Recognizing the Armenian Genocide:  
The Congressional Foreign Affairs Dilemma  
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I. Abstract

Congressional efforts to pass legislation recognizing the Armenian Genocide as genocide gained great support during the 110th Congress. Ultimately, a textbook campaign of Executive lobbying by the Bush Administration would derail the progress of the act. The study of this effort presents an illustration of the dilemma faced by Congressmen in the field of foreign affairs, as they are forced concurrently to represent the interest of a home district and the national good, which frequently diverge. The President, charged with representing only the national good, emerges as the authoritative voice on foreign policy.
II. The Armenian Genocide

Armenians had lived as a minority population in the Ottoman Empire for the entire history of the Empire. As Christians in an Islamic nation, they were treated as “dhimmi,” effectively second-class citizens with limited rights (Akcam, 2006, p. 24). In the nineteenth century as other minorities, such as the Greeks, who were subjected to the same treatment as the Armenians broke away from the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians would stay part of the Empire, earning the title of “loyal millet”1 (Dadrian, 1995, p. 192). Despite this title, as the Ottoman Empire began to decline in prosperity, the Armenians became a scapegoat for the Empire’s problems, and were subjected to periodic pogroms (“Historic Armenia,” 2008).

The situation would only worsen for Armenians with the start of World War One, publically blamed by the Minister of War for the catastrophic Turkish loss at the Battle Sarikamis, public sentiment against the Armenians was at an all-time high (Balakian, 2003 p. 40). The government would begin a propaganda campaign describing Armenians living in the Empire as a security threat (Dadrian, 1995, p. 223), and on the same day as the Gallipoli landings (April 24, 1915), approximately 250 Armenian intellectual, cultural and community leaders would be arrested (Balakian, p. 211). This event would mark the start of the Ottoman government’s policy of pursuing the systematic destruction of its Armenian population.

On May 29th, 1915, the Temporary Law of Deportation would be passed, giving authority to the Ottoman government to deport anyone that was sensed to present a threat to national security and seize their property without compensation (Balakian, 2003, p. 186). The military interpreted this law to apply to all Armenians and began a systematic program of deportation, marching man, woman and child to a number of concentration camps located near the modern-day Turkish borders with Iraq and Syria. No food, water, or shelter was provided on the long marches to these camps, and many Armenians died as a result on the marches. When the camps were reached, basic necessities were still lacking, and more would die in the camps from starvation, sickness and exposure. The killings, however, were not limited to indirect methods, as mass executions were also carried out by various methods (“The Armenian Genocide”, 2008.)

While the Ottoman government faced protest from a number of nations abroad, including members of both of the major warring factions at the time and the United States, genocidal policies would continue until at least 1918. Estimates vary as to how many Armenians would die in what Theodore Roosevelt would call “the greatest crime of the war.” The modern-day Turkish government, which refuses to characterize the events as genocide, states that three-hundred thousand Armenians would die in these events, while the current Armenian figure is one and a half million deaths. Most scholars place the number of deaths between one and one and a half million (“Armenian Massacres”).

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1 A millet in the Ottoman Empire was the term for an autonomous religious group, answerable to the government.
III. Recognizing the Armenian Genocide

While modern scholars generally agree that the events that compose what is popularly known as the Armenian Genocide were indeed an act of genocide\(^2\), the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey, consistently refuses to classify events as “genocide” (“Turkey Recalls Envoys”, 2006). The Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C., maintains a fact-sheet on its website entitled “Armenian Allegations” that reflects the stance of the Turkish government. In this fact sheet, the Turkish government steadfastly denies that the events called the Armenian Genocide were, in fact, genocide. Beginning by describing the tolerant treatment received by Armenians from the Ottoman government, the Fact Sheet then continues to question the sources named as proving genocide, and finally argues that the events which, unfortunately, led to Armenian deaths do not constitute genocide (“Armenian Allegations”, 2004).

Currently twenty-two nations have passed measures officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Canada and France, who recognized the genocide in 2001 and 2004, respectively, both experienced negative turns in their relations with Turkey after passing such measures, as the Turkish ambassadors to both nations were recalled, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry “for a short time for consultations over the latest developments about the baseless allegations of Armenian genocide” (“Turkey Recalls Envoys”, 2006). While recalling an ambassador for consultations is an official sign of displeasure that has few immediate, practical repercussions, the Turkish government did not stop at this measure. After passage of the recognition by the French, Turkey cancelled “millions of dollars” worth of defense contracts with French firms, and both French and Canadian firms were excluded from bidding on Turkish government projects after their respective measures passed (“Turkey Recalls Envoys”).

