

# Bob Dole and the Armenian Genocide. From Dr. K to Mr. Byrd

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**During his long political career, Bob Dole was a loyal friend of the Armenian American community and a consistent supporter of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States. His attachment to this cause stemmed from his special relationship with an Armenian American surgeon, Dr. Hampar Kelikian, who gave new meaning to Dole's life after he returned from World War II severely handicapped. It led him to defend Armenia and the Armenian people in Congress and to fight for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the United States (which proved reluctant to antagonize Turkey, its NATO ally). In 1990, Dole and Armenian activists led a long and tough battle in the Senate to pass Senate Joint Resolution 212 (S. J. Res. 212), a resolution recognizing the Genocide. They faced strong opposition from Turkey, the Executive branch, and Robert Byrd, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The resolution was eventually rejected. This article analyzes Dole's strong relationship with the Armenians and his struggle to obtain the recognition of the Genocide in Congress. It focuses on Dole and Byrd, and it discusses how the Senate operated, Congress-Executive relations, and the significance of lobbying.**

Robert J. Dole will be remembered for his defeats in both his Vice-Presidential (in 1976) and Presidential (in 1996) bids, but also for his impressive longevity in Congress, especially as a Republican senator from Kansas.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1969, after eight years as a House representative, he was elected to the upper chamber and kept the seat for 27 years (from 1969 to 1996). He served as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Minority Leader, and Majority Leader. A pragmatic conservative whose conservatism tended to soften over time ([Clark](#)), he developed an interest for social and Human Rights issues and, sometimes, "an appetite for bipartisanship" ("Bob Dole's Odyssey"). Dole will also be remembered for a few important laws which he proposed and/or heavily supported, such as the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 (focusing on intellectual property), the Farm Bill of 1985, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

One aspect of Bob Dole's political engagement is less well known and might not occupy the place it deserves in his political legacy: his support for Armenia and his commitment to a full recognition of the Armenian Genocide.<sup>[2]</sup>

In April 1945, at the front in northern Italy, the young lieutenant Dole was hit in his back and right arm by a German bullet or exploding shell (Thompson 30). Paralyzed for several months, he almost lost the use of his right arm, and also lost hope in his future. But in 1947 the Chicago-based Armenian American surgeon, Dr. Hampar Kelikian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide and a pioneer in the restoration of damaged limbs, helped restore his physical condition and his mind. He operated on Dole several times,

helping him accept his handicap, overcome it, and believe in his future. During this process, the two men became close friends. Dr. Kelikian, or Dr. K as Dole would often affectionately refer to him, recounted to Dole the history of the Armenian people and the Armenian Genocide, which claimed the life of as many as 1.5 million Armenians—including three sisters of Kelikian (Cramer 133). In the 1970s and 1980s, Dole developed a close relationship with the Armenian American community,<sup>[3]</sup> and eventually came to support their push for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the United States, which was and still is vehemently denied by Turkey.

Using mostly materials from the congressional archives and from the archival collections of the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics (University of Kansas), my goal in this article is to study the political support Senator Dole gave to Armenians and more specifically to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in the US Senate at the turn of 1980s and 1990s. In the process, the article addresses many significant questions on which it seeks to shed new light, such as the way the Senate operates, the Congress-Executive relationship, and the significance of ethnic and foreign lobbying in Washington DC. It also provides specific information and an original look on Dole himself, as well as on his main opponent on the Senate floor, the influential southern Democratic senator Robert Byrd. In the first part, I discuss why and how Bob Dole became a strong supporter of US recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Then, in the second and third parts of the article, I focus on his main congressional battle in favor of the recognition: the struggle for S. J. Res. 212 in 1989.<sup>[4]</sup> In the second part, I analyze the conflicts and political struggles between Dole and the Armenians on one side, and Turkey and its allies in Washington DC on the other. I also discuss how the resolution passed—narrowly—the Senate Judiciary Committee. In the third and final part, I study the lobbying activities of both the Armenian and Turkish camps, the debates on the Senate floor, led by Senator Dole and Robert Byrd, and how S. J. Res. 212 was finally rejected.



Senator Robert Dole during a visit to the 2008 RNC – Republican National Convention. [Wikimedia](#). Author: Kevin Rofidal. [CC-BY-SA 3.0](#)

## The United States, Bob Dole, and the Armenian Genocide

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### The United States and the Question of the Armenian Genocide

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- i. While the destruction of Ottoman Armenians has never occupied as central a place in US political and cultural life as, for example, the Holocaust, the United States considerably assisted the Armenian victims during and after the genocide. The Near East Relief supported survivors with an estimated \$116 million between 1915 and 1930 (that is to say approximately 1.5 billion in 2017 US dollars) and directly rescued several hundreds of thousands of refugees and orphans in a massive humanitarian campaign that even today is praised by Armenian Americans.
- i. The American people, especially those born in the 1900s, 1910s, and 1920s, were quite aware of the fate and sufferings of the Armenians, and expressed strong sympathy and compassion for them. As early as 1919, President Wilson explained that “there is no region of the world toward which the sympathies of the United States have gone out so abundantly as to the poor people of Armenia” (329). In the first lines of the preface to his book *Starving Armenians*, the American historian Merrill D. Peterson, who was born in 1921, explains: “The first words I remember my mother saying to me in the dim light of childhood were ‘Clean your plate! Think of the starving Armenians!’” (xi). In his autobiographical book *Black Dog of Fate*, published in 1997, the Armenian American poet and scholar Peter Balakian presented the Armenian plight as “the most dramatic human rights issue of its day” (176). He also recalled meeting an African American from Charleston, South Carolina, in New York in the late 1960s/early 1970s, who still remembered the sufferings of Ottoman Armenians because of the mark they left on him when as a child.
- i. The Armenian massacres were somewhat forgotten in the 1930s and 1940s. The United States had other serious social and political concerns. The Armenian survivors focused on reconstructing their lives and had little energy to mobilize for the acknowledgement of their tragic experience. Only after World War II and the Holocaust did things start to change. First, immediately after the war, when law scholar Raphael Lemkin conceptualized the crime of genocide, he applied his definition to the Armenian Massacres. Second, the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 brought the issue of genocide to the attention of the international community ([UN Human Rights Office](#)). Finally, the commemoration of the Shoah also played an important role. It is in this context that many Armenians throughout the diaspora began to address the Armenian Genocide as an issue affecting their identity and demanding political redress.
- i. Turkey vehemently opposed any type of recognition and reparation for the crime committed by its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. The denial was consubstantial with the crime itself, but it intensified and became more ‘professional’ in the 1960s and 1970s. It increased the polarization between Armenians and the Turkish governments, and forced the former to thus turned elsewhere for political support, particularly from countries where they were living such as the United States.
- i. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed attempts to gain formal and official recognition of the Armenian Genocide in and by the United States. This process was, and still is today, highly complicated by the fact that Turkey is a major NATO—which it integrated in 1952—and Middle Eastern ally of the United States. Yet, thanks to the effort of the US

Armenian lobby,<sup>[5]</sup> 48 states of the Union, the House of Representatives, several Congressional Committees, one President (Ronald Reagan in a 1981 statement), one US ambassador to Armenia (John M. Evans in 2005), and a few other federal and non-federal institutions have recognized the Armenian Genocide. However, mostly because of pressures from the Executive branch (itself strongly lobbied by Turkey), no legislation has passed to date, and the Executive branch maintains an ambiguous position of non-recognition, non-denial.

