



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE HAILS 61ST ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN INDEPENDENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Following is a statement delivered by Senator Bob Dole (R.—Kansas) last week in tribute to the 61st anniversary of Armenian independence:

"On May 28, 1918, the Armenian people at last came to the end of their long quest for self-determination. The persistence of the Armenian people in pursuing this goal is proof of its cogency. In order to better appreciate the importance of this historic occasion, I would like to cite some of those enormous obstacles the Armenian people overcame in order to gain independence.

"Armenia has been subject to foreign domination almost continuously since the days of the Roman Empire. It was subjugated by many different nations, and in the 16th century was enslaved by the Ottoman Empire. This domination became particularly invidious when the Turks began a genocidal campaign against the Armenians in 1894. This brutal massacre, steeped in history, reached its peak in 1915, when 1,500,000 Armenians were slaughtered," Dole said.

"On May 28, 1918, realizing it was the only way to escape Turkish oppression, the Armenians proclaimed themselves free and independent. Fighting bravely, the Armenians succeeded in driving out their oppressors. The Treaty of Sevres, signed by Turkey and the Allies in 1920 enlarged the new nation to include most of historic Armenia.

"Mr. President, lamentably, this treaty was never adhered to. In November of the same year, Armenia was invaded from the west by Turkey and from the east by Russia. Caught in the jaws of this huge vise, the young nation was crushed and divided between its oppressors," continued Dole.

"I have no doubt that one day Armenia will again be a free and independent nation. A people that can retain their national identity, despite the kind of suffering the Armenian people have endured, possess the strength of will to guarantee their eventual freedom.

"Mr. President, I call on the Senate to join in commemorating such a courageous people as the Armenians. In this manner, we can continue to draw inspiration from the Armenians' courageous struggle for freedom and self-determination. The determination of these peoples should serve as a beacon of hope to all struggling for their freedoms under the dark pale of oppression.

"Mr. President, may our defense of freedom be as unyielding as the Armenians' quest for it," Dole concluded.