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JUSTICE AND HUMANITY DEMAND SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTION;
WHERE ARE CHINA CRITICS ON ARMENIAN QUESTION?

TODAY WE RESUME THE DEBATE ON S.J. RES. 212 -- THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION. WE HAD A GOOD DEBATE YESTERDAY.

I THANK MY COLLEAGUES WHO JOINED IN SUPPORT OF MY RESOLUTION -- SENATORS PRESSLER, LEVIN, WILSON, SIMON AND PELL. I EXPECT THAT OTHERS WILL JOIN TODAY'S DEBATE IN SUPPORT OF THE RESOLUTION.

I ALSO WANT TO COMMEND THE DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE, SENATOR BYRD. AS USUAL, HE SPOKE HIS MIND WITH CLARITY, CONVICTION AND EFFECT. WE DISAGREE ON THE ISSUE, BUT I HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR HIS SINCERITY, AND FOR HIS EFFECTIVENESS AS AN OPPONENT.

I WOULD MAKE ONE OBSERVATION: SO FAR, AT LEAST, HE SEEMS TO BE DOING ALL THE "HEAVY LIFTING" ON HIS SIDE OF THE DEBATE. LEFT ME SAY: BY HIMSELF, HE IS AN ARMY. SO I'M NOT FEELING SORRY FOR HIM.

BUT I DO HOPE SOME OF THOSE WHO RIGHT NOW SHARE HIS VIEWS WILL COME JOIN US HERE. PERHAPS WE CAN CHANGE A FEW MINDS; COUNTER A FEW OF THE ARGUMENTS THAT TURKEY'S HIGH-PRICED LOBBYISTS HAVE BEEN PEDDLING THESE PAST WEEKS AND MONTHS; PUT THINGS IN A BETTER PERSPECTIVE.

ONE THING YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH FOR VERY LONG AROUND HERE IS BLUFFING ANYONE. WE HAVE AN ANTIDOTE FOR THAT -- IT'S CALLED VOTING. SOONER OR LATER, WE ALL HAVE TO VOTE.

SO I CAN'T BLUFF ANYONE AND SAY I HAVE 60 VOTES FOR CLOTURE IN MY BACK POCKET. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY I'LL END UP WITH.

BUT I AM PRETTY SURE THERE ARE GOING TO BE A SIZEABLE NUMBER WHO WILL VOTE WITH SENATOR BYRD, AGAINST CLOTURE. SO IT IS IRONIC THAT HE IS LEFT HERE ALONE TO DEBATE HIS SIDE OF THE ISSUE. AND I HOPE SOME OF HIS REINFORCEMENTS WILL SHOW UP. AGAIN, I AND SOME OF MY FRIENDS WOULD LIKE A SHOT AT DISCUSSING THE ISSUES DIRECTLY WITH THEM, AND MAYBE EVEN CHANGING THEIR MINDS.

TO REPEAT -- I WANT TO COMMEND THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA FOR HIS STATEMENTS YESTERDAY. BUT I HAPPEN TO DISAGREE WITH MUCH THAT HE SAID. AND I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS SOME OF THOSE DISAGREEMENTS.

A SMALL BUT IMPORTANT POINT FIRST. IN RESPONSE TO REMARKS THAT I MADE -- SAYING THAT "THREATS" HAD BEEN MADE BY OPPONENTS OF THE RESOLUTION -- THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA SAID, "I HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY THREATS."

BUT I WOULD REMIND THE SENATE THAT THE SENATOR ALSO INCLUDED IN HIS STATEMENT WHAT WE ALL KNOW -- THAT TURKEY HAS ALREADY RETALIATED AGAINST US FOR JUST OUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS RESOLUTION.

I WOULD ALSO INFORM THE SENATE THAT PRESIDENT OZAL PERSONALLY INDICATED TO ME -- AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS A THREAT OR NOT; I'M NOT CASTING ANY ASPERSIONS ON HIM, BUT HE WAS QUITE CLEAR -- HE INDICATED TO ME THAT FURTHER POSITIVE ACTION ON THE RESOLUTION WOULD LEAD TURKEY TO TAKE DRASTIC ACTIONS IN TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

I KNOW OF AT LEAST ONE SENATOR, AND THERE MAY BE OTHERS, THAT HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH LOSS OF IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO COMPANIES IN THEIR STATE IF THAT SENATOR VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTION.

