

CONFRONTING DENIALS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IS NOT ONLY HONORING HISTORY, BUT A CRUCIAL POLICY POSITION FOR CONFRONTING THREATS IN OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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We convene during the Spring of each year in many venues around the world to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, whose beginning we mark as April 24, 1915 when hundreds of leaders of the Armenian people were rounded up by the Ottoman Turks in most cases soon to be executed. This, like the full genocide that follows, against more than a million Armenians as well as to many other non-Turks, especially other Christians like the Armenians –the Assyrians and Greeks, and also to a non-Turkish people, the Yzedis, constitutes a *major event of world history* that we dare not forget or trivialize.

I shall speak today about several aspects of confronting denials of the Armenian Genocide, beginning with meanings that are properly close to the hearts of the Armenian people, but then extending our understanding of the meanings of denials as impacting on all peoples everywhere in our contemporary world and not only as regards honoring the past. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and every known genocide, is a matter of standing for life against the forces of death-making that did not end in 1915 and still abound in our world.

The real goals for all our peoples in our contemporary world must be to reduce the extent of human murders of masses of unarmed fellow human beings of whatever religion, race, nationality, political persuasion or any other identifying characteristic that the human mind knows all too well how to create as a sign that some other people are less than human (*dehumanization*), yet are said to threaten our very existence (*projected attribution of danger to one's survival*), and therefore must be eliminated. The commemoration of the Armenian genocide is not 'simply' a memo re past history, it is a living reminder of many dangers that, tragically and maddeningly, continue in our present world. The commemoration of the Armenian genocide is not a holiday event, it is the serious business of humanity fighting for human life.

The four aspects of denials of the Armenian Genocide which I will treat are as follows:

- I. DENIAL OF GENOCIDE IS NOT ONLY A POLITICAL TACTIC, IT IS AN ATTACK ON DECENT PEOPLES' MINDS AND EMOTIONS AND A THREAT TO CELEBRATE AND RENEW GENOCIDE
- II. TURKEY TODAY IS A STUDY OF A BITTER STRUGGLE TO GIVE UP DENIALS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE WHOSE OUTCOME IS AS YET UNKNOWN
- III. ISRAEL IS A PEOPLE THAT RECOGNIZES AND CARES ABOUT THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE WITH A GOVERNMENT THAT WRONGLY PLAYS REALPOLITIK HARDBALL

IV. CONFRONTATION OF DENIALS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ARE ALSO CONFRONTATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY JIHAD AND THE TRANSNATIONAL GENOCIDAL TERROR THAT THREATENS THE WORLD

I. DENIAL OF GENOCIDE IS NOT ONLY A POLITICAL TACTIC, IT IS AN ATTACK ON DECENT PEOPLES' MINDS AND EMOTIONS AND A THREAT TO CELEBRATE AND RENEW GENOCIDE

The denial of a people's genocide is, obviously, a slap in the face, a ringing insult to the memory, sensibility, and historical pride of the victim people. In other words, denials have psychological agendas as well as political ones.

In fact, the meaning of the insults goes far beyond an attack on the victim people, for they are also resounding announcements of a continued and renewed ethno-nationalist bigotry, and possibly even a call for justifying and allowing renewed genocidal terror, beginning with the known victim people in the past history of the case of genocide being addressed, but also extending to the new victims who are already on the stage of contemporary history. For denials of genocides, like genocide itself, is a contagious disease of the Mind of society. In other words, our obligation to fight denials is not only for the immediate victim people and their history—justification enough, but for all of our civilization and our still inept battle to stop mass killing of any and all peoples.

The following are some of the meta-meanings we identify in denials of a given genocide such as the Armenian Genocide, beginning quite naturally with the offensive attacks, mocking, and continuing hatred of the victim people, and then extending to the further meanings of denials meanings as celebrations and calls to renewed violence against whichever victim peoples in a world that has not stopped mass killing.

