

From the  
"Armenian Mirror-  
Spectator",  
Feb. 1, 1986, page 2

## Congressman Aspin Urges Fight Against Turkish Distortion Of History

*Following is a letter by Congressman Les Aspin (D-Wisconsin), dated January 14, 1986 and addressed to the chairman of the Armenian Rights Council of America (ARCA). ED.*

Dear sir:

We have had a hectic few months in Washington trying to get a bill through the House of Representatives to mark next April 24 as National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man.

The Turkish government has pulled out all the stops to try to prevent enactment of this legislation. The Turkish Embassy in Washington has been inviting so many people from Capitol Hill for conferences and lunches that there's often a traffic crunch in front of the building. The Turkish government in Ankara has been making frequent public threats against our bases in Turkey.

The pressure meant that some in the House leadership were reluctant even to schedule the bill. There's about a dozen of us in the House with a reputation for working hard on Armenian issues. We tried to keep up counter-pressures. Finally, we got the leadership to schedule the bill for consideration on December 12.

It was quite a debate. It came right in between the dramatic vote defeating tax reform and the dramatic vote requiring a balanced budget in 1991. With three contentious issues on that day, the debate often got heated.

The infuriating part of the debate was the effort of some members to muddle or rewrite history. I was appalled by the fact that several members actually tried first to keep the bill from coming up. They lost that effort on a 263-156 vote, which shows the strength of support we have. Next, they tried some parliamentary

maneuvers designed to convert the bill into a toothless statement. Their aim is to replace the bill that cites the Ottoman Empire as the cause of the Armenian genocide into a resolution that opposes genocide without ever mentioning Armenians or the Ottoman Empire. Before we ran out of time, an amendment to delete any reference to Turkey was defeated. We didn't have time to vote on the next proposal, which was to delete all reference to Armenians.

Congress finished for the year a few days later. The earliest we can take up this bill again is late in February.

In the coming weeks I will be sitting down with leaders of the Armenian community and with other congressional backers of this legislation to determine the best route to take up this bill. We want to try to build on that to win some real victories — not just symbolic ones — for the Armenian community.

Personally, I consider the most important goal to alert the American public to the Turkish attempt to rewrite history and to prevent Turkey from getting away with that crime. The debate itself helped to educate many members of Congress who were not fully aware of the issue.

I am also enclosing for you a copy of a letter that ten leaders of the Armenian cause in Congress sent to all members of Congress refuting some of the charges that have been leveled at the Armenian genocide resolution.

The fight goes on. I don't know where it will lead us in the new year, but I will be there making every effort to ensure that this nation never forgets the terrible massacres of Armenians.

Sincerely,

Les Aspin  
Member of Congress

From the  
"Armenian Reporter",  
Jan. 23, 1986,  
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## Turks Launch New Campaign to Deny Armenian Claims

NEW YORK, N.Y. - The Academy of History of Ankara University has embarked on a new drive to develop a series of publications to undermine Armenian claims that a million and a half Armenians were massacred by Ottoman Turkish leaders, according to published reports.

The campaign has been billed as a "campaign of documentaries" and aims at either denying or undermining efforts undertaken by Armenians throughout the world at smearing the image of present-day Turkey by associating that country with the Ottoman Empire in which these tragic events occurred.

Two separate groups of Tur-

kish scholars and historians have been commissioned by the Academy of History to conduct research and undertake a thorough study of the events of World War I and come up with a series of publications which will "set the record straight." These two groups will also spend time on the study of the Turkish minorities presently living in Bulgaria in light of the Bulgarian authorities' obvious campaign to "Bulgarize" these ethnic Turks by forcing them to change their Turkish names to Bulgarian sounding names.

The Academy has set a goal of 20 publications, which will be translated into various languages and will be distributed

among some 375 public libraries throughout world in addition to being sent to world leaders, scholars and historians. The Academy feels that through the worldwide distribution of such documentaries, historical facts will be set straight and presumably Armenian charges directed at Turks will be refuted.

One report from Ankara indicated that President Kenan Evren is personally following the progress of the undertaking and has already come up with appreciative remarks about the work of these scholars and historians engaged in this work, which will uplift the Turkish image in the community of world nations.

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## Armenian Genocide Commemoration Is Important

The following "Dear Colleague" letter was sent to all members of the U.S. House of Representatives and was signed by Congressmen Robert K. Dornan, Frank Annunzio, Nick Mavroules, Bob Edgar, Tony Coelho, Les Aspin, Carlos Moorehead, James Howard, William Ford, and Charles Pashayan, Jr. ED.

December 6, 1985

Dear Colleague:

As you may know, House Joint Resolution 192, which would designate April 24, 1986, as "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man," will be brought to the House floor for a vote on Tuesday, December 10, 1985. The year marked the 70th anniversary

of the Armenian Genocide which began in 1915.

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THERE ARE THREE POINTS WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO CLARIFY ABOUT THIS RESOLUTION.

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First, the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide is important not only to Americans of Armenian descent, but to all Americans. Although the Armenian Genocide was a deep tragedy and was acknowledged by previous U.S. Administrations and Congresses, it is even a greater tragedy that the officials of the government of modern-day Turkey as well as the officials of our government

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## GENOCIDE

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continue to deny that this Genocide ever took place. To memorialize the Genocide of Armenians is no more anti-Turk than to memorialize the victims of the holocaust is anti-German. Were the many events from this past spring marking the liberation of the concentration camps a gratuitous insult to one of our most needed and trusted allies?

Second, the resolution and the effort to recognize the Armenian Genocide is not an attack on the current Turkish government. The Genocide was committed from 1915 to 1923 by the Ottoman Turkish governments prior to the establishment of the current Turkish Republic. There is a problem because the current Turkish government — unlike the current German government — declines to acknowledge the historical facts

of its predecessor's conduct. But the resolution before the House says absolutely nothing about the conduct or the policies of the Turkish Republic.

Third, the resolution commemorates a documented fact of history. The American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire reported extensively for years on the continuing massacres and his efforts to bring them to an end. Most significantly, Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, himself denounced the massacre of "millions" of Armenians. In a 1926 article, he wrote of those Turkish rulers "who should have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse from their homes and massacred."

We are hopeful that you will support this resolution when it comes to the floor.