SO I THINK THERE HAVE BEEN THREATS MADE, OF VARIOUS KINDS. I HOPE THEY HAVEN'T HAD A DECISIVE IMPACT ON VOTES ON THIS RESOLUTION. THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE OUGHT TO OPERATE.

I MIGHT ALSO ADD ONE VERY DISTURBING POINT: AS I SAID YESTERDAY, SOME PEOPLE ARE FALSELY CLAIMING THAT OUR RESOLUTION MIGHT SOMEHOW BE AN INDUCEMENT TO TERRORISM BY SO-CALLED "ARMENIAN EXTREMISTS." I INDICATED YESTERDAY THAT I REJECT AND RESENT THAT ARGUMENT.

BUT LAST EVENING I WAS MADE AWARE OF ONE VERY DISTURBING INCIDENT. A RESPECTED SCHOLAR NAMED SUSAN BLAIR -- WHO WAS THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER AND EDITOR OF A BOOK TITLED THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE PROVINCE, WHICH MAKES A COMPELLING CASE THAT THERE INDEED WAS AN ARMENIAN GENOCIDE -- MS. BLAIR HERSELF RECEIVED A DEATH THREAT UPON THE RECENT PUBLICATION OF HER BOOK.

I HAVE NO IDEA -- AND NEITHER DO THE POLICE -- WHO MADE THE THREAT. BUT IT REMINDS US AGAIN THAT THERE ARE EXTREMISTS IN EVERY COMMUNITY. AND WE MUST JOIN TOGETHER TO CONDEMN THEIR ACTS, WHATEVER THEIR MOTIVE.

ENOUGH ON THAT POINT. LET ME SPEAK TO SOME OF THE OTHER ARGUMENTS RAISED BY THE DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE.

AT ONE POINT IN HIS STATEMENT, HE SAID, AND I QUOTE: "THE SENATE SHOULD NOT BE THE VEHICLE FOR REOPENING OLD WOUNDS."

I DEEPLY RESPECT SENATOR BYRD, BUT HE HAS IT BACKWARDS. ACTION ON THIS RESOLUTION WILL NOT "REOPEN OLD WOUNDS." FOR THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS AROUND THE GLOBE -- INCLUDING THE NEARLY ONE MILLION IN THIS COUNTRY -- THE WOUNDS ARE ALREADY OPEN; PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY -- STILL OPEN.

THE WOUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN CLOSED -- THE HURT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO HEAL -- BECAUSE THE WORLD HAS NOT FACED UP TO THE TRUTH OF THE SUFFERING OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE IN 1915-23.

(MORE)

CONSTRUCTING A HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM DOES NOT KEEP OPEN OLD WOUNDS OF THE NAZI GENOCIDE AGAINST EUROPEAN JEWS. IT HELPS THE WORLD CLOSE THOSE WOUNDS, AS PART OF A RENEWED DETERMINATION THAT WE CAN NEVER LET ANOTHER GENOCIDE OCCUR.

WRITING ABOUT, AND SPEAKING ABOUT, AND REMEMBERING THE CAMBODIAN GENOCIDE -- DOES NOT KEEP OPEN OLD WOUNDS, BUT CAUSES US TO REMEMBER THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE KHMER ROUGE; AND, AGAIN, REINFORCES OUR DETERMINATION TO STAMP OUT THE THREAT OF GENOCIDE WHEREVER IT THREATENS TO REOCCUR.

IGNORING THE FACT OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE DOES NOT "REOPEN OLD WOUNDS." DEALING STRAIGHTFORWARDLY WITH THIS RESOLUTION CAN START THE PROCESS OF CLOSING THOSE OLD, OLD WOUNDS.

THEY WILL NEVER BE CLOSED IF WE ALL KEEP OUR HEADS BURIED IN THE SAND.

ANOTHER ARGUMENT MADE YESTERDAY IS THAT ACTION ON THIS RESOLUTION COULD SPUR ETHNIC TENSIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH ARE SO MANIFEST TODAY IN ARMENIA AND AJERBAIJAN -- SO WE OUGHT TO LAY OFF THE RESOLUTION; THE SENATE SHOULD NOT ACT; THE SITUATION IS JUST TOO TENSE AND SENSITIVE.

