

# Armenian genocide could get U.S. recognition

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**B**etween 1914 and 1923, more than one million Armenians perished in what would come to be known by many as the Armenian genocide.

Despite the recognition of these events by more than 19 countries around the world, the United States does not officially recognize the genocide as having occurred.

California Congressman Brad Sherman, D-27th District, and other members of the House of Representatives have proposed a resolution calling on the United States to call on Turkey to officially acknowledge

the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks.

Two resolutions were adopted by the House International Relations Committee two weeks ago, and will likely be voted on by the House later this fall.

"We ought to recognize it because it is true," Sherman said of the genocide.

One of the resolutions calls on Turkey to build closer relations with the United States as well as acknowledge the actions of the Ottoman state at the time of the genocide. The second resolution calls on the president to consider the Armenian genocide when making related decisions about U.S. foreign policy.

"In order for a country to suc-

ceed in the future, it has to be honest about its past," Sherman said. "Our friends in Turkey would benefit from acknowledging history."

Ruben Adalian, director of the Armenian National Institute, said there is documented outrage against Turkey's actions during the actual events of the genocide in the United States in the early part of the 20th century. Adoption of the resolution would prove influential to the world, he said.

"One cannot underestimate what a formal statement by the (United States) has in international implications and it communicates to the rest of the world a standard and respect of human rights," Adalian said.

George Shirinian, director of Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, said his organization wanted the world to remember when an innocent nation was almost wiped off the earth in hopes that it would solve internal Turkish problems.

Shirinian said the resolutions would have a large over-arching effect on the world.

"It deals with matters of history, matters of family, personal and national memory, issues of justice, psychological trauma, and for all the people of the Armenian nation," he said.

He said he could not think of anything more politically healthy to

occur than to have these resolutions adopted.

"The world looks to the United States as a leader politically, economically and morally," Shirinian said.

A similar resolution was presented to the House of Representatives in 2000, but was removed before it could be voted on. Foreign relations with Turkey appear to have been the deciding factor in this decision.

Terenig Topjian, senior art major and public relations chair for the Armenian Student Association at CSUN, said there had been resolutions close to passage in previous

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years, and that one of the resolutions that was closest occurring the Clinton administration.

Topjian reinforced the belief that historians consider the genocide fact, and that it is important for the U.S. government to do the same.

"Even the best politicians in the world can't tell you how Turkey will

react," he said.

Sherman said that many people at the Pentagon have close working relationships with individuals in Turkey, and that about \$10 billion was presented to Turkey in hope that they would assist the United States in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Topjian said there was a connection between Turkey's reaction to the calls for recognition and the

country's desire to become part of the multi-national European Union.

"If Turkey wants (a spot in the E.U.) enough, they will eventually, hopefully, recognize the Armenian genocide," he said.

The political climate seems to be one reason for the failure of the 2000 resolution and possible opposition to the current resolutions.

"I don't think it is right for American policy to be dictated from

abroad," said Shirinian of the Zoryan Institute.

"Turkey has consistently threatened political reprisal to alter their relationship with the United States, which has security implications for the United States," Adalian said.

Sherman said these resolutions may prove to be unsuccessful, and may be frozen before they ever have a chance to be voted on.

Shirinian said he was cautiously hopeful that the resolutions would pass, and he was confident of more than sufficient bipartisan support for the resolutions.

"Denial is the last step in genocide. First you exterminate the people, then the memory of the people, then the memory of the extermination," Sherman said.

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