DENIAL OF A KNOWN GENOCIDE IS HUMILIATION, MOCKING OF THE FEELINGS, SENSIBILITY, MEMORIAL AND ATTACHMENT OF THE SURVIVORS

To seek to erase agonizing vivid memories and pictures from the eyes and minds of millions of survivors, descendants of survivors and relatives is to mock the sensibilities, memorial needs, and personal attachments – in a sense once again to victimize the victims.

DENIAL OF A KNOWN GENOCIDE IS AN ATTACK ON THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, PEOPLEHOOD, AND NATIONAL AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY OF THE VICTIM PEOPLE

To deny a cataclysmic holocaust in a people's history is to seek to abort the re-grouping and re-creation of that people's historical process, national and cultural continuity.

DENIAL OF A KNOWN GENOCIDE IS A CELEBRATION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE KNOWN VICTIMS, AND A CELEBRATION OF FURTHER DESTRUCTIVENESS IN THE FUTURE

To deny the countless deaths of a known event of genocide is to celebrate the deaths of those same victims, and to intimate cynically that the doctrine of power which brought about their destruction is still in force – to be used when opportunity permits.

‘KILLING’ THE RECORD OF A KNOWN EVENT OF GENOCIDE IS ALSO TO ‘MURDER’ TRUTH AND RECORDED HUMAN HISTORY

To ‘kill’ the record of human history and the ability of men to differentiate between known and unknown is to write a final chapter to mass murder by ‘murdering’ truth, reality, and human memory and history.

II. TURKEY TODAY IS A STUDY OF A BITTER STRUGGLE TO GIVE UP DENIALS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE WHOSE OUTCOME IS AS YET UNKNOWN

I want to share with you now my observations of the struggle for change that is taking place in Turkey these years.

Clearly murder—the case of the late Hrant Dink – is still afoot; clearly, people are being taken to trial and imprisoned for violating the infamous Article 301 of “insulting Turkishness”; clearly the nonsense of denials of the Armenian Genocide continues to pour out of official and prestigious unofficial sources in Turkish society; and clearly Turkish diplomats and a sterling crew of lobbyists, including well known and well placed former American legislators, are busy all over the world spewing forth a balanced strategy of bizarre denials—everything on the record of the Armenian Genocide including Turkish state records and British historians are designated as “forgeries”; nasty threats – such as to pull out of NATO and/or not give air space to US planes heading for Iraq or not give water to Israel; and seductive enticements that all is about to be settled between good old Armenian and Turkey so tsk, tsk now is not the time to insult Turkish sensibilities.

On the other hand, clearly a major corrective counter process is also raising its head. It began perhaps with a number of outstanding Turkish intellectuals who had taken up residence in the USA acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and indeed added significantly to our historical knowledge; but slowly but surely was also abetted by a few courageous Turkish intellectuals who continued to live in Turkey but dared to make statements acknowledging the genocide when they were outside Turkey, such as in a conference in Venice I attended a few years ago – although in some cases pleading with us to avoid the explicit use of the word genocide at this stage; and now has continued with an unprecedented manifesto by a large number of Turkish intellectuals in Turkey even apologizing for the genocide! In fact, following the petition, more than 13,000 people, mostly Turks, signed an online petition signing on to the apology for the World War I massacres of Armenians by the Ottoman army. Again this petition too stopped short of using the word genocide. But the petition, entitled 'I apologise', reads:

"My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this injustice and for my share, I empathise with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers. I apologise to them."

Needless to say, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the initiative made no sense. "The Turkish Republic has no such problem. They [the intellectuals] must have committed genocide because they are apologising," Erdogan stated almost with a standup comic quality were the issue not so serious.

Still remember also how thousands of Turks rallied after Hrant Dink's murder and chanted, "We are all Hrant Dink." And slowly but surely there are academic and professional meetings convening in Turkey and breakthroughs in the Turkish media that are telling the truth of the Armenian Genocide as never before. I would say that something big is happening in Turkey, or perhaps more correctly that something big is trying to happen in Turkey. So that there are contradictory alternations between progress towards telling the truth and vicious reversions to 301 and to a know-nothingness of denials of reality and to bare knuckle threats against other people and governments. These are dangerous yet also promising times.