## Bob Dole and Dr. K

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0. Bob Dole's first encounter with the tragic fate of the Armenian people probably took place through discussions with Dr. Hampar Kelikian in the late 1940s or 1950s. When they first met in early 1947, Dole was in a poor condition. The young man of 23 was extremely thin and had lost a kidney. "[He] spent 39 months recovering. He was paralyzed for months, near death twice, couldn't clean or feed himself for more than a year. When the Army sent him home, saying it could do no more, his right arm was fused to his body at a 45-degree angle" (Russakoff). The two years of tough medical procedures had left him without any hope about playing basketball (his favorite sport) or becoming a doctor (as he had always wished). Dr. K operated on Dole seven times in seven years and never requested money for his treatments (Thompson 35). Some years later, he summed up the reasons why he did so: "I do what I can for the country, both out of gratitude and out of respect. Dole epitomized America to me. He had the faith to endure" ("Time May Be Right"). The operations were long and tough, but Kelikian's innovative use of leg and bone muscle helped restore some functionality to Dole's arm.
1. "But surgery was a minor part of what Kelikian did for Dole. [...] An Armenian who arrived in America in 1920 with \$2 and a rug, [he] suggested that Dole go into law, then politics, as a way of using what he had left—his mind, wit, and will. Dole said he went to Kelikian seeking a 'miracle,' and learned to face life without one" (Russakoff). The two men met often and became close, and remained in contact long after their last medical appointment. The surgeon was very helpful to the young man from Kansas who began to feel like a sort of adoptive son (Thompson 36). Half a century after their first meeting, Senator Dole explained: "Dr. K had an impact on my life second only to my family" (Dole). When Kelikian died in 1983, at the age of 84, Dole was devastated. On the day of his passing, Dole paid a tribute to his surgeon on the floor of the Senate. Citing Ernest Hemingway and reading a poem by Robert Frost, he referred to him as a hero (129 Cong. Rec. 21104–21105). A few days later, he attended the funeral in Chicago, and Alice Kelikian, Dr. K's daughter and also a Dole's close relation, said, "you would have thought he, rather than I, had lost a father" (Russakoff).

## Bob Dole and the Question of the Armenian Genocide

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2. Not only did the Armenian American surgeon familiarize Robert Dole with the Armenian Genocide, he also convinced Dole of the moral and symbolic importance of officially recognizing it as genocide (Dole). In the 1960s and 1970s, Dole, first representative and

then junior senator from Kansas, focused mostly on issues of direct interest to his constituency. At first it was colleagues like Richard L. Roudebush (Republican representative from Indiana), whose reelection Dole publicly supported in 1970,<sup>[6]</sup> or then-Representative Gerald Ford, who would choose Dole as his running-mate in the 1976 presidential election<sup>[7]</sup> and raised the question of the Armenian Genocide in Congress. The issue gained importance in the Senate in the 1980s. The House had already formally recognized it in 1975, by the vote of House Joint Resolution (H. J. Res.) 148 (designating April 24, 1975—the commemoration day of the 60th Anniversary of the genocide—as “National Day of Remembrance of Man’s Inhumanity to Man”), under the impetus of Speaker ‘Tip’ O’Neill. But the Senate was more careful with foreign affairs and less sensitive to Armenian lobbying. After passing the House, H. J. Res. 148 did not get out of the Senate Judiciary Committee (of which Bob Dole was not a member)<sup>[8]</sup>. In April 1980, for the 65th anniversary of the Genocide, two speeches were delivered in the upper house by Senators Dole and Carl Levin, but they were short (compared to the ones in the House) and quite unpolitical. Only commemorative, they did not seek to denounce Turkey or make any claim for the Armenians (126 Cong. Rec. 9000 in 1980). In April 1983, 1985, 1986, and 1987, other speeches of the same kind were delivered by senators—including one by Dole, in 1983 (136 Cong. Rec. 2168 in 1990).

3. It was only in 1983–1984 that the Armenian Genocide was seriously and quite massively raised again in the Senate, as a political issue, with the introduction of two resolutions: S. J. Res. 87 and Senate Resolution (S. Res.) 241. Although commemorative in essence, S. J. Res. 87, whose title was “A Joint Resolution Designating a Day of Remembrance for Victims of Genocide,” made clear in its summary that it “[d]esignates April 24, 1984, as a day of remembrance for all victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry who died between 1915 and 1923.”<sup>[9]</sup> The title of S. Res. 241 made its purpose clear: “A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the foreign policy of the United States should take account of the genocide of the Armenian people, and for other purposes.”<sup>[10]</sup> In both cases the resolutions passed the committees to be “placed on Senate legislative calendar under general orders,” but neither was discussed nor submitted to a vote in the upper chamber. It is interesting to note that both resolutions were supported more than thirty representatives, among them influential and ‘heavyweight’ senators from both camps, including Bob Dole, Ted Kennedy, Alfonse D’Amato, Joe Biden, Daniel Moynihan, Paul Tsongas, Christopher Dodd, and many others. But (1) a majority of the supporters were democratic and therefore in the camp opposing then-president Reagan, and (2) neither Howard Baker (Republican Majority Leader) nor Robert Byrd (Minority Leader and President Pro Tempore of the Senate) were among the cosponsors.
4. Of the two resolutions, it seemed obvious that S. Res. 241, the one “expressing the sense of the Senate that the foreign policy of the United States should take account of the genocide of the Armenian people” would be—and eventually was—firmly opposed by the administration and its close supporters in Senate. S. J. Res. 87, however, was purely commemorative and perceived by many as one of the milder of the several Armenian Genocide resolutions that had been proposed in Congress. Still, pressured by the Executive, the Republican Policy Committee of the Senate put a hold on this resolution

and first refused to divulge to Bob Dole (and probably the other supporters of the resolution) who requested the hold. The Committee argued that it was a “privileged information.”<sup>[11]</sup> After a few days, Dole’s staffers succeeded in getting the information and were told that the hold was put by the then-chair of the Republican Policy Committee, Senator John Tower of Texas and by Senator Jeremiah Denton of Alabama (and also a former Rear-Admiral of the US Navy, who had retired in 1977), and that they had been requested to do so by the White House, itself responding to pressure from the Turkish government.<sup>[12]</sup> The State Department was also involved in these behind-the-scene mobilizations to prevent the resolution from reaching the Senate’s floor.<sup>[13]</sup>