In addition to these nations, the European Parliament has recognized the Armenian Genocide and has suggested that the Turkish government reconsider its stance on the status of the Armenian Genocide prior to admission to the European Union ("European Parliament: EU Relations," 2002). The United Nations Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations intended to prevent and prosecute in the future and the United Nations War Crimes Commission, would state that the Armenian Genocide was “precisely…one of the types of acts which the modern term ‘crimes against humanity’ is intended to cover” (Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution, 2007). Recognition of the genocide is not limited to nation-states, and transnational organizations, as forty states of the United States of America\(^3\) have also

\(^2\) The most common definition of “genocide” is found in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Article II of the Convention defines genocide as the following: “Article 2 of this defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

\(^3\) The ten that have not are: Alabama, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Texas, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wyoming.
passed measures recognizing the Armenian Genocide (Genocide Recognition by U.S., 2004).

IV. Congressional History of the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide

The American Congress, particularly the House of Representatives, has a significant legislative history related to the Armenian Genocide. The first significant act passed by the Congress was House Joint Resolution 148, on April 8, 1975. This Act designated April 24, 1975, the “National Day of Remembrance of Man’s Inhumanity to Man”, and authorized the President to issue a proclamation “remembering all victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry”. House Joint Resolution 247, passed on September 10, 1984, would again designate April 24, as “National Day of Remembrance of Man’s Inhumanity to Man” and issue an authorization to the President similar to the one in House Joint Resolution 148(Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution, 2007). More recently, and more consequentially, on June 5, 1996, the Foreign Operations Export Financing Act of 1997 was amended to reduce aid to Turkey until the Turkish Government would acknowledge the Armenia Genocide (Simon, 2000).

These resolutions passed by Congress certainly express a sense of disapproval towards Turkey by the United States Congress, but the measure to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide as “genocide” has never been taken by Congress; an important distinction in the eyes of the Turkish government. The President, who issues an annual message commemorating the Armenian Genocide, is careful to not refer to the events as “genocide.” In his most recent message, issued on April 24, 2007, President Bush would refer to the event as “one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century”, and state that “as many as 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives in the final years of the Ottoman Empire, many of them victims of mass killings and forced exile”, but he would never use the word “genocide” ("Presidential Message: Honoring," 2007).

Serious efforts have been made, however, to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide as genocide. In the 106th Congress, Rep. James Rogan (R-CA) would lobby Republican leadership hard to bring to the floor H. Res. 155, a resolution that would have requested the President refer to the Armenian Genocide as genocide in his annual address (Calling Upon the President, 1999). Rogan, representing the 27th District in California, had a large number of Armenians in his district (estimated at 75,000 or 8% of voters), frequently introduced measures relating to Armenian interests and passing this resolution would win large support in the Armenian community for his upcoming reelection ("U.S. House Shelves," 2000). As the race became more contested, Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) would bow to Rogan’s lobbying and promise to allow measure to come to the floor for a vote, a move widely seen by both Democrats and Republicans as an attempt to boost Rogan’s campaign (Simon, 2000).

As soon as this promise was made, President Clinton, during a meeting with the Turkish president, voiced his opposition to the bill, and began to lobby against the bill. Walter B. Slocombe, Undersecretary of Defense, wrote a letter to Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, stating that

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4 April 24th is the commonly used date for commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, for, as detailed in Section I, this was the day on which the genocide began with the deportation of the 250 Armenian elite in 1915.
passage of H. Res. 155 would have a negative affect on American security interests.” The Turkish government itself would issue a statement stating that passage of this bill would be viewed as an “unfriendly act” (Simon, 2000). Hastert, after receiving phone calls and letters from Clinton, which detailed the far reaching national-security issues related to the passage H. Res. 155\(^5\), decided not to bring the bill to a vote (“U.S. House Shelves”, 2000).

