Observance of the Armenian Genocide**

As of April 15th, over one hundred and ten (110) Senators and Representatives have agreed to co-host the Armenian Genocide Observance on Capitol Hill, which will attract several hundred Armenian Americans from around the nation who want to thank their legislators for supporting the passage of the Genocide Resolution. This remembrance will take place in the Cannon Caucus room on Wednesday, April 28th from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.

*** Members of Congress ask President to recognize the Armenian Genocide**

As of April 15th, over one hundred and fifty (150) U.S. Representatives had signed a Congressional letter urging President Bush to honor his pledge to properly recognize the Armenian Genocide in his annual April 24th remarks. This letter was initiated by House Genocide Resolution lead sponsors George Radanovich (R-CA), Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Congressional Armenian Caucus Co-Chairman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Joe Knollenberg (R-MI).

*** National Genocide Resolution postcard campaign**

Over 75,000 Armenian Americans and other friends of Armenia have participated in a national postcard campaign urging House Speaker Hastert and Senate Majority Leader to bring the Genocide Resolution to a vote in their respective houses of Congress. To view a copy of the on-line version of these postcards visit: <http://www.anca.org/anca/public/genocide-postcard-pdf.pdf>

*** Benefit concert supports passage of Genocide Resolution**

The multi-platinum selling, Grammy Award nominated band System Of A Down is playing a benefit concert in Los Angeles on April 24th for the Armenian National Committee of America and other groups supporting the Genocide Resolution. For more information about the concert visit: <http://systemofadown.com/soulsbenefit/index.htm>

Key points regarding the Armenian Genocide:

* The Armenian Genocide is fully documented in the U.S. archives and through an overwhelming body of first-hand, governmental, and diplomatic evidence. The only party denying the Armenian Genocide is the Turkish government.

* Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey in 1915, wrote that, “When the Turkish authorities gave the order for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal this fact. . . 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.”

* American Consul Leslie A. Davis [Mamouret-ul-Aziz (Harput)], in a cable to American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau [Constantinople] on June 30th, 1915, wrote: “On Saturday, June 28th, it was publicly announced that all Armenian and Syrians were to leave after five days. The full meaning of such an order can scarcely be imagined by those who are not familiar with the peculiar conditions of this isolated region. A massacre, however horrible the word may sound, would be humane in comparison with it. In a massacre many escape but a wholesale deportation of this kind in this country means a lingering and perhaps even more dreadful death for nearly every one. I do not believe it possible for one in hundred to survive, perhaps not one in thousand.”

* In a July 24, 1915 cable, American Consul Davis noted that, “I do not believe there has ever been a massacre in the history of the world so general and thorough as that which is now being perpetrated in this region or that a more fiendish, diabolical scheme has ever been conceived by the mind of man. What the order is officially and nominally to exile the Armenians from these Vilayets may mislead the outside world for a time, but the measure is nothing but a massacre of the most atrocious nature. It would be that even if all the people had been allowed to perish on the road. As the greater part of them, however, have been actually murdered and as there is no doubt that this was done by order of the Government, there can be no pretense that the measure is anything else but a general massacre.”

* Israel Charney, the noted genocide and Holocaust scholar and the editor of the respected Encyclopedia of Genocide, has written extensively about the psychology of genocide denial. He has stressed that to deny the countless deaths of a known event of genocide is to celebrate the deaths and to intimate that the doctrine of power that brought about the destruction is still in force to be used when opportunity permits. To seek to erase agonizing memories is to mock the sensibilities of the victims and their descendents - to once again victimize the victims.

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* The 1986 and 1988 debates on the ratification and implementation, respectively, of the Genocide Convention focused extensively on the affirmation of the Armenian Genocide. The Congressional Record, in particular, documents the fact that Senator Proxmire, the prime force behind U.S. participation in the Genocide Convention, spoke repeatedly and passionately about the Armenian Genocide during his many years in the Senate. (The relevant portions of this debate can be provided on request.)

* The Turkish government claims that the Armenian Genocide does not meet the definition of genocide, despite the fact that father of the Genocide Convention, human rights pioneer Rafael Lemkin, specifically cited the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide as the two clear instances of genocidal crimes covered by the Convention.

* One-hundred-and-twenty-six Holocaust scholars, among them Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, Yehuda Bauer, Israel Charny, Irving L. Horowitz, Steven Katz, issued a statement on March 7, 2000 stating that the "Armenian Genocide is incontestable historical fact and accordingly urge the governments of the Western democracies to likewise recognize as such."

* The renowned International Genocide Scholars Association, the pre-eminent authority on genocides, in its June 1997 convention passed a unanimous resolution reaffirming "the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey in 1915" as "a case of genocide which conforms to the statutes of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide."

* In a 1999 statement, 150 scholars, writers and journalists urged Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Among signatories to the statement were Deborah E. Lipstadt, David Goldhagen, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Arthur Miller, Joyce Carol Oates, Grace Paley, Harold Pinter, Susan Sontag, Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, William Styron, D. M. Thomas, Kurt Vonnegut, and Derek Walcott.