5. However, it is important to note that the White House’s position on the issue was more complex than it may appear at first glance. When questioned by George Deukmejian, an Armenian American and the Republican Governor of California, about the Executive’s opposition to the resolutions, the White House apparently had trouble in asserting a clear position, and disagreements among the president’s entourage and staffers emerged. In the response finally sent to Governor Deukmejian, President Reagan gave some political and geopolitical justifications to his decision, and circumvented the word genocide (whereas he had used it in 1981 and many times before being elected president). He did so with the approval—and even probably under the impulse—of the State Department and the National Security Council,<sup>[14]</sup> embodied by National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane, a firm opponent to the Armenian resolutions. However, some of Reagan’s staffers, including James Cicconi, Special Assistant to the president and to the White House Chief of Staff James Baker, and possibly James Baker himself, were in favor of using the term—and even produced draft versions of the written response to Deukmejian including the term genocide. More significantly, Vice-President George H. W. Bush apparently was on the same page and thought that the president “should not be positioned in retreat from where he was on this issue.”<sup>[15]</sup>

## The Making of S. J. Res. 212: Dole and Turkey Maneuver

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### The Preparation and Introduction of S. J. Res. 212

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6. The tense discussions and numerous behind-the-scenes political maneuvering that led to the rejection of the S. J. Res. 87 and S. Res. 241 came in the aftermath of Dr. Kelikian’s passing in 1983. In 1987, another attempt to pass legislation in the House was rejected as well, after steady lobbying from the administration. President Reagan was concerned by the fact H. Res. 238 would make “[o]ur Turkish friends nervous,” as he wrote in his diaries (524). It can be assumed that Dole, who supported the two Senate resolutions, was disappointed.
7. Meanwhile, Dole got closer and closer to the Armenian Americans. During the presidential primaries of 1987–1988, which he lost to George H. W. Bush, his campaign fundraiser was of Armenian background (Suzie Nakasian), and he received varying degrees of support from influential Armenian American Republicans, such as Chuck Haytaian (of the Armenian Assembly of America) and Edna Bogosian (President of the

Massachusetts Federation of Republican Women). There was an “Armenian-Americans for Dole Program,” and the “Dole For President” organization was co-chaired by Hirair Hovnanian (also Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Assembly) and Matthew J. Hatchadorian (Ohio Republican leader) was its Political Chairman.<sup>[16]</sup> Dole expressed positive feelings towards the Armenians and made clear that it was “time for the Congress of the United States to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide” (“Deukmejian Calls”).

8. Meanwhile, he showed concern and support when a terrible earthquake devastated the northern regions of Soviet Armenia in December 1988, tens of thousands of people. Immediately after the earthquake, Dole sponsored and secured legislation providing US aid to the victims (“Dole Calls”). A few months later, Dole and his wife Elizabeth, who was at that time Secretary of Labor, visited Soviet Armenia on behalf of the recently elected president, George H. W. Bush, carrying with them supplies for humanitarian activities in Armenia. Meanwhile, the first scheduled stop immediately after their arrival in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, was a visit to and wreath laying at Dzidzernagapert, the Armenian Genocide memorial.<sup>[17]</sup> Thus, in the late 1980s, when the Armenian American lobbyists decided to try once again to pass a legislation recognizing the Armenian Genocide, they naturally decided that Dole—who had also previously supported the UN Genocide Convention ratification and a legislation denouncing the Cambodian Genocide (136 Cong. Rec. 2239)—should be their patron in the Senate. “When the Armenian Assembly and Kelikian’s daughter Alice asked him to help with a new resolution under preparation in 1989,” as one author puts it, “Dole signed on without hesitation” (Bobelian 177).
9. This was planned to be a joint resolution titled “Designating April 24, 1990 as ‘National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.’” Dole would lead the fight for the passage of S. J. Res. 212 in the Senate, and in the House, H. J. Res. 417 was introduced by Democratic Representative David Bonior and was initially supported by Representatives Toricelli, Lehman, Dornan, Moorhead, and Pashayan; four of the five representatives were from California. However, the joint resolution had trouble finding support and did not make it out of committee.<sup>[18]</sup>
10. In the Senate, Dole’s team and the Armenian lobbyists succeeded in building a large bipartisan coalition in favor of the project. Thanks to sustained efforts and, among other things, a “Dear Colleague” letter written by Dole and sent to the senators just before the introduction of the bill on September 29, 1989,<sup>[19]</sup> they soon succeeded in getting 54 cosponsors.<sup>[20]</sup> In the following months some cosponsors rallied while others withdrew their sponsorship. Among the early cosponsors who maintained their sponsorship until the vote were highly influential senators such as Ted Kennedy, Jesse Helms, John Kerry, Jim Jeffords, Joe Biden, Wendell Ford, Alfonse D’Amato, Al Gore, Chris Dodd, Claiborne Pell, and Joe Lieberman. However, it is important to note that Democratic (that is to say then-majority) heavyweights such as President Pro Tempore and former Majority Leader Robert Byrd or then-Majority Leader George Mitchell, were not among the cosponsors. Nor was minority Whip Alan Simpson. Yet, the support of the bill by a maximum of 62 cosponsors was exceptional, especially if we consider that between 1973 and 2004, the average Senate bill was cosponsored by only three to five senators (Fowler 458). This

initial support goes to the credit of Bob Dole and the Armenian Assembly of America but also reflected the fact that, at first glance, S. J. Res. 212, seemed purely commemorative and not too controversial for many senators. As the title of the resolution explains, it sought to establish a “National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923,” on April 24, 1990. It did not impose any foreign policy change on the Executive and avoided indicating any responsibility for the Republic of Turkey. However, the short text of the law mentioned the “G-Word.” It also mentioned both “the Ottoman Empire” and “the Republic of Turkey.”<sup>[21]</sup> As a joint resolution it had the potential to be voted on in the House and become law.