TO BUTTRESS THE CASE, REFERENCE WAS MADE TO ON-GOING ETHNIC TENSIONS INVOLVING TURKS AND BULGARIANS, SERBS AND CROATIANS, AND ARMENIANS AND AZERIS.

SENATOR BYRD MADE THE SAME POINTS IN HIS OPENING REMARKS TODAY.

ONCE AGAIN, I FIND THE ARGUMENT 180 DEGREES BACKWARDS. MORE IMPORTANT, THE CLEAR RECORD IS THAT THE SENATE FINDS THE ARGUMENT BACKWARDS.

THE FACT IS: THE SENATE HAS ACTED ON EVERY ONE OF THOSE VERY SENSITIVE SITUATIONS REFERRED TO BY THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA.

IN FACT, AMENDMENT NUMBER 279 TO THE FY90 FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT WAS AN AMENDMENT TO CONDEMN BULGARIA FOR ITS VICIOUS ATTACKS ON AND EXPULSION OF ETHNIC TURKS -- ONE OF THE VERY INSTANCES CITED BY THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA AS EVIDENCE THAT THE SITUATION IN THE REGION IS TOO SENSITIVE FOR US TO ACT.

YET THAT AMENDMENT -- THAT VERY WORTHWHILE AMENDMENT; AN AMENDMENT I SUPPORTED AND EVERY SENATOR PRESENT, 99 OF US, VOTED FOR -- THAT AMENDMENT WAS AUTHORED AND OFFERED BY THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA.

HE FELT ON JULY 18, 1989 -- WHEN HE OFFERED THAT AMENDMENT -- THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT TOO SENSITIVE TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUE AT HAND. HE WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. EVERY SENATOR PRESENT AGREED WITH HIM. THE VOTE WAS 99-0.

THE RECORD ON THE OTHER ISSUES RAISED -- SERB VERSUS CROATIAN; ARMENIAN VERSUS AZERI -- THE RECORD IS THE SAME. THOSE SITUATIONS ARE VERY SENSITIVE -- NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. THEY ARE SENSITIVE BECAUSE THEY ARE IMPORTANT; BECAUSE THEY DEAL WITH HUMAN LIFE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND HUMAN CONFLICT BETWEEN PEOPLE OF VASTLY DIFFERENT CULTURAL AND POLITICAL VALUES.

THAT IS WHY THEY ARE SENSITIVE.

THAT IS EXACTLY WHY THE SENATE HAS CHOSEN TO DEAL WITH THEM. WHY THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA OFFERED HIS VERY COMMENDABLE AMENDMENT ON BULGARIAN-TURKISH VIOLENCE. WHY THE SENATE HAS ACTED SO DECISIVELY ON THESE OTHER ISSUES CITED.

IN MY VIEW, IT IS NOT OUR JOB TO DUCK TOUGH, SENSITIVE ISSUES.

IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FACE UP TO THEM.

IT IS TIME WE FACED UP TO THE ISSUE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE.

SO THAT IS ANOTHER ARGUMENT.

A THIRD -- AND PERHAPS THE ONE THAT THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME ON -- WAS THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF TURKEY. HE MADE REFERENCE TO ITS ROLE IN NATO; ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO THE USSR AND IRAN; THE FACT THAT WE HAVE BASES THERE, AND WILL HAVE BASE NEGOTIATIONS SOON; THE FACT THAT IT IS, QUOTE, "AN ALLY WHOSE POSITION IS IMPORTANT TO ISRAEL;" AND OTHER SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS.

NO ONE DOUBTS THE IMPORTANCE OF TURKEY. I DON'T -- AS I SAID SEVERAL TIMES IN MY STATEMENTS YESTERDAY, AND I HAVE SAID MANY TIMES OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

TURKEY IS IMPORTANT.

BUT I WANT TO MAKE TWO COMMENTS ON THIS MATTER.

FIRST, I WANT TO REMIND THE SENATE OF WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY -- THIS QUESTION OF IMPORTANCE CUTS BOTH WAYS.