Two years ago I was invited to a conference at Istanbul University on Armenian-Turkish relations. What was my personal experience like? Participation at the Istanbul Conference was for me a difficult "ride" between relief at not being harassed either by legal officials or by the public, great pleasure at what I have described of the unheard-of progress of our very presence and in our contributions being heard in Turkey, and distinct sadness, discomfort and anger at the shallowness and intellectual as well as ethnic bigotry of so many presentations.

I have never been treated to so many different looks going through me as if I were a piece of glass. I found the prevailing discourse so stilted, blocked and rigid with denials that I literally decided not to hand out publicly flyers I had brought for the Encyclopedia of Genocide -- which presents a great deal of information about the Armenian Genocide, or membership forms for our International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) -- which in the past has issued a unanimous resolution confirming the authenticity of the Armenian Genocide (but I did give these materials to selected individuals who were a pleasure to meet).

I met the two kinds of deniers about which I have written so much in the professional literature on denial. The first group of deniers are those whose use of denial is a patent expression of their hatred, prejudice and bigotry. They are fascists who celebrate violence and want more of it. The second are what I have dared to call in the literature in several extensive papers "innocent deniers," and these include people whose conscious intentions and even much of their unconscious intentions make them spokesmen and advocates of peace between peoples. I hated the former, and liked several of the latter – even as I disciplined myself against letting the liking seduce me away from the dangerously wrong position these people take.

I was not harassed or under legal risk. When I first received my invitation from Istanbul University, I had written promptly to say, "As you undoubtedly knew when you invited me...I am as I have been for many years very convinced of the historical authenticity of the Armenian Genocide," and indeed the organizers remained true to the response which they sent in which

they said that Istanbul University is an academic institution and there are no limitations on expression of views.

My overall sense of the conference is that it was a Turkish government message to the Armenian people, the rest of the free world and especially the European Union which Turkey so desires to join, that they are prepared to initiate a corrective cultural process which could, slowly but surely, lead to acknowledgment of the genocidal killings of the Armenians.

Yet this does not mean that such a process will take place overnight, nor are there guarantees that the process will go as far and as clearly as most of us in the West would wish. Nor was the corrective process done elegantly at this conference. The overwhelming majority of papers and statements in my judgment were (a) one-sided rehashes of Turkish denial propaganda; (b) a basic intellectual failure since they did not even mention or refer to or in any way acknowledge any of the voluminous documentation and evidences of the Armenian Genocide that are now part of world culture; and (c) a great number were emotional diatribes rather than "scientific" or properly scholarly contributions.

Nonetheless, this was a conference in Turkey where my dear colleague from Israel, Professor Yair Auron, opened the conference with the first paper in which he stated in a strong resonant voice that there was no question but that the Armenians had suffered genocide at the hands of the Turks; where intrepid Armenian researcher Ara Sarafian who is based in London did the same on another day; where Yair Auron's remarks were featured prominently and amazingly accurately in the English language and Turkish language press the next day -- in Turkey!; and where Sarafian was invited to an extensive television appearance on a very popular show in prime Turkish television time!

It was striking to me that when Yair Auron concluded his sterling confirmation of the Armenian Genocide, I did not see a single participating scholar or diplomat in the ranks of the participants who were sitting up front next to the stage clapping for Auron, not even a token clapping which would acknowledge his right to speak as he did. It was eerie. There was a small ripple of mild applause from a few rows in the back of the hall. And yet, as I have emphasized, Auron did get to say what he said and was quoted accurately and prominently in several Turkish newspapers. I think we should be grateful for these large small miracles.

I would not be carried away with anger at the shoddy and bigoted presentations that dominated the conference and miss expressing the appreciation and respect that the conference took place at all. I came away from the conference believing that exchanges directly between Turks and Armenians are valuable insofar as they expose people to one another as people and by dispelling the totalitarian Turkish censorship and criminalization of studies about the Armenian Genocide. But I propose that the next steps of progress might best be created by international commissions or conferences sponsored and led by outstanding cultural-academic authorities from other countries, which of course include Turks and Armenians but are under the leadership of scholars from other nationalities, where all presentations are pre-evaluated by an outside panel of "scholar-judges" who would preside as experts with the right to remove any statements that are in open violation of established statements of world history, are racist or prejudiced, or are legitimating or inciting of violences.