## The Armenian Camp Organizes and S. J. Res. 212 Passes the Judiciary Committee

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1. Turkish lobbying began immediately after the introduction of the bill. The first step was to diminish the strong coalition of cosponsors. While a maximum of 62 senators had cosponsored the bill, the number actually varied between 43 and 54. Ultimately, nineteen cosponsors withdrew in response to lobbying by Turkey and its allies, as well as through pressure from the Executive. Among the senators who withdrew sponsorship, many were original cosponsors. Some were very influential, such as Strom Thurmond and Sam Nunn (who withdrew sponsorship only one day after he had granted it on October 4, 1989).<sup>[22]</sup> Some of these gentlemen—out of the 62 senators involved in this sponsorship, only two were women, the two only female senators of the 101st Congress, and did not withdraw<sup>[23]</sup>—were close allies and friends of Dole, but they could not resist the lobbying pressure. For example, Republican Senator Simpson, then-Minority Whip wrote Dole a letter at the end of October: “Between the time you introduced the resolution and the time it got to the Judiciary Committee, my office had been flooded with mail and telephone calls—all negative.”<sup>[24]</sup> He explained being lobbied in particular by former senator and then-lobbyist under contract with Turkey Charles ‘Mac’ Mathias.<sup>[25]</sup> Although the initial co-sponsorship of the bill was quite remarkable, passage was never assured.
2. The next step for the supporters of the bill was to obtain a favorable vote in the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, and not to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which would have been more likely to invoke the ‘national interest’ to reject it. Moreover, the Committee on the Judiciary was chaired by Joe Biden, known to be a supporter of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and with Ted Kennedy and Paul Simon as members. The vote, which Minority Whip Simpson succeeded in postponing for more than two weeks (Wright 17), was extremely close. Senators Biden, Kennedy, Simon, DeConcini (all four who cosponsored the bill), Leahy and Thurmond (who had both originally sponsored the bill but then withdrew their sponsorship), and Grassley and Kohl (both not cosponsors), voted in favor of the bill. Senators Heflin, Specter, Metzenbaum, Humphrey, Hatch, and Simpson voted “Nay” (Bobelian 185). This 8–6 vote, in favor of the



resolution, was largely obtained thanks to the efforts of Dole and supportive committee members. It was a victory for Dole's camp and S. J. Res. 212 was reported without amendment and without written report by Senator Biden on October 18, 1989.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Turkey Mobilizes Its Allies and Lobbies against S. J. Res. 212

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3. Lobbying against the resolution soon became more diversified and sophisticated: the resolution faced direct opposition from the Executive branch; the senators were also under the constant pressure by Turkey (both directly, i.e. pressure from Turkish officials—and indirectly, i.e. pressure from lobbyists under contract with Ankara); Israeli representatives and some US-Jewish leaders and organizations, and the Defense industries lobbyists also intervened against S. J. Res. 212. In the face of this opposition, support declined. Minority Whip Simpson, in trying to justify his opposition to the law, explained to Dole as early as October 30, 1989, that the pressure on him was too strong and came from “everyone.”<sup>[27]</sup> He also said that he “became the focal point for the greatest lobbying campaign [he had] experienced in a long while,” whereas a Senate staffer, on condition of anonymity, presented this campaign as “one of the slimiest” he had seen in eight years on Capitol Hill.<sup>[28]</sup>
4. Turkey first sought the support of Jewish American leaders, organizations, and Israel against S. J. Res. 212. According to the Israeli ambassador to Washington, DC, “in early October a meeting took place in New York between the Foreign Minister of Turkey and a group of Jewish leaders. In that meeting an approach was made concerning the above-mentioned legislation.”<sup>[29]</sup> The Turkish camp gained the support of several Jewish American organizations and leaders—although many recognized that this lobbying campaign placed them in a difficult situation (Blitzer)—and much lobbying opposing S. J. Res. 212 was reported in the following weeks. The Israeli embassy in Washington, DC—although the Israeli ambassador denied it—and some Israeli diplomats, also mobilized against it (Wright 17). It seems that lobbying by Israel and some Jewish American leaders and organizations was mostly motivated by Israel's interest in maintaining good geopolitical relations with Turkey.
5. But it also seems that some Jewish leaders feared that characterizing other massacres as genocides might ultimately reduce the uniqueness of the Holocaust and therefore weaken its memorialization.<sup>[30]</sup> Lobbying was so strong and problematic—and, according to Bob Dole, partially illegal—that Dole reported it on the floor of the Senate on November 3, 1989; officials of the Israeli ministry of Foreign Affairs later explained that the embassy had been “overzealous” (Shalev). Israeli and Jewish lobbying probably decreased in intensity after the vote on the resolution in the Judiciary Committee when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that “the Israeli government d[id] not deal with this [the Armenian resolution]” and “it is not our business” (Shalev). The Jewish Turkish community also intervened, possibly under pressure from Ankara (Bali 272), and many lobbyists under contract with Ankara were well known and influential American Jews, such as Richard Perle, Mark Epstein, or Douglas Feith (Blitzer). As reported by a journalist:

[T]he Jewish community in Turkey engaged a Washington lawyer, Paul Berger, to lobby senators, and has sent a Turkish Jewish representative, Lorry Burla, to Washington to assist him. International Advisors, Inc. (IAI), the lobbying firm created last January by former head of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Morris Amitay, to join in the fight. IAI is backed by the law firm of Feith and Zell, which has a branch in Tel Aviv. (Wright 17)

16. Meanwhile, the Executive branch, itself under constant pressure from Turkey, also did its maximum to oppose the resolution and prevent it from passing. Initially, Dole and the Armenian side “were [...] hopeful that President George H. W. Bush would not object as strenuously as past presidents. During the 1988 president campaign, Bush had in absolute terms pledge to acknowledge the ‘genocide of the Armenian people’ and vowed that the ‘Bush administration will never allow political pressure to prevent our denunciation’ of it” (Bobelian 178). However, despite this promise and despite the fact that he seemed in favor of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide when he was Vice-President, President Bush personally opposed S. J. Res. 212.<sup>[31]</sup> Brent Scowcroft, who in 2000 became the chairman of the American Turkish Council and opposed publicly other Armenian Genocide resolutions in the 2000s, led the opposition from the White House. The State Department, accompanied by US companies doing business with Turkey, the Defense Department and American weapons manufacturers selling arms to Turkey also actively opposed and lobbied against the resolution. In a testimony before the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East in October 1989, President Bush’s Assistant Secretary of State, Raymond Seitz, made clear that “the administration strongly oppose[d] the Armenian resolution” (Lowry). Secretary of State James Baker explained, for his part, that it was preferable to “let history be judge of this unfortunate episode” (“Amorality in Washington”). Meanwhile, in quite a surprising move, the Executive decided to recall the US ambassador to Ankara, Morton Abramowitz, for consultation. In his own words, he “spent months lobbying some sixty senators to reject the resolution” (Abramowitz). Former ambassador to Turkey Robert Strausz-Hupé (who had been in post in Ankara until May 1989), also lobbied against the resolution (136 Cong. Rec. 2320). However, the position of the White House was more ambiguous than it may appear. After the vote in the Judiciary Committee, when it became clear that the resolution had a chance to pass, the White House agreed to discuss the contents of the bill, and ultimately gave its approval to a softened version of it.
17. That is also why the bill was not brought to the Senate floor before February 1990: Dole and his friends were negotiating with the administration and felt that they might receive some support from the White House. It turns out that the White House encouraged softening the language of the bill while opposing its passage at the same time. The initial idea was to push Dole to withdraw S. J. Res. 212 and to work on another bill, with a different text, that would omit or in some way qualify the “G-Word.”<sup>[32]</sup> When it was clear that Dole was determined to lead the fight to its end with the support by many of his colleagues, the White House proposed to work on modifications of the text itself, in order to find a language acceptable for the Turkish side as well. White House Chief of Staff John Sununu and National Security Advisor Scowcroft discussed the question with

Dole many times in January and February 1990. On February 18, a few days before the vote, the *Washington Post* reported that 39 drafts had been produced to try to change the language of the resolution. In a last-minute move, “Dole and Bush agreed to use the term ‘genocide’ in return for changing the resolution from a joint to a concurrent one, forgoing the need for a president signature. The switch took Bush off the hook, and divested the resolution of its legal standing but still affirmed the veracity of the Genocide” (Bobelian 198). Opponents of the resolution in the Senate refused this proposal.