In justification, Hastert would state, "I believe the Armenian people suffered a historic tragedy, and that this resolution was a fitting condemnation of those events. But the president of the United States, the commander and chief of our Armed Forces, has asked us not to bring this resolution to the House floor.” A disappointed Rogan would vow to reintroduce the legislation when national security interests were not at stake (“U.S. House Shelves”, 2000). Unfortunately for Congressman Rogan, he would not have the chance to reintroduce the legislation, as he would lose his reelection bid, to State Senator Adam Schiff by a margin of 52.8% to 43.8%. In this election, which turned out to be the most expensive in House history, Schiff solidly won the Armenian vote (Rainey & Winton, 2000), and Rogan’s inability to pass this bill after coming so close is considered a major reasons why Schiff triumphed (Kessler, 2007).

V. 110th Congress’ Actions

Efforts on the part of the United States Congress to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide appeared to be at a standstill in the post 9/11 Republican controlled Congress, as Speaker Hastert continued to be set against any such measure. With the coming of the 110th Congress, and its Democratic majority, recognition efforts seemed to have new life. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the inheritor of Rogan’s heavily Armenian district, would introduce H. Res. 106, entitled “Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.” (Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution, 2007).

Schiff issued a press release detailing his reasoning behind sponsoring the bill and the effects of the bill. It stated in part:

“The United States has a compelling historical and moral reason to recognize the Armenian Genocide, which cost a million and a half people their lives,” said Rep. Schiff. "But we also have a powerful contemporary reason as well -- how can we take effective action against the genocide in Darfur if we lack the will to condemn genocide whenever and wherever it occurs? With the new leadership in Congress, I am hopeful we can finally get this resolution passed. “The Affirmation of the U.S. Record on the Armenian Genocide” resolution has bipartisan support from over 150 Members of the House of Representatives. It calls on the President to “ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding” of the “Armenian Genocide” and to “accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide.” (Schiff, 2007).

H. Res. 106 proved to be a popular bill in the House, quickly attracting over 200 co-sponsors, from both parties. Most of the co-sponsors signed on in support for moral reasons. In remarks made on the House Floor on April 23, 2007, Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY) would state, “If we are to change the future, we must recognize the past.” Rep.

\(^5\) Threats related to the passage of this bill made by the Turkish government included the revocation the right to use Turkish airbases to enforce no-fly zones in Iraq, the cancellation of a contract with Bell-Textron helicopters, and the opening of an oil pipeline to Iraq.
Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) would similarly state on July 24, 2007 “It is morally imperative that we remember this atrocity and collectively demand reaffirmation of this crime against humanity. We must stand up and recognize the tragic events that began in 1915 for what they were, the systematic elimination of the people. By recognizing these actions as genocide, we can renew our commitment to prevent such atrocities from ever occurring again.”

As had occurred in 2000, the Executive Branch unleashed a concerted lobbying effort against the bill. As part of this effort, Secretary of Defense Gates and Secretary of State Rice would write identical letters to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH), and Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the committee to which the bill was referred, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA). The letters, sent on March 7, 2007, stated that passage of H. Res. 106 would put the security of the United States at risk. In testimony before the Europe Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 15, 2007, Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs would hammer the message of this letter home to the members of the subcommittee, that passage of this resolution would have serious ramifications for American military operations in the area, particularly in Iraq. Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL), chair of the subcommittee would state in this testimony that whether or not one supported the Iraq one of the worst things that could happen for our troops was a major disruption in supplies, and that chilling relations with Turkey, such as those that could be caused by passage of this bill, would almost certainly cause disruptions.

Not constraining its efforts to current administration officials, the Bush Administration would gather all eight living former Secretaries of State together to sign a letter to Congress asking for the bill not to be passed as it posed a national security problem. President Bush himself would appeal to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee not to pass the bill stating “Its passage would do great harm to our relations with a key ally in NATO and in the global war on terror” ("House Panel OKs Armenian," 2007). Despite the administration’s efforts, Pelosi, who has a significant Armenian population in her own district and is highly rated by the Armenian National Committee, vowed to bring the bill to a floor vote and asked Lantos to schedule a vote in committee.