TURKEY IS IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED STATES. THE UNITED STATES IS AT LEAST EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO TURKEY.

THE UNITED STATES HAS NEVER MADE THE FACTS OF 1915-23 AN ISSUE IN U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS. THE REASON IS SIMPLE: THOSE EVENTS, IN OUR VIEW, HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MODERN TURKISH REPUBLIC, THE CURRENT TURKISH GOVERNMENT, OR THE CONTEMPORARY TURKISH PEOPLE.

IT IS THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WHICH INSISTS ON MAKING THIS A LIVE, ALL-TOO BITTER BILATERAL ISSUE.

WE DON'T SEE OUR ACTION AS ANTI-TURKEY. WE SAY IT. WE MEAN IT.

WHY DOES TURKEY INSIST ON TAKING IT THAT WAY? WHY DOES TURKEY INSIST ON MAKING A CRISIS OUT OF A COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION?

IT IS NOT NECESSARY. I HAVE SAID TIME AND TIME AGAIN: I AM WILLING TO WORK WITH THE ADMINISTRATION, THE TURKISH EMBASSY, ITS LOBBYISTS, WHOEVER -- TO TRY TO FIND LANGUAGE THAT DOES NOT OFFEND, BUT RETAINS THE ESSENCE OF OUR TEXT. I HAVE BEEN TOLD, AGAIN AND AGAIN, BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TURKISH EMBASSY, THAT IT WILL NOT COMPROMISE, PERIOD. THAT IS WHY WE ARE -- WHERE WE ARE.

THE OTHER POINT I WANT TO MAKE IS TO CONTRAST OUR OPPONENTS VIEW ON THIS ACTION WITH THE POSITION THAT MANY OF THEM TOOK DURING RECENT SENATE ACTION ON THE QUESTION OF CHINA SANCTIONS.

THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER SPOKE ELOQUENTLY AND FORCEFULLY THIS MORNING OF HIS OUTRAGE -- WHICH WE ALL SHARE -- ABOUT THE GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IN RECENT MONTHS. AS WE ALL KNOW, HE ALSO LED THE FIGHT TO OVERRIDE THE PRESIDENT'S VETO OF THE CHINESE STUDENTS BILL.

(MORE)

THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA, AND MANY OTHERS WHO OPPOSE S.J. RES. 212 HELD THE SAME VIEW OF THE CHINESE STUDENTS LEGISLATION.

TIME AND AGAIN DURING THE DEBATE, I HEARD THOSE TWO DISTINGUISHED SENATORS, AND OTHERS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT ISSUE, MAKE THIS POINT: WHAT HAPPENED IN TIENANMEN WAS A MATTER OF RIGHT AND WRONG. THEY SAID, AGAIN AND AGAIN: CHINA IS IMPORTANT STRATEGICALLY -- THE MAJORITY LEADER THIS MORNING REMINDED US THAT ITS PEOPLE COMPRISE NEARLY A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION.

BUT THEIR ARGUMENT WAS: WE CAN'T LET CHINA'S IMPORTANCE STAND IN THE WAY OF SENATE ACTION ON AN ISSUE OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

WHAT HAPPENED IN TIENANMEN AND SINCE HAS BEEN TRAGIC. HUNDREDS -- PROBABLY THOUSANDS -- HAVE BEEN KILLED. COUNTLESS THOUSANDS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND REMAIN JAILED. IT HAS BEEN A HUMAN RIGHTS DISASTER.

BUT COMPARED TO WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ARMENIANS IN OTTOMAN TURKEY IN 1915-23 -- WELL, THERE JUST ISN'T A COMPARISON. AS TERRIBLE AS THOUSANDS KILLED AND WOUNDED IS -- A MILLION AND A HALF KILLED, AND AN ENTIRE NATION OF PEOPLE NEARLY WIPED OUT; THAT IS NOT A TRAGEDY, IT IS A GENOCIDE. IT RAISES INHUMANITY AND BARBARISM TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL.

IF THERE EVER WAS A QUESTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG, IT HAPPENED IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1915-23.

LISTEN TO WHAT THE MAJORITY LEADER DECRIED IN HIS STATEMENT ON CHINA THIS MORNING -- AND LET ME SAY, IS RIGHT TO DECRY. THESE ARE HIS WORDS:

-- POLITICAL AND OTHER EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLING.

-- TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

-- ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION OR EXILE.

-- EXCESSIVE FORCE AND VIOLATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN LAW IN INTERNAL CONFLICTS.

AGAIN, HE WAS RIGHT TO DECRY THOSE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

BUT EVERY ONE OF THOSE CHARGES CAN BE MADE, AND PROVED, A THOUSAND FOLD -- AGAINST THE AUTHORITIES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

SO IF WE SHOULD SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE CURRENT CHINESE GOVERNMENT -- EVEN IN THE FACE OF ITS VAST STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE -- BECAUSE OF ITS CRIMES; AND WE SHOULD; NO ONE DOUBTS THAT. BUT IF WE SHOULD -- THEN WHAT CASE CAN BE MADE AGAINST SPEAKING OUT AGAINST THE MUCH MORE BARBARIC CRIMES COMMITTED AGAINST AN ENTIRE NATION OF PEOPLE; AND, TO BOOT, BY A GOVERNMENT LONG SINCE RELEGATED TO THE TRASH CAN OF HISTORY?

HOW CAN YOU ARGUE, ON ONE HAND, TO IGNORE CHINA'S AT LEAST EQUAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE, AND SPEAK OUT AGAINST ITS TERRIBLE, BUT CLEARLY LESSER, CRIMES -- AND YET SAY WE CAN'T SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE CRIMES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, BECAUSE A SUCCESSOR SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT MAY TAKE UNJUSTIFIED AND UNINTENDED OFFENSE AT OUR SIMPLE UTTERING OF THE TRUTH?

IT MAKES NO SENSE.

YESTERDAY, THE SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA SAID, AND I QUOTE:

"AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, I SUPPOSE I WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH THE RESOLUTION, BECAUSE I SEE IT THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES THAT DO THE TURKS....I AM NOT OFFENDED BY THE LANGUAGE, BUT TO THEM THE LANGUAGE IS OFFENSIVE. THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE TO PAY ATTENTION TO. HOW WILL THEY REACT?"

THAT IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD STATEMENT OF THE SENATOR'S POINT OF VIEW. I RESPECT IT. BUT I WOULD CONTRAST IT WITH SOMETHING THE MAJORITY LEADER QUOTED THIS MORNING -- IT IS FROM A LETTER THAT SENATOR MITCHELL RECEIVED FROM A PROFESSOR YANG, FROM BATES COLLEGE IN MAINE. THESE ARE THE PROFESSOR'S WORDS, BUT I BELIEVE IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT SENATOR MITCHELL REFERRED TO THEM FAVORABLY. HERE ARE THE WORDS:

"IT IS SIMPLY NOT RIGHT TO CLAIM, AS SOME CHINA CARD PLAYERS IN THIS COUNTRY DO, THAT THE CHINESE HAVE A SPECIAL 'ORIENTAL MIND,' AND THAT DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM ARE SOMETHING NOT IN THE CHINESE CULTURE. TO ME, SUCH REMARKS ARE ... MORALLY UNFORGIVEABLE."

THERE ARE CHINA CARD PLAYERS -- AND TURKEY CARD PLAYERS. AND IT IS NO MORE RIGHT FOR TURKEY CARD PLAYERS TO SAY, WELL, MAYBE IT WAS TERRIBLE, BUT IT WILL OFFEND SOME PEOPLE TO SAY SO -- THAN IT IS FOR CHINA CARD PLAYERS TO MAKE THE SAME POINT ABOUT CHINA.

THIS IS A MATTER OF RIGHT VERSUS WRONG.

IT IS NOT A MATTER OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH TURKEY.

IT IS A MATTER OF THE EXTERMINATION OF A MILLION AND A HALF HUMAN BEINGS.

IT IS NOT A MATTER FOR GEOPOLITICAL CARD PLAYERS, WHATEVER THEIR NATIONALITY OR NATION OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

IT IS A MATTER FOR CIVILIZED PEOPLE -- ARMENIAN, TURKISH, AMERICAN -- TO DEAL WITH STRAIGHTFORWARDLY, HONESTLY, AND IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH THE HUMANITY THAT FINALLY DEFINES US ALL.

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