8. These last moves show how intricate the situation was for the White House. On the one hand, President Bush tried to respect his own promise and did not have any political interest in hampering a resolution introduced by the Republican leader in the Senate. On the other hand, he had no other choice than be extremely sensitive to Turkey’s lobbying, so he and his administration opposed to S. J. Res. 212. The Executive and Senators were indeed, in the winter 1989–1990, under constant pressure from Ankara and its lobbyists. After the vote on the resolution by the Committee on the Judiciary,

Turkey [started to make] threats ranging from outright military sanctions to the erection of a monument in the Turkish capital of Ankara to American genocide against the American Indians. Meanwhile, [Turkey announced] four interim sanctions, including a halt to United States Navy visits to Turkey and suspension of the use of certain military training facilities. Nearly 5,000 American troops [were] stationed in Turkey. (McKenna)

9. High-ranking Turkish officials, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, also insisted, in the media, on the fact that the Turkish people were united against the bill and angry at it, indirectly threatening the United States with the possibility of anti-American demonstrations in Turkey. In the meantime, they also met directly with many officials of the US administration and legislators. In early November 1989, Daryal Dabatiday, deputy chief of the Turkish mission in Washington, said that Turkish officials had already met with “every Senator interested in listening” (“US Thinks Twice”). As mentioned earlier, the Turkish government also relied on private lobbyists. After S. J. Res. 212 was rejected, Senator Dole indicated that the Republic of Turkey “ha[d] expended hundreds of thousands of dollars this year alone in a relentless campaign against S. J. Res. 212.” He continued: “We have taken the bluster and blandishments of Turkey’s high-priced lobbyists.”<sup>[33]</sup> This Turkish lobbying campaign was so massive, diversified, and sophisticated that, according to one of Bob Dole’s main staffer, Al Lehn, Turkey went as far as sending three Turkish Armenians, recognized figures among the Armenian community of Turkey,<sup>[34]</sup> to lobby against S. J. Res. 212 probably by the end of 1989. Lehn, who met with them, explained that they told him, “if this [resolution] passes, we could be the victims of a backlash in Turkey, and our blood would be on your hands.”<sup>[35]</sup>
10. Despite this lobbying, only two or three Senators can be really identified as firm opponents to the resolution. However, a highly influential figure took the lead: Robert Byrd, Senior Democratic Senator from West Virginia, former Minority and Majority leader (former Whip as well), and then-Chair of the Appropriations Committee, arguably the most important Committee of the Senate. Byrd, a Southern Democrat, is a complex

character and the reasons behind his opposition are complex too. Interested in Defense and Foreign Policy issues, he made his first trip overseas as a congressional representative to Turkey in 1955. He continued to visit this country and seemed fascinated by its history, its people, its army, as his comments on the Senate's floor show (136 Cong. Rec. 2156, 2158). He was soon identified as a friend of Turkey in the Senate. It is also clear that he quickly understood—quite rightly—that S. J. Res. 212 was as a 'Dole resolution,' and—although he was careful enough to publicly insist on the fact there was nothing personal in his opposition (136 Cong. Rec. 2020)—saw an opportunity to cross swords with the latter. Even though Byrd kept calling him "my dear friend" when he took the Senate's floor (136 Cong. Rec. 2021), as senators sometimes do, it was well-known that Dole was his rival. As his long-time staffer and then biographer David Corbin explains: "there is no doubt that Byrd found satisfaction in defeating Dole on an issue that was so important and personal to him" (388). Two other reasons, difficult to prove, are at least worth speculating about. First, Byrd was the author of several history books and may have opposed legislative intrusion into matters better reserved for professional historians. As he stated on the floor, addressing his fellow senators: "We are politicians. We are not historians" (136 Cong. Rec. 2176). Second, as a Southerner and longtime defender of segregation, he may have worried that officially recognizing racially motivated atrocities would leave the United States open to demands for genocide recognition and reparations from Native Americans and descendants of the enslaved.<sup>[36]</sup> For example, during the debates over S. J. Res. 212, Byrd explained: "[W]e should not put ourselves in the position of making the Senate an instrument of determination of what is genocide and what is not genocide and what race of what nation now or in the far distant past committed the inexplicably horrific crime of genocide" (136 Cong. Rec. 2176).

## Senators Dole and Byrd's Joust and the Gradual Burying of S. J. Res. 212

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### Dole and the Armenians' Engagement for S. J. Res. 212

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1. The Armenian camp, for its part, could also count on some levers and some supporters but, overall, its human and financial resources were far less significant than those of the Republic of Turkey. As Bob Dole repeated several times during the senatorial debates, it was a David v. Goliath fight. The first and main asset that the Armenian side could claim was Bob Dole himself and in his impressive commitment to supporting the resolution. For the senior senator from Kansas, succeeding in passing this piece of legislation soon became a personal matter and a question of honor.

Dole hung photographs of Armenian children in his office. He showed an astonishing drive, 'perhaps the highest intensity I've ever seen from him,' marveled a prominent Senate staffer whose boss opposed Dole's resolution. 'He wouldn't give up, he was absolutely determined to win. It wasn't related to Kansas in any way. It was personal.' (Thompson 184)