Lantos, a Holocaust survivor and fervent supporter of such measures in the past, would seem to have been highly supportive of this bill. Yet, he would vote against the measure, which passed committee on October 10, 2007 by a 27-21 vote. He stated that considerations of “solidarity with the Armenian people” must be considered against the additional risk American servicemen would be placed in by the passage of this bill ("House Panel OKs Armenian," 2007). After this vote, however support for the passage of the bill would quickly drop in the Whole House, as it became apparent that the lobbying efforts of the administration were more effective in the body as a whole than in the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Rep. Doug Lamborn (R-CO), along with 10 others would drop his co-sponsorship within a week of committee passage. Sympathizing with the national security arguments

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6 This is primarily due to the fact that almost a quarter of fuel used by American forces in Iraq comes through Turkey and an airbase in Turkey is used as a hub for almost three-fourths of air traffic into Iraq.
presented by the Executive, he stated, “Nothing changes the fact that mass killings and unspeakable acts of brutality occurred. However, passing this nonbinding resolution at this critical time would be a destabilizing action when the United States needs the help of its allies, including Turkey, in fighting the global war on terror.” (Hulse, 2007). Rep. Lincoln Davis (D-TN), another member who withdrew support from the bill stated, “Had I known when I signed the resolution that it would develop into this huge of an issue, I would have refrained from signing.” (Simon, 2007).

Faced with a declining number of co-sponsors (down to 215 from a high of 232), and lacking support from a number of the remaining cosponsors, such as Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) who stated that he would not vote for the bill if it came to the floor, the resolution’s chief supporters faced a difficult decision regarding whether or not to proceed with the vote. Stating "We want to make sure that when the measure is brought to the floor we're confident the votes are there, I think the worse thing would be that you take it up and you're not successful, and Turkey argues that it's a denial of the genocide." Schiff, along with three other key sponsors, would on October 25, 2007, ask Pelosi to indefinitely delay the vote until passage could be assured ("House Sponsors of Armenian," 2007). At this time, the bill is still awaiting floor action.

VI. The Failure of H. Res. 106

The failure of this once popular measure can be directly attributed to successful lobbying efforts of the Bush Administration. By putting together a well-focused campaign, from a number of different officials, the executive was able to convince the legislature to follow the lead of the executive. Prior to the lobbying campaign embarked upon by the Administration it seems clear that many Congressmen were unaware of the potential repercussions passage would have for American foreign policy. The remarks by Rep. Davis that are quoted above are clear proof of this fact. In addition to enlightening Congress about the serious repercussions of this act, it seems that the Administration was able to genuinely convince certain members of Congress that “playing nice” with a valuable ally was much more important than making a political statement about a touchy subject: Rep. Lamborn’s comments are testimony to this theory.

While the Bush Administration has often been noted for using partisan tactics, its ability to form a bi-partisan coalition against this bill undoubtedly lent extra credibility to its point of view. Having every living former Secretary of State, regardless of party affiliation sign a letter against a piece of legislation dealing with foreign affairs is an impressive statement against the advisability of passing said legislation. Convincing Rep. Lantos, who as a Holocaust survivor had perhaps more justification than anyone in the Congress to condemn genocide, to come out against passage of the legislation also grants credence to the administration’s point of view.

The efforts by the Bush Administration to defeat the passage of H. Res. 106 can be viewed as a textbook example of how the Executive Branch can successfully lobby Congress to follow its lead on foreign policy issues. First, develop a broad, bi-partisan coalition of experts to gain authority on the issue. Second, ensure that all Members of Congress are fully aware of the foreign policy implications of their actions. Finally, use your authority and the Representative’s new awareness of the issue to convince them to value national-security issues over whatever other issue is at stake in that particular instance.
VII. The Congressional Foreign Affairs Dilemma

This case study presents an interesting illustration of the dilemma that Members of Congress must face when deciding matters related to foreign affairs. A Congressman is forced to balance his actions between representing the district from which he is elected and representing the nation in whose Congress he serves. Sometimes these interests are one and the same, enabling the Congressman to simultaneously represent both constituencies, but these interests are often not in line. In this case, seemingly all the “experts” on national security, Secretaries of State, Defense, members of the military, stated that the passage of H. Res. 106 was unequivocally harmful for the foreign relations and national security of the United States. Such broad, bi-partisan statements are hard to come by and would appear to represent the definitive correct answer on this issue.