Intriguingly the conference also proceeded to produce a written record. I was torn about including my paper in this record and finally stipulated that it could be [printed only if the following demurrer were prominently displayed as the opening page of my article. To my amazement when I received the book a few months ago it was all there word for word as follows:

A Casebook of Denials of Doing Harm to Others and Rewards to People and Nations Who Overcome Denial

The following introductory note MUST appear with any publication of this article along with other papers presented at the conference at Istanbul University:

DISCLAIMER: The author agreed to participate in the conference at Istanbul University as a welcome new initiative by an established Turkish academic institution -- and to all appearances the Turkish government as well -- to invite and allow explicit references to the Armenian Genocide, which even in recent months has been the basis for criminal prosecution of any number of Turkish citizens. By agreeing to publication of the present paper in the Proceedings of the conference, the author is aware that he is necessarily agreeing to publication of this paper alongside of any number of gross denials of the history of the Armenian Genocide (as well as other non-Turkish peoples) committed by the Ottoman Empire. Publication of this paper by Istanbul University alongside of denials of the Armenian Genocide in no way is to be taken as the author's approval or agreement of such denials, but as a willingness to open new windows in Turkish society towards learning about the western world's established history of the Armenian Genocide. -Israel W. Chany

The conference was also an edifying experience that I felt helped me to finally put a finger on a key component of the Turks' need to deny the Armenian Genocide, and that is humiliation. This is a people that does not like to acknowledge weakness or failing. The culture does not yet link between an ability to face one's shortcomings and possible growth and development. Weakness is shame, error is humiliating. I found moreover that there was a deep ambivalence in the Turkish collective experience about whether their people, sitting on a geographic tilting point between civilizations, could constitute a modern Moslem and democratic community that could truly take a place alongside of and as part of western European life, or whether it was to be a major player in the pan-Moslem world with all of its ideological rigidities and downright backwardness.

My bottom line judgment, and certainly hope, is that the Turkish cultural process will arrive at an acknowledgment of the genocide of the Armenians in the course of the next 15 years as Turkey moves closer and closer to its deep desire to be part of the European Union. I even understand that Turkish culture cannot do it all at once on its own. I came away impressed that the Turks have a very strong desire to come out of their marginal kind of status of being neither 'full' Europeans nor a part of the fundamentalist Islamic world. I think this is the doorway through which real though not perfect progress can be made, and I recommend that we redefine ourselves as helping Turkey make this step.

III. THE OVERALL FAILURE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL BUT NOT OF ISRAELIS TO RECOGNIZE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

To my deep regret and shame, much too often both great democracies of which I have the privilege of being a citizen (Israel where I live, and the United States where I was born) have failed seriously in their moral responsibility towards the Armenian people.

I am particularly wounded as well as angry at such failures by my Jewish people when we too have known the worst horrors of being victims of a major genocide, and therefore we should be all the more at your sides as deeply committed allies in all aspects of preserving and honoring the record of the Armenian Genocide.

Yet I bring you the happy news that we have won the battle for recognition and genuine respect for the memory of the Armenian Genocide on the level of everyday Israeli culture. Throughout the year there are major statements in our culture about the Armenian Genocide, including many full-length feature stories and interviews in all of our major newspapers and on our television. On April 24 there is powerful coverage, for example, this year on Roim Olam or Seeing the World, a major TV news magazine; there is an annual seminar at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem at which this year the keynote speaker was Prof. James Russell of Harvard University, and it was my honor to be the keynoter the year before together with an influential member of the Knesset who was totally knowledgeable about the Genocide and totally clear about Israel's error in not recognizing it; and there is of course an annual commemoration by the Armenian Community – it was there that the two ministers in the past announced their recognition of the Armenian genocide. During a too-brief period, we also had two ministers of the Israeli government who officially recognized the Genocide, and although the governments in question promptly disavowed these ministers' statements as private and not speaking for the country, the records of those ministers honoring the Armenian Genocide on behalf of the State of Israel cannot be erased.ⁱⁱ I would say that both the everyday Israeli man on the street and the professional scholars of the Holocaust, such as Prof. Yehuda Bauer perhaps the ranking scholar of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem, are basically sympathetic and committed to paying homage to the Armenian Genocide. A few years ago four of us, including one of the above former ministers, Yossi Sarid, Prof. Bauer, Prof. Yair Auron, an indefatigable scholar of the Armenian Genocide and of Israel's denials of same, and myself traveled together to Yerevan to lay a wreath at the Armenian Genocide Memorial.