2. His staff was very much involved too, and worked efficiently with Armenian lobbyists, and especially with Van Krikorian, of the Armenian Assembly of America. During the resolution debates, which lasted four days, Dole installed Krikorian and Rouben Adalian, a scholar who had joined the Genocide Research Program of the Armenian Assembly in 1987, in his offices in the Senate, and frequently asked for their help in preparing his arguments (Bobelian 198). He talked for hours on the floor and deployed every possible argument to show that the Senate had to pass the resolution. He presented thousands of pages of documents proving that what happened in 1915 was genocide. He did not hesitate in publicly criticizing Turkey, Israel, some Jewish American organizations, as well as the (Republican) Executive branch and some of his colleagues, often by name. He and the Armenians could also count on the support and involvement of senators such as Carl Levin, Paul Simon, Ted Kennedy, Pete Wilson, John Kerry, and some others, who often coordinated their work and arguments with Dole's. A few major Republican personalities, such as Charles Pashayan (representative from California), Barry Zorthian (diplomat and chairman of the Armenian American for Bush-Quayle Committee in 1988), and, above all, Governor Deukmejian vigorously supported the resolution. Deukmejian was particularly active in defending the resolution and directly lobbied senators. Finally, Armenian communities and lobbyists mobilized too. While the Armenian Assembly spent a lot of energy trying to convince lawmakers, it seemed to have few allies among other lobbyists. But rich and influential benefactors among the Armenian American population, as well as rank-and-file voters, were very active in their respective spheres and constituencies. Some survivors of the Armenian Genocide were also sent to the Senate during the last days of the debates over the resolution.<sup>[37]</sup>
3. There were two rounds to the debate, the first lasting three days, from February 20 to February 22, and the second on February 27. The opponents to the resolution knew that the vote would be tight and that the resolution might pass if submitted to a regular vote. That is why Robert Byrd decided he would use a senatorial procedure that he had fondness for, the filibuster, which allows a senator to take the floor for a long period of time to delay or block a vote on impending legislation. Byrd was famous for having used the filibuster to try to block a vote on another (much more pressing) human rights issue: segregation in the South. Former member and recruiter of the Ku Klux Klan, he filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for more than fourteen hours (Corbin 92). In February 1990, he understood this was the best option to block the Armenian Genocide resolution. Indeed, the only solution to end a filibuster is to vote a motion of cloture, which requires the approval of three-fifths of the Senate.

## The Debate on S. J. Res. 212

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4. The first session of debates was long and contested. It lasted for several hours each of the three days. Dole and Byrd spent a lot of time on the floor. On the first day, Tuesday, February 20, among the resolution's opponents, only Byrd spoke (twice). He enumerated many diverse geopolitical arguments against the resolution, claiming that there was no reason for the United States to confront a friendly country like Turkey, also a major NATO ally. Among the resolution's supporters Dole was the one who talked the most (in

four different sessions), but Senators Pressler, Levin, Simon, Wilson, and Pell, also took the floor. They mostly focused on showing that (1) the genocide was an unquestionable historical fact and, to this end, presented many archival documents, and (2) the goal was not to confront modern Turkey but to bring justice and serenity to the Armenians. They also tried to denounce Turkey's lobbying and to present the vote as a just struggle against powerful political and geopolitical interests. This first day of the debates terminated with the deposition of a cloture motion by Dole along with sixteen other senators, on the possibility of ending the debates after the three-day period that had already been agreed upon by the Senate's leadership. The following day, Wednesday, February 21, the debates started again in the afternoon. Senator Byrd immediately took the floor and began his long speech—he said he had prepared a speech of approximately 65 pages ([136 Cong. Rec. 2182](#))—and his filibuster. After one hour and a half and a bit of dispersed speaking, he yielded the floor to Senator Sam Nunn but made clear that he retained the floor after Nunn and potentially other of his colleagues' remarks ([136 Cong. Rec. 2159](#)). Senator Nunn, recognized as an expert in foreign policy and defense matters and chairman of the influential Senate Committee on Armed Service, opposed the resolution and repeated the geopolitical arguments articulated by Byrd the day before. Then, the latter said a few more words and yielded the floor to Senator Timothy Wirth, junior senator from Colorado, and a member of the Committee on Armed Service, who also opposed the resolution. He was followed by another opponent, Senator James Exon, a Democrat from Nebraska, famous for voting against the 1983 resolution establishing Martin Luther King Day ([Schudel](#)).

5. After this short series of speeches against the resolution, senators DeConcini, Simon, Levin, Kennedy, and Sarbanes explained their support for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. They presented historical evidences proving that it was genocide, insisted that S. J. Res. 212 did not target present-day Turkey, denounced Turkish lobbying, and also tried to show that the Congress had a duty to speak out against historical atrocities and had done so in the past. Their talks were interspersed by Byrd's repetitive comments and short contributions: he had not left the floor, but just kindly yielded it to his colleagues. He yielded again to another southern senator who opposed the resolution, Dale Bumpers from Arkansas, whom Dole repeatedly questioned and challenged during the speech. Bumpers, who was initially a cosponsor of S. J. Res. 212, made clear that he reversed his position after Byrd, "the chairman of the Appropriations Committee" and "our former majority leader," asked him to reconsider it ([136 Cong. Rec. 2185](#)). In his comments, he explicitly pointed to the parallel with the South and slavery, and insisted that the resolution unfairly incriminated present-day Turkey and present-day Turks. He explained:

[T]here is another factor that disturbs me, and it is that we are asking this body to blame present-day Turkey and the Turkish people for what happened to Armenians many years ago. I am a son of the South. But I never owned a slave. My father never owned a slave.

And later continued:

Bear in mind that the Armenians in this country whose parents and grandparents suffered still feel some of the pain, just as blacks in this country still feel the results of slavery; some of the hangover from those days is not gone. (136 Cong. Rec. 2185)

16. These arguments, paralleling Turkish and American histories might have spoken to some senators, especially those from the South or from territories where Native Americans had been heavily massacred or suffer(ed) severe discrimination. Byrd, in his next comments, expressed a similar sentiment: "Someone has said that every man, if he goes far back enough, will find that he has in his ancestry a king. He will also find an ancestry with slaves. So if we go back far enough, we can find where many wrongs have been committed" (136 Cong. Rec. 2186). After a speech by senator Boren, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, stressing the interests of American companies doing business with Turkey, the discussions were closed (136 Cong. Rec. 2192–2193). The Senate decided to vote on the motion of cloture the following day (136 Cong. Rec. 2199). However, later in the day, Dole and Byrd spent an additional thirty minutes (fifteen minutes each) reiterating their arguments. Dole's concluding remarks were as follows: "So I urge my colleagues when it comes one o'clock tomorrow to vote to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed. We need sixty votes. It will be hard to do. There are a lot of powerful influences at work" (136 Cong. Rec. 2244).

## The Burying of S. J. Res. 212

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17. When the session started the following day, the pro-Armenian camp knew it would be difficult to obtain the sixty "Yeas" necessary to vote the cloture and bypass Byrd's filibuster. "Dole and Byrd had two hours apiece" to finish the debate before the afternoon vote (136 Cong. Rec. 2317).<sup>[38]</sup> Each of the titans dole[d] out blocks of minutes to their colleagues, who rehashed the same arguments with few new additions. When an opponent of the resolution made one claim, a supporter quickly came to the floor to denounce it. The speed and incisiveness of the last day of the debate outpaced the more leisurely pace of the first two days" (Bobelian 198). Fifteen senators took the floor, eleven of them supporting the resolution. In a last move, Dole announced that he was ready to "convert the joint resolution to a concurrent resolution. It does not become law, and is not as offensive. So [he] can modify the language, and take out some of those things that offended the Turkish Republic" (136 Cong. Rec. 2349). This was rejected by Byrd, who explained: "what this would do is remove from the President the responsibility of vetoing or signing or letting it become law over his veto. It is a way for the White House to wash its hands of a major foreign policy issue." He also insisted on the fact that "Turkey is still on trial on this floor. The foreign policy disaster in the making if this resolution passes would be the same" (136 Cong. Rec. 2350). At the end of the debates, Dole seemed desperate. His last words before the vote on the cloture motion were, "The right thing to do is let us proceed. This is not a filibuster on the merits. It is on a procedural vote. I cannot believe I am going to be denied that right. So we want to proceed. Do not cut us off at the knees by saying we cannot even proceed to the resolution. That is all I want to do, proceed to the resolution" (136 Cong. Rec. 2350).
18. Dole was right to be concerned and disappointed: the vote ended 49-49, far from the 60