Yet at this moment, there are still 211 co-sponsors of this bill, and while not all of them would vote in favor of the measure if called for a vote, that is nonetheless a significant amount of support for a “wrong” answer. Why then would so many Members be willing to be wrong? The answer is because only one constituency they represent elects them, and that constituency is the local one, and when given a choice, it seems a hard sell to convince a Congressman to choose the nation over his district. In this particular instance, Rep. Schiff knew that he won his office in no small part because his predecessor failed to pass a piece of legislation similar to H. Res. 106, and that failure to support this measure would lead to a withdrawal of Armenian support and a possible electoral loss. Other Members almost certainly faced similar pressure in their own districts, as the Armenian lobby is well organized and spent $3.6 million dollars on lobbying efforts in 2006 alone (Kessler, 2007).

The logical choice for a Congressman desiring reelection is to do what best benefits or represents his home district, regardless of whether or not it is in the best interest of the nation as a whole. It is perhaps for this reason that the President has emerged as the dominant player in foreign affairs. The President is the only member of the government bound only to a national constituency and he must look out for the welfare of the entire nation. Therefore, it is with this perspective of national, instead of regional, benefit that he pursues foreign policy. When the President is able speak authoritatively on foreign policy, as President Bush did in this case, his viewpoint should be a better indicator of what is in the best interest of the American public as a whole in matters of foreign policy.
Appendix A: H. Res. 106

110th CONGRESS
1st Session
H. RES. 106

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 30, 2007
Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. SHERMAN, and Mr. MCCOTTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the 'Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution'.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The House of Representatives finds the following:

(1) The Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, 500,000 survivors were expelled from their homes, and which succeeded in the elimination of the over 2,500-year presence of Armenians in their historic homeland.

(2) On May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers, England, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging for the first time ever another government of committing 'a crime against humanity'.

(3) This joint statement stated 'the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres'.

(4) The post-World War I Turkish Government indicted the top leaders involved in the 'organization and execution' of the Armenian Genocide and in the 'massacre and destruction of the Armenians'.

(5) In a series of courts-martial, officials of the Young Turk Regime were tried and convicted, as charged, for organizing and executing massacres against the Armenian people.
(6) The chief organizers of the Armenian Genocide, Minister of War Enver, Minister of the Interior Talaat, and Minister of the Navy Jemal were all condemned to death for their crimes, however, the verdicts of the courts were not enforced.

(7) The Armenian Genocide and these domestic judicial failures are documented with overwhelming evidence in the national archives of Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, the United States, the Vatican and many other countries, and this vast body of evidence attests to the same facts, the same events, and the same consequences.

(8) The United States National Archives and Record Administration holds extensive and thorough documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially in its holdings under Record Group 59 of the United States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40, which are open and widely available to the public and interested institutions.

(9) The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of many countries, among them the allies of the Ottoman Empire, against the Armenian Genocide.

(10) Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described to the United States Department of State the policy of the Government of the Ottoman Empire as 'a campaign of race extermination,' and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the 'Department approves your procedure . . . to stop Armenian persecution'.

(11) Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 of February 9, 1916, resolved that 'the President of the United States be respectfully asked to designate a day on which the citizens of this country may give expression to their sympathy by contributing funds now being raised for the relief of the Armenians', who at the time were enduring 'starvation, disease, and untold suffering'.

(12) President Woodrow Wilson concurred and also encouraged the formation of the organization known as Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress, which contributed some $116,000,000 from 1915 to 1930 to aid Armenian Genocide survivors, including 132,000 orphans who became foster children of the American people.

(13) Senate Resolution 359, dated May 11, 1920, stated in part, 'the testimony adduced at the hearings conducted by the sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations have clearly established the truth of the reported massacres and other atrocities from which the Armenian people have suffered'.

(14) The resolution followed the April 13, 1920, report to the Senate of the American Military Mission to Armenia led by General James Harbord, that stated '[m]utilation, violation, torture, and death have left their haunting memories in a hundred beautiful Armenian valleys, and the traveler in that region is seldom free from the evidence of this most colossal crime of all the ages'.

(15) As displayed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Adolf Hitler, on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by saying '[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?' and thus set the stage for the Holocaust.

(16) Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term 'genocide' in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century.
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(17) The first resolution on genocide adopted by the United Nations at Lemkin's urging, the December 11, 1946, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 96(1) and the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide itself recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations intended to prevent and punish by codifying existing standards.

