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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

EDWARD G. SANDERS, STAFF DIRECTOR
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February 8, 1984

Dear Colleague:

An appalling, recurrent tragedy has unfolded throughout the world in the more than three generations since the beginning of this century. Ruling groups have on several occasions attempted to liquidate entire cultures or social groups through systematic terror and murder, and in most cases they have come terrifyingly close to achieving their goals. Russians in the 1930's, Cambodians during the last decade, and, perhaps most indelibly ingrained on our consciousness, Jews during World War II fell prey to such campaigns, and were wiped out by the millions. No one who has managed to survive the unspeakable calamity of genocide will ever lose the emotional scars inflicted by their experience. And images of family and friends who did not survive will always be bright in their memories.

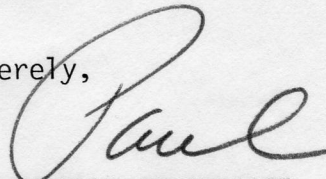
What has become known as the first genocide of the twentieth century cost the lives of more than one million Armenians in Turkey from 1915 to 1923. Armenian-Americans still alive today were among the 500,000 others who lived through this mass murder and escaped or were deported. They have never had the opportunity to return to and live in their ancestral homeland.

Yet today there are those who deny that the Armenian genocide ever took place. Ignoring extensive historical evidence that proves the extent of the mass murders, they would deceive the world with a cruel hoax. For survivors in the United States and around the world, their outrageous denial of the Armenian genocide represents not simply a contempt for historically demonstrated fact, but a personal affront that flatly mocks the most catastrophic event of their lives.

Each year on April 24, Armenians around the world recall and mourn the genocide of their forbears. April 24, 1984 will mark the sixty-eighth anniversary of this tragedy. During the first session of the 98th Congress, I introduced Senate Joint Resolution 87, designating April 24, 1984 as a day of remembrance for all victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry who died between 1915 and 1923. The resolution also requests the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the American people to observe and reflect upon this tragic event. Arising out of respect for those who died and those who survived, and out of the firm belief that we must take to heart the lessons of history, such reflection seems both beneficial and wise.

If you would like to cosponsor S.J. Res. 87, kindly contact Don Gordon of my staff at extension 4-8512.

Sincerely,



Paul E. Tsongas, U.S.S.