votes necessary to end Byrd's filibuster. Partisanship played a role but cannot explain everything: 31 of the 54 Democratic senators opposed the cloture and 26 out of 44 Republicans voted for it. Nor does committee membership: 'only' fifteen of the 29 members of the Appropriations Committee, chaired by Byrd, supported him. Meanwhile, some cosponsors of the resolution did not vote for the cloture, some who did not cosponsor did vote for it. From the initial cosponsors, sixteen withdrew their cosponsorship, but among these sixteen senators, four voted "Yea" to invoke cloture.<sup>[39]</sup> In the end, it seems that it was mostly the senators from states with no or few Armenian Americans, along with members of less influential committees, who tended to support Byrd's filibuster (Bobelian 205). Senators from rural states tended to do the same, as well as senators from the South. If we adopt the Census Bureau territorial definition of the South<sup>[40]</sup>, 23 of the 32 southern senators voted against the cloture, that is almost 72% of them. This percentage is even higher in the Deep South.

9. Dole and the Armenian camp were disappointed, frustrated, and exhausted. Yet they decided not to give up and immediately proposed a new motion of cloture, to be discussed and voted Tuesday of the following week, the 27th of February. Dole also confirmed that he had obtained support from the White House for a slightly different version of the resolution, if it was to be changed from a joint resolution to a concurrent resolution (136 Cong. Rec. 2351). On February 27, thirteen senators took the floor, ten in favor of the resolution, three (senators Byrd, Wallop, and Exon) against it. The arguments were the same as the week before. Dole submitted new wording which maintained the word genocide but also stated, "Congress calls on the people of the United States to join the millions of Armenians and other people around the world to commemorate every April 24th as the anniversary of the Armenian genocide" (136 Cong. Rec. 2775). This was instead of "the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe this date as a day of remembrance for the 1,500,000 people of Armenian ancestry who were victims of the genocide perpetrated by the governments of the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923" ) He also read the letter signed by President Bush, approving this new version of text, on the condition that it became a concurrent resolution. Byrd repeated his disagreement and confirmed he would continue his filibuster. After two hours of debate concluded by Senator Dole, the second vote on the cloture took place, and the cloture was rejected 51 to 48. This second failure to bypass Byrd's filibuster sounded the death knell of S. J. Res. 212. Bob Dole took the floor a last time to acknowledge his defeat and made clear that he would not seek a third cloture vote. He was disillusioned, angry, and frustrated, as were the Armenians and their supporters. However, as Hovannisian points out, "during the three days of debate and two votes on cloture, pages of materials relating to the Armenian Genocide were read into the official record and supporters of the resolution struck hard on the facticity of the genocide, the moral and ethical issues involved, and the anomaly of the United States being subjected to blackmail by an allied government" (194). Bob Dole, for his part, concluded with the remark, "I still think 'David' won the debate – but it is pretty clear that 'Goliath' won the vote" (136 Cong. Rec. 2794).

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0. Dole, who remained senator for six more years, never again tried to pass legislation acknowledging the Armenian Genocide. His interest in the Armenians and in Armenia-related issues remained strong but, although he had told his opponents that he would do so (Thompson 184), he never again raised the issue of the Armenian Genocide recognition in Congress. Changes in the geopolitical sphere may help explain this. In the 1990s, the focus of many Armenians and of their supporters tended to switch, at least partially, from commemorating politics to supporting the Republic of Armenia, which became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991 and was then in a situation of war against neighboring Azerbaijan for control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. However, it is not an exaggeration to say that Bob Dole never really tried again to promote recognition of the Genocide because this struggle for S. J. Res. 212 upset him. Although the senior senator from Kansas was thick-skinned, he was not accustomed to being rebuked by Byrd and other opponents, but also by close colleagues and friends from his own camp. Often presented as a personal defeat for Dole, the outcome of these unusual, "quite extraordinary" (Abramowitz), and "long and troubling" senatorial debates, unsuccessfully concluded a decades-long personal effort ([136 Cong. Rec. 2343](#)).
  1. However, Dole's efforts to pass S. J. Res. 212 and, beyond, Dole's relationship with Armenia and the Armenians cannot be reduced to the failure of February 1990. He dedicated much time and energy to the Armenians and the cause of the Armenian Genocide, mainly out of gratitude for Hampar Kelikian, the Armenian doctor who survived the genocide and who gave new meaning to his life after World War II. Dole also considered it a just cause. On Armenian Genocide commemoration day of 1990, April 24, he emphasized that this genocide should be fully acknowledged because: (1) "One reason six million Jews were slaughtered was Hitler's conviction that no one remembered the Armenian Genocide." (2) "It is right. It is right historically. It is right morally."<sup>[41]</sup> Meanwhile, Dole was also a pragmatic and an experienced politician, and his involvement in this issue allowed him to shape his image as a leader with national stature. At the same time, his engagement also allowed him to become an uncontested friend of the Armenian American community, which supported him<sup>[42]</sup> and rewarded him in return.<sup>[43]</sup> However, all of this seems quite minor in contrast to the opposition he had to face, from Turkey, Turkish lobbyists, the White House and the administration, from his own party and colleagues, and sometimes, apparently, his own staff.<sup>[44]</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to assess if his investment in the Armenian cause helped Dole politically, especially if we balance the limited and arguable gains against the energy he invested and the political risks involved.
  2. The S. J. Res. 212 episode, as well as the preceding (and following) attempts to legislate on the issue of the Armenian Genocide, also tell a lot about lobbying in Washington, DC, and about the shaping of the US 'national interest.' Foreign lobbying by Turkey, along with lobbying from various Jewish and industrial groups and pressure from the Executive branch, heavily impacted the debate. Lobbying is part of US political life, and the Armenians also lobbied, but the fact that one single foreign country drove, directly or

indirectly, such a huge and heavily funded campaign was criticized and condemned by many observers. As I have shown above, Turkey gave the impression of blackmailing US officials and senators, and dictating Senate conduct.