Nonetheless, as you know, sadly and shamefully the pull of practical government politics still leads to official Israel cooperating with Turkey in gross denials of the Armenian Genocide. No less than the arch fighter for peace in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Shimon Peres, now President of Israel, then serving as Israel's Foreign Minister, twice went notably out of his way to insult the history and memory of the Armenian Genocide.

The first time was in an interview in the Turkish Daily News on 10 April 2001. The second time was in February 2002 when Peres insultingly backed up the Israeli Ambassador to Armenia, who was subordinate to him as Foreign Minister, for her denials that the Genocide was in any way a full-blown event of genocide that was in the same category of events as the Holocaust of the Jewish people.

This is what I wrote Peres on the first occasion in 2001:

April 11, 2001

The Honorable Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Israel

Jerusalem, Israel

Re: Report in Turkish Daily News, Ankara, 10 April 2001

Dear Mr. Peres:

I offer you my deepest respects for your enormous contributions to the security and development of Israel, and to peace. Nonetheless, it is my privilege since many years ago not to agree with your position regarding the Armenian Genocide. It seems that because of your wishes to advance very important relations with Turkey, you have been prepared to circumvent the subject of the Armenian Genocide in 1915-1920. (Thus, you advised me in a telephone conversation in 1982 not to insist on including the subject of the Armenians in the First International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide that we convened in Tel-Aviv, and I then made the decision not to give in to pressures of the Foreign Ministry to cancel the lectures on the Armenian genocide or to cancel the entire conference.)

It seems to me according to yesterday's report in the Ankara newspaper that you have gone beyond a moral boundary that no Jew should allow himself to trespass. You are quoted as follows: "We reject attempts to create a similarity between the Holocaust and the Armenian allegations. Nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a tragedy what the Armenians went through but not a genocide."

For the record, in 1999, at a Conference on the Holocaust in Philadelphia, a large number of researchers of the Holocaust, including Israeli historians, signed a public declaration that the Armenian Genocide was factual.

Also for the record, in 1996 at the meeting of the Association of Genocide Scholars, the Association as a whole officially voted a resolution that the Armenians had been subject to full-scale genocide.

Even as I disagree with you, it may be that in your broad perspective of the needs of the State of Israel it is your obligation to circumvent and desist from bringing up the subject with Turkey, but as a Jew and an Israeli I am ashamed of the extent to which you have now entered into the range of actual denial of the Armenian Genocide, comparable to denials of the Holocaust.

Respectfully,

Prof. Israel W. Charny

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It will be of interest also that my second letter to Shimon Peres in response to what I thought was an especially insulting form of denial in 2002 included an editorial from the California Courier by Harut Sassounian, who also speaks to you today, about whom I said as follows:

I am enclosing with great concern for your attention an editorial in a leading US-Armenian newspaper calling on Armenia to expel the Israeli Ambassador. For your further information, the author of this editorial, who is the head of the Armenian United Fund in the US -- comparable to our United Jewish Appeal -- was for many years a delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

To conclude about Israel's recognition of the Armenian Genocide, I am again happy to emphasize that the people and the culture very strongly recognize and honor the Genocide, and know how serious and important is for us and the whole world, and to express the hope that some day we will succeed in changing the official Israeli government position.

IV. CONFRONTATION OF DENIALS OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ARE ALSO CONFRONTATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY JIHAD AND THE TRANSNATIONAL GENOCIDAL TERROR THAT THREATENS THE WORLD

I would like you now to consider the following several Calls to Jihad, and as you take them in to think to yourself to which period and event of history you would assign them.