(18) In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Commission invoked the Armenian Genocide `precisely . . . one of the types of acts which the modern term `crimes against humanity' is intended to cover' as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals.

(19) The Commission stated that `[t]he provisions of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sevres were obviously intended to cover, in conformity with the Allied note of 1915 . . ., offenses which had been committed on Turkish territory against persons of Turkish citizenship, though of Armenian or Greek race. This article constitutes therefore a precedent for Article 6c and 5c of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters, and offers an example of one of the categories of `crimes against humanity' as understood by these enactments'.

(20) House Joint Resolution 148, adopted on April 8, 1975, resolved: `[t]hat April 24, 1975, is hereby designated as `National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man', and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry . . .'.

(21) President Ronald Reagan in proclamation number 4838, dated April 22, 1981, stated in part `like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians, which followed it--and like too many other persecutions of too many other people--the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten'.

(22) House Joint Resolution 247, adopted on September 10, 1984, resolved: `[t]hat April 24, 1985, is hereby designated as `National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man', and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially the one and one-half million people of Armenian ancestry . . .'.

(23) In August 1985, after extensive study and deliberation, the United Nations SubCommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities voted 14 to 1 to accept a report entitled `Study of the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,' which stated `[t]he Nazi aberration has unfortunately not been the only case of genocide in the 20th century. Among other examples which can be cited as qualifying are . . . the Ottoman massacre of Armenians in 1915-1916'.

(24) This report also explained that `[a]t least 1,000,000, and possibly well over half of the Armenian population, are reliably estimated to have been killed or death marched by independent authorities and eye-witnesses. This is corroborated by reports in United States, German and British archives and of contemporary diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, including those of its ally Germany.'.

(25) The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, an independent Federal agency, unanimously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include the Armenian Genocide in the Museum and has since done so.

(26) Reviewing an aberrant 1982 expression (later retracted) by the United States Department of State asserting that the facts of the Armenian Genocide may be
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ambiguous, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in 1993, after a review of documents pertaining to the policy record of the United States, noted that the assertion on ambiguity in the United States record about the Armenian Genocide 'contradicted longstanding United States policy and was eventually retracted'.

(27) On June 5, 1996, the House of Representatives adopted an amendment to House Bill 3540 (the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997) to reduce aid to Turkey by $3,000,000 (an estimate of its payment of lobbying fees in the United States) until the Turkish Government acknowledged the Armenian Genocide and took steps to honor the memory of its victims.

(28) President William Jefferson Clinton, on April 24, 1998, stated: `This year, as in the past, we join with Armenian-Americans throughout the nation in commemorating one of the saddest chapters in the history of this century, the deportations and massacres of a million and a half Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the years 1915-1923.'.

(29) President George W. Bush, on April 24, 2004, stated: `On this day, we pause in remembrance of one of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th century, the annihilation of as many as 1,500,000 Armenians through forced exile and murder at the end of the Ottoman Empire.'.

(30) Despite the international recognition and affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, the failure of the domestic and international authorities to punish those responsible for the Armenian Genocide is a reason why similar genocides have recurred and may recur in the future, and that a just resolution will help prevent future genocides.

SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

The House of Representatives--

(1) calls upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of the failure to realize a just resolution; and

(2) calls upon the President in the President's annual message commemorating the Armenian Genocide issued on or about April 24, to accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians as genocide and to recall the proud history of United States intervention in opposition to the Armenian Genocide.
References


Calling upon the President to provide in a collection all United States records related to the Armenian genocide and the consequences of the failure to enforce the judgments of the Turkish courts against the responsible officials, and to deliver the collection to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, the library of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and to the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia, , H.R. H. Res. 155, 106th Cong. (1999), http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d106:4:./temp/~bddTSz:::


Rainey, J., & Winton, R. (2000, November 9). Schiff Savors Victory but Faces Yet Another Challenge; Influential state senator prepares to move to rookie post with the minority party in Congress. Rogan, meanwhile, remains a hero to many Republicans despite sound defeat. Los Angeles Times, p. A.42.


U.S.-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead, 110th Cong. (2007), 7 CIS H 38130 (LexisNexis Congressional).