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Senate

Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein

“Remembering the Armenian Genocide”

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the victims of the Armenian Genocide, one of the great tragedies of the 20th century. Last Saturday, April 24, 2004, marked the 89th anniversary of the beginning of that tragic period and I urge all Americans to take time to remember, reflect, and pledge never to forget what happened.

On April 24, 1915, under the guise of collecting supplies for its participation in World War I, the Ottoman Empire launched a brutal and unconscionable policy of mass murder. The *New York Times* reported that the Ottoman Empire had adopted a policy to annihilate the Armenians living within the empire.

Throughout the following years, Armenians faced violent attacks, starvation, deportation, and murder. Sadly, the world took little notice.

Before the violence began in 1914, 2.5 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire. As a result of the Genocide, 1.5 million Armenians had died and another 500,000 had been driven from their homes and villages. We must remember and pay homage to those that died. We must remind the world of these deaths and renew our commitment to ensure that such tragedies never happen again.

I am proud to represent an Armenian community of half a million in my great State of

California. They are a strong and resilient community, taking strength in the tragedies of the past and the promise of a better tomorrow. This community is leading the effort to preserve the memory of the Armenian Genocide not only for future generations of Armenian Americans, but, indeed, for all Americans and all citizens of the world.

I urge my colleagues to join me in remembering the first Genocide of the 20th Century. Through our commemoration of this tragedy, we make clear that we will not tolerate mass murder and ethnic cleansing ever again and we will never forget.