1. Here is the first:

A "Jihad" Appeal to Moslems

TRANSLATION OF A RECENT CALL DISTRIBUTED TO THE MILLIONS OF ISLAM

Kill them!

God will punish them in your hand and put them to shame; and ye will overcome them. He will rejoice the hearts of believers, and take away the wrath from the hearts of unbelievers." (Text of the Koran.)

Islam is being torn down stone by stone. You have become slaves of the people of the Cross.

Behold! God has bestowed upon you a greater favor. The tears of the faithful for centuries past are bearing fruit. Your enemies are trembling under your hand. Attack them from every side. Whenever you meet them, kill them. Quicken the failing proclamation of the Unity by the fire of your rifles and cannon, and by the blows of your swords and knives. Cause the minarets and mountains and wilderness to resound once more with the cry, "Allah! Allah."

Jihad! Jihad! Oh, Moslems, blow the trumpet everywhere, of people of the Unity. The great God is ordering you to fight with your foes everywhere. God will put them to shame in your hands; He will give you the victory; He will quench the fire of their fate. Do not forget. God has purchased the souls and the property of the faithful. In exchange He give you the houris and damsels of heaven.

2. Now the second:

There is no point to the life of anyone who will not convert to Islam

Sheik Nazim Abu Salim is certain the day is near when Islam will defeat its opponents. According to him, there is no point to the life of anyone who will not convert to Islam.

3-4. Now a third and fourth:

There is no God but Allah

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Mohammad is his messenger. There is ____ (name of victim) ____ hit by God in one of its softest spots. Thank God for that. When God blessed one of the groups of Islam, vanguards of Islam, they destroyed ____ (name of victim) _____. I pray to God to elevate their status and bless them.

These events have divided the whole world into two sides. The side of believers and the side of infidels, may God keep you away from them. Every Muslim has to rush to make his religion victorious. The winds of faith have come. The winds of change have come to eradicate oppression from the island of Mohammad, peace be upon him.

To (name of victim people), I say only a few words to it and its people. God is great, may pride be with Islam. May peace and God's mercy be upon you.

Jihad today is a religious duty of every Muslim

Peace be upon Mohammad our prophet and those who follow him. Jihad today is a religious duty of every Muslim if they haven't got an excuse. God says fight, for the sake of God and to uphold the name of God. Every Muslim has to play his real and true role to uphold his religion and his nation in fighting, and jihad is a duty.

There are thousands of young people who are as keen about death as (non-Moslems) are about life. I thank God for allowing us to start this jihad. This battle is a decisive battle between faithlessness and faith. And I ask God to give us victory in the face of our enemy and return them defeated.

5. And now a fifth call to jihad:

After the Second World War, by exploiting the holocaust and under the pretext of protecting the Jews they made a nation homeless with military expeditions and invasion. They transferred various groups of people from America, Europe and other countries to this land. They established a completely racist government in the occupied Palestinian territories. And in fact, under the pretext of making up for damages resulting from racism in Europe, they established the most aggressive, racist country in another territory.

Dear friends, today the human society is facing a kind of racism which has an ugliness that has completely distorted the honour of mankind at the verge of the third millennium and it has made the global society shameful. The global Zionism is the complete symbol of racism.

Cultural movements on their own are not sufficient to fight this evil phenomenon. We should try to put an end to the misuse of international means by the Zionists and their supporters. And by respecting nations' demands, we should motivate the united governments to eliminate this clear racism.

Do you have trouble understanding the language? There are times when jihadists too speak in elliptical and allegorical terms, but it shouldn't be too hard to know what they mean. If you are having doubts about the last quotation, the same source said explicitly on another occasion, "The Jews should know that they are nearing the last days of their lives...Israel must be wiped off the face of the map." Clear enough.

So, how many do you think you got right as to their time in history?

