

It is time for us to take that simple step to reduce unnecessary gun violence. It is time for the Federal Government to step forward and stop purchasing firearms for our use that do not have smart gun technology that ensures that that gun that we give to a law enforcement officer cannot be used against him or her, to personalize the weapon. Similarly, we would not think of having an automobile that did not have a key that personalized its use, so we should do the same with firearms.

There are other important areas that we have tried to bring before people in this Chamber. Law enforcement wants us to help them tackle the all-too-frequent problems of firearm violence. Fifteen States have child access protection laws which make it harder for children to gain access to guns.

We have had the tragic example of Jonesboro, Arkansas where the children's first stop was at a home that used safe storage of the weapons. There, even using a blowtorch, they were unable to get access to weapons. They went to the next home, and there the weapons were open and accessible. The rest is tragic history.

The horror that we witnessed yesterday in Colorado is part of a larger pattern. How many more examples are we going to have to witness before we come to our senses on the floor of this Chamber and take simple steps?

There is no one single solution to solve the epidemic of gun violence, but we have the responsibility to undertake these simple, common sense steps. I pray the Republican leadership will allow us to vote on some of them in the course of this session.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

#### 84TH COMMEMORATION OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, today I come to the floor to again commemorate the anniversary of one of the darkest stains on the history of modern civilization, the genocide of the Armenian people by the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

I greatly appreciate the strong support of so many of our colleagues in this effort, especially the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), my fellow cochairman of the Armenian Issues Caucus. I commend him for arranging this special order and for his

continued dedication to these vitally important issues.

I would also like to recognize the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) for introducing a resolution calling for a collection of all U.S. records relating to the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I wish, as every Member does, that this special order did not have to take place. We would like to believe that such a tragedy could never have happened in the modern world because it is painful to accept that man is capable of committing and tolerating such atrocities.

Unfortunately, we have seen over and over the tragic results of hatred and ignorance: the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide, and today the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Far too often the so-called civilized nations of the world have turned a blind eye.

I cannot stand here at this moment and talk about genocide without mentioning a genocide which is happening right now before our eyes. Today the United States is not sitting by and simply watching this happen, unlike its reaction to the Armenian genocide 84 years ago. The United States is embarking on a new phase of foreign policy.

This is perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the first time in all of human history that the greatest power in the world is not using its power with the aim of advancing itself and its own interests, but with the intent of protecting and defending a group of oppressed people. The American people can be proud that we are finally using every effort to stop the ethnic cleansing of innocent people. These efforts were not made in the past, resulting in the genocides of the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Armenia. They are, thank God, being made today.

Today, I come to the House floor to commemorate a very specific genocide which began on April 24, 1915. On that date, over 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested in Istanbul and killed, marking the beginning of an 8-year campaign which resulted in the destruction of the ethnic Armenian community which had previously lived in Anatolia and Western Armenia. Between 1915 and 1923, approximately 1.5 million Armenians were killed and more than 500,000 were exiled.

The U.S. Government was aware of what was happening during these tragic years. U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. sent back graphic descriptions of death marches and mass killings, as did other Western diplomats. Although the U.S. and others voiced concerns about the atrocities and sent humanitarian assistance, little was actually done to stop the massacres.

The Armenian genocide was the first genocide of the modern age and has been recognized as a precursor of subsequent attempts to destroy a race through an official systematic effort.

We must call this what it was, genocide, and we must never forget that it happened. Congress has consistently demanded recognition of the historic fact of the Armenian genocide.

The modern German government, although not itself responsible for the horrors of the Holocaust, has taken responsibility for and apologized for it. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Turkish government continues to deny that the Armenian genocide even happened. This, unfortunately, is consistent with the Turkish government's position that it, today, has no problem concerning the rights of its Kurdish population.

Armenia and Armenians will remain vigilant to ensure that this tragic history is not repeated. The United States should do all that it can in this regard as well, including a clear message about the historic fact of the Armenian genocide. We do Turkey no favors by enabling her self-delusion, and we make ourselves hypocrites when we fail to sound the alarm on what is happening in Turkey today.

Armenia, Mr. Speaker, has made amazing progress in rebuilding a society and a nation, a triumph of the human spirit in the face of dramatic obstacles. Armenia is committed to democracy, market economics and the rule of law. We must continue to take a strong stand in Congress in support of these principles and respect for human rights, and I am proud to stand with Armenia in so doing.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I join many of my colleagues today in remembering and acknowledging the atrocities endured by the people of Armenia earlier this century.

Eighty-four years ago, on the night of April 24, 1915, the Turkish government placed hundreds of the most prominent public figures in the Armenian community under arrest. They were apprehended and sent to prison. In the end, most of these cultural leaders and scholars were executed. The most disturbing part is that these deaths were only the beginning as an attempted extinction of an entire civilization was to shortly follow. For this reason, April 24 is commemorated as the date of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide.

The atrocities committed against the Armenian people during this time can be categorized as a genocide because such an organized killing of a people would require the central planning and resources only a government is capable of implementing. The Armenian Genocide was centrally planned and administered by the Ottoman Empire against the entire Armenian population under its rule. It was carried out during World War I between the years 1915 and 1918. The Armenian people were subjected to deportation, torture, massacre, and starvation. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were forcibly moved from Armenia and sent to the desert to die of thirst and starvation. Others were methodically massacred throughout the region.

Most estimates illustrate that one and a half million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923. There were an estimated two million Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I, and more than one million Armenians were deported in 1915. Hundreds of thousands more were either killed or died of hunger or exhaustion.