Two US congressmen have issued statements to commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the 228 Incident.

Representatives Scott Garrett of New Jersey and Kenny Merchant of Texas, both Republicans, published a history of the incident and its impact on modern Taiwan in Congressional Record, the official record of the proceedings and debates of the US Congress.

Garrett said the incident helped “galvanize Taiwan’s struggle for independence,” while Merchant said it “helped pave the way for Taiwan’s momentous transformation to a thriving and pluralistic democracy.”

Bob Yang (□□□), president of the Washington-based Formosan Association for Public Affairs, said: “Two twenty-eight must never be forgotten. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

“Like many politically motivated historic tragedies throughout history that are regularly commemorated in other parts of the world, we have a responsibility to continue memorializing the lives of the people [who] perished during the massacre in 1947,” he said.”

“The massacre and the subsequent White Terror of the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT] government left an indelible mark on Taiwan’s road toward democracy and freedom,” he said.

Yang said the statements -issued by the two US congressmen highlighted the reality that even though the massacre took place in Taiwan, “the sorrows from such a tragedy are shared by everyone around the world who is concerned about human rights and freedom.”

Garrett said in his statement that an estimated 18,000 people lost their lives in the massacre, while Merchant said estimates varied from 10,000 to 30,000.

“The incident is now openly discussed and commemorated as Peace Memorial Day,” Merchant said, adding “the details of the incident have become the subject of investigation. Monuments and memorial parks to the incident victims have been erected in a number of cities in Taiwan.”

Source: Taipei Times 2010/03/01