

*Bob Dole*



**NEWS**

**U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS**

**FROM:**

**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY  
77TH ANNIVERSARY OF TRAGEDY  
OFFICIAL RECOGNITION STILL NEEDED**

**WASHINGTON - SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS) TODAY MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON THE SENATE FLOOR TO COMMEMORATE THE 77TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE.**

LAST FRIDAY, APRIL 24, MARKED THE 77TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE. BETWEEN THE YEARS 1915 - 1923, APPROXIMATELY ONE AND A HALF MILLION ARMENIANS PERISHED AS A RESULT OF THE BRUTAL POLICIES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. ALTHOUGH THE TERM "GENOCIDE" WAS NOT COINED UNTIL YEARS LATER, IT IS SADLY THE ONLY ACCURATE WORD TO DESCRIBE THE TERRIBLE SERIES OF EVENTS THAT LEFT A RESIDUAL ARMENIAN POPULATION OF ONLY ABOUT 100,000 IN THAT REGION.

SADLY, THIS BODY HAS NEVER MUSTERED THE MORAL COURAGE AND CONVICTION TO DEAL STRAIGHTFORWARDLY WITH ARMENIAN GENOCIDE. POLITICAL PRESSURE, NO-HOLDS-BARRED LOBBYING, AND THE EXPENDITURE OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS HAVE PREVENTED THE SENATE FROM PASSING AN APPROPRIATE COMMEMORATIVE RESOLUTION.

BUT THOSE OF US WHO ARE WILLING TO LOOK HISTORY IN THE EYE, AND WHO SEE THE DANGER OF CLOSING OUR EYES AND HEARTS TO THE TRUTH OF THE TRAGEDY WHICH TOOK PLACE, WILL NOT CEASE IN OUR EFFORTS TO REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED. SO THIS YEAR, AS IN THE PAST, I BELIEVE IT IS BOTH RIGHT AND ESSENTIAL TO REMEMBER THIS TERRIBLE TRAGEDY. ONLY IN THAT WAY CAN WE HELP ENSURE THAT THESE HORRIBLE EVENTS WILL NEVER AGAIN TAKE PLACE.

WHILE WE HAVE NOT PASSED A RESOLUTION, OUR PAST DEBATE HAS NOT ONLY BENEFITTED THE SENATE BUT HAS ALSO BROUGHT A GREATER AWARENESS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ABOUT THESE EVENTS. MEANWHILE, THE MOUNTING BODY OF SCHOLARLY WORK ON THIS ISSUE HAS CONTINUED TO REMOVE ANY REMAINING SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE FACT OF THIS TRAGEDY.

ONLY ONE PARTY CONTINUES TO INSIST IT ALL NEVER HAPPENED -- THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY. I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR IN EVERY STATEMENT I HAVE MADE THAT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HISTORY OF THE GENOCIDE RESTS WITH EITHER THE TURKISH PEOPLE OR THEIR MODERN-DAY GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE OFFERED TO AMEND AND RE-WRITE OUR RESOLUTION TO UNDERSCORE THAT POINT. BUT ANKARA HAS NOT BUDGED.

THAT IS TOO BAD, FOR TURKEY WOULD ONLY ENHANCE ITS OWN IMAGE BY ACKNOWLEDGING THESE SAD MOMENTS IN HISTORY. THAT IS A TRAGEDY, BECAUSE WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO PUT THE GENOCIDE ISSUE TO REST UNTIL ALL INTERESTED PARTIES REACH A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST, AND A COMMON AGREEMENT TO GO FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE ON THE BASIS OF AN HONEST RENDERING OF HISTORY.

AS OPERATION DESERT STORM AGAIN DEMONSTRATED, TURKEY IS AN IMPORTANT FRIEND AND PARTNER TO THE UNITED STATES, AND WE HIGHLY VALUE OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE. THAT FRIENDSHIP WOULD NOT SUFFER FROM--AND, IN FACT, COULD ONLY BE STRENGTHENED BY--COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST.

THIS 77TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENOCIDE COMES AT A TIME OF RAPID CHANGE FOR ARMENIA. WITH THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT ARMENIAN STATE IS TAKING BOLD STEPS TO PURSUE DEMOCRACY AND A FREE MARKET ECONOMY. ARMENIA AND THE OTHER REPUBLICS OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION ARE LOOKING TOWARD NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS.

IF EVER THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR ARMENIA AND TURKEY TO LAY DOWN THEIR HISTORIC ENMITIES AND TRY TO FORGE A NEW FUTURE OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION, THAT TIME IS NOW.

I AM CONVINCED THE ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT, UNDER THE COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT TER PETROSSIAN, IS READY TO MAKE THAT ATTEMPT.

JUDGING BY THEIR CLEAR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY AT HOME AND THEIR WARM RELATIONSHIP WITH US, I BELIEVE THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO TRY, TOO.

WE CANNOT ALLOW HISTORY TO DICTATE OUR LIVES. BUT NEITHER CAN WE FORGET HISTORY, NOR TURN OUR BACKS ON THE TRUTH. LET ALL OF US, EVEN AS WE REMEMBER THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF THE PAST, REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO MAKING SURE IT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN; AND TO WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF ALL.

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