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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

HENRY A. WAXMAN
24TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEES:
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PHILIP M. SCHILIRO
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

May 21, 1986

Letters to the Editor
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles, California 90053

Dear Sirs:

I write as the congressional representative of one of the largest Armenian communities outside Europe, and as a sponsor of the congressional resolution making April 24 a day of remembrance of the Armenian genocide victims of 1915.

Though the Times (May 8th) candidly admitted having been wrong to oppose the Resolution, I do not believe your apology goes far enough. For example, although the resolution focuses on events of the Ottoman period, Armenian grievances do not apply exclusively to that government. The current Turkish government conducts a constant campaign to present the events of 1915 as if there were no systematic genocide, contrary to the clear consensus of historians of the period.

Contrast this approach to that of West Germany. The post-World War II West German government neither perpetrated nor was legally responsible for the Holocaust. Yet it honorably acknowledged the ultimate moral responsibility of the German people for the attempt to exterminate the Jews, and established a system of reparations to the State of Israel and individual survivors.

Also, the Times has yet to fully credit Armenian-American leaders for consistently denouncing Armenian violence against Turkish diplomats. Justice Armand Arabian and former District Attorney Robert Philibosian are by no means the only ones to do this. I have participated in numerous April 24 Genocide Commemoration programs, and have yet to hear a speaker--Armenian or non-Armenian--who did not insist that the campaign for remembrance be conducted peacefully and within the law.

Finally, I think the Times can do better than to say "The Armenians call this Genocide." "Genocide" is an objective term. It means a systematic effort by a government to destroy a segment of its population. Included in this dreadful classification are the German annihilation of the Jews, the Cambodian mass-murder of civilians during the rule of Pol Pot, and the Turkish slaughter of Armenians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry A. Waxman".

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress
(24th District-Hollywood)

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