Yes, the first Call to Jihad – opening with the chilling words, "Kill them!" is from the era of the Armenian Genocide, reprinted specifically from *The Missionary, Review of the World in July 1915*. Do you have any question as to the significance of this kind of statement in enabling, bringing about and justifying the terrible genocide of the Armenian and other non-Moslem peoples by the Ottoman Turks in what we know was the Armenian Genocide? With all that you know would you minimize, trivialize, explain away, reinterpret, or wink at these words? The second statement that there is no point to life for anyone who is not a believer is from a Sheik in Nazareth, Israel, speaking in September 2001 after 9/11.

The next statement is from no less than Osama bin Laden, and the victim people to whom he refers are the American people. (Excerpts from text of Osama bin Laden's Statement, October 7, 2001, by the Associated Press). Similarly, the BBC reported that the Taliban's Supreme Leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, warned in a BBC interview of a plan to destroy the United States.

"If God's help is with us, this will happen within a short period of time—keep in mind this prediction."

Asked if this meant the possible use of nuclear, chemical or biological arms, Mullah Omar said it was not a matter of weapons.

"The real matter is the extinction of America, and, God willing, it will fall to the ground."

The fourth statement is by the leader of a UN member state, Ahmadinejad, on April 21, 2009, speaking no less than to an international meeting sponsored by the United Nations at what we know as the Durban II Conference. Speaking in this forum, Ahmadinejad avoided the direct calls for the destruction of Israel which he has been stating promiscuously for years. It is reported that on his way back from Durban to Iran he redoubled these explicit calls. And there is a plethora of other openly murderous statements by this man, and his fellow leaders, and one should also note along with a state-level devotion to open denials of the historical validity of the Holocaust.

Yes, all over our world today the calls to jihad are endless. An influential Egyptian Moslem leader, Sheik Youself Al_Quaradawi, about whom one of my editors of a book I wrote on suicide bombing some years ago -- a lovely liberal Jewish woman -- had insisted that I tone

down my supposedly anticlerical and anti-Moslem statements says, "Allah, take this oppressive Jewish, Zionist band of people and kill them, down to the very last one."

This was an oath found in a house in Kabul used by a Pakistani Islamist group:

I, Amir Maawia Sididiqi, son of Abdul Siddiqi, state in the presence of God that I will slaughter infidels my entire life. And with the will of God, I will do these killing in the supervision and guidance with Harkat ul Ansar. May God give me strength in fulfilling this oath.

A Sheik in Gaza City said:

Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and Americans who are like them – and those who stand by them.

Alan Cowell reported in the New York Times from London in 2006:

A prosecutor told a London court on Monday that Dhiren Barot, the most senior Qaeda operative known to have been captured in Britain, had plotted "a memorable black day for the enemies of Islam" by killing "hundreds if not thousands of innocent people" in Britain and the United States. Barot, 34, who converted to Islam from Hinduism, was said to have worked on plans to use a radioactive dirty bomb and limousines jammed with gas canisters meant to explode in underground parking garages. The potential targets included the New York Stock Exchange, the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund in Washington and, in London, a subway train as it traveled under the Thames.

Another report by Alan Cowell in the New York Times was in connection with the London bombings on July 7, 2005:

On the day before the first anniversary of the London bombings, Al Jazeera television showed a video that appeared to be a last testament recorded in advance by one of the four attackers warning that, "What you have witnessed now is only the beginning." The tape also showed what seemed to be a terrorist training site and a map of London with areas circled as potential targets.

Speaking on the video in the accent of his native Yorkshire, Mr. Shehzad Tanweer said, "What you have witnessed now is only the beginning of a string of attacks that will continue and become stronger."

To conclude, all of the above are cut from the same cloth of race and people hatred, ethno-religious-nationalist superiority, a quest for power over others if not the whole world, joy and legitimacy in murder of as many human beings as possible. The same is true in Armenia-Turkey, Iran, Israel, Afghanistan-Pakistan, the USA, Great Britain and, terrifyingly, many more places in the world we live in. This is what the Armenian Genocide, like the Holocaust, like the Cambodian Genocide, like Mao's and Stalin's murdering of millions of their countrymen and every case of genocide means.

To really commemorate the Armenian Genocide, we ALL have our work cut out for us.