3. Finally, if we keep focusing on the Senate, the fate of S. J. Res. 212 is further evidence of the propensity of this chamber to be potentially 'seized' by one (or very few) influential, motivated, and skilled senator(s). Senator Byrd succeeded in literally destroying a resolution that was initially cosponsored by about sixty senators and, at some point, had received the approval of the White House. He found ways to put so much pressure on some initial supporters of the resolution that they withdrew their sponsorship, and then, almost by himself, blocked the resolution and even prevented it from being brought to the floor. Byrd's motivations are probably more complex than they appear at first glance. Yet, one thing is for sure: After his filibuster against S. J. Res. 212, he became a hero in Turkey (Corbin 211). The Atatürk Society of America gave him the first "Atatürk Peace and Democracy Award" in May 1995 (Atatürk Society) and, after he passed away in 2010, the Turkish Coalition of America launched the "C. Byrd Memorial Scholarships" (dedicated to Turkish American students).

## Notes

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[1] The author would like to thank Dr. Brian Schmitt, the editorial board of *ASJ* (Drs. Martina Kohl and Andrew Gross in particular), and the anonymous reviewers for their comments on the preliminary versions of the paper.

[2] The Armenian Genocide consisted in the organized physical destruction of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1917, by the Turkish Ottoman authorities. It killed an estimated one to 1.5 million Armenians, females and males of every age, in atrocious conditions, and marked the end of the ancestral presence of this people in Asia Minor. It also completely renewed and redefined the pre-existing Armenian diaspora, which expanded after the genocide, especially in the United States, France, the Middle East, and South America.

[3] In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Armenian Americans were often estimated at a few hundreds of thousands. In 1979, Carlos Moorhead, representative of the San Joaquin Valley in the House, estimates them to "more than 500,000" (125 Cong. Rec. 2299). They were, and still are, quite significant in terms of number and influence in some districts of Massachusetts, New Jersey, California, and Michigan, but it is important to note they were not present in Kansas.

[4] "S.J. Res. 212 – A Joint Resolution Designating April 24, 1990, as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'" Text. 101st Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[5] Since the early 1970s, the Armenian American lobby has been mostly organized by two active organizations: the Armenian National Committee of American (ANCA) and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA).

[6] "Press Release from the Office of U.S. Senator Bob Dole." 18 Oct. 1970. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas (RDA). Web. Dec, 2018.

[7] It is interesting to note that Gerald Ford publicly spoke of the "Turkish Genocide of the Armenian people" before the House when he was a representative, but opposed legislation recognizing the Genocide by the same House in 1974, when he was President. To my knowledge, Bob Dole, who accepted to be his running-mate in 1976, never commented on Ford's volte-face on this issue.

[8] "H. J. Res. 148 – A Joint Resolution to Designate April 24, 1975, as National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man." Actions. 94th Congress (1975–1976). *Congress.gov*.

[9] "S. J. Res. 87 – A Joint Resolution Designating a Day of Remembrance for Victims of Genocide." 98th Congress (1983–1984). *Congress.gov*.

[10] "S. Res. 241 – A Resolution Expressing the Sense of the Senate that the Foreign Policy of the United States Should Take Account of the Genocide of the Armenian People, and for Other Purposes." Titles. 98th Congress (1983–1984). *Congress.gov*.

[11] "Memo from Barbara Bodine to Senator Dole." 10 May 1984. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative, Legislative Assistants, Berlin-Bodine, Foreign Policy, Box 87, Folder 11, RDA.

[12] "Memo from Barbara Bodine to Senator Dole." 15 May 1984. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative, Legislative Assistants, Berlin-Bodine, Foreign Policy, Box 87, Folder 11, RDA.

[13] "Memorandum from James Cicconi to James Baker." 17 Sept. 1984. Ronald Reagan Library, James Cicconi Files, Box 6, Armenian-Americans (2). PDF. Dec. 2018.

[14] "Memorandum from Lee Verstandig to Michael Deaver." 20 April 1984. Ronald Reagan Library, James Cicconi Files, Box 6, Armenian-Americans (2). PDF. Dec. 2018.

[15] "Memorandum from George Bush to James Baker, Robert McFarlane, and Ed Derwinski." 13 Aug. 1984. Ronald Reagan Library, James Cicconi Files, Box 6, Armenian-Americans (1). PDF. Dec. 2018.

[16] "Memorandum." N.d. (probably written in October 1987). Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Leadership Personal/Political Papers, Box 391, Folder 62, RDA.

[17] "Senator Dole – Secretary Dole Mission to Poland and Armenian Stops in Morocco – Soviet Armenia – Poland – The Netherlands." Press Release. 17 Aug. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative, Press Releases, RDA. Dec. 2018. PDF.

[18] "H. J. Res. 417 – Designating April 24, 1990 as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'" Committees. 101st

Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[19] "Dear Colleague Letter." 28 Sept. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Leadership, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Relations, Box 224, Folder 6, RDA.

[20] "[S. J. Res. 212 – A Joint Resolution Designating April 24, 1990, as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'](#)" [Cosponsors](#). 101st Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[21] "[S. J. Res. 212 – A Joint Resolution Designating April 24, 1990, as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'](#)" [Text](#). 101st Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[22] "[S. J. Res. 212 – A Joint Resolution Designating April 24, 1990, as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'](#)" [Cosponsors](#). 101st Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[23] Barbara Mikulsky (D.-MD) and Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R.-KS), both "original cosponsors."

[24] "Letter from Senator Alan K. Simpson (Assistant Republican Leader) to Senator Dole." 30 Oct. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[25] "Letter from Senator Alan K. Simpson (Assistant Republican Leader) to Senator Dole." 30 Oct. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[26] "[S. J. Res. 212 – A Joint Resolution Designating April 24, 1990, as 'National Day of Remembrance of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915–1923.'](#)" [Actions Overview](#). 101st Congress (1989–1990). *Congress.gov*.

[27] "Letter from Senator Alan K. Simpson (Assistant Republican Leader) to Senator Dole." 30 Oct. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[28] Susan Bennett, "Resolution on Armenia Mushrooms into a Mess." N.d. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Press, Subject Files, 1987–1994, Box 73, Folder 1, RDA.

[29] "Letter from Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arad to Senator Dole." 25 Oct. 1989. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 6, RDA.

[30] "Committee Softens Armenian Genocide Resolution." AP. N.d. (Nov. 1989). Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections: Republican Leadership, 1985–1996, Box 587, Folder 16, RDA.

[31] To that effect see “Letter from President Bush to Senator Dole” (2 Nov. 1989) and “Letter from Senator Dole to Moshe Arab, Ambassador of Israel” (2 Nov. 1989). Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[32] To that effect see “Letter from President Bush to Senator Dole” (2 Nov. 1989) and “Letter from Senator Dole to Moshe Arab, Ambassador of Israel” (2 Nov. 1989). Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[33] “Armenian Genocide. Day of Remembrance Senate Should Have Made Official.” Senator Dole Address. 24 April 1990. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 6, RDA.

[34] Al Lehn named them and identified them as: a journalist for Turkish-Armenian newspapers; a professor of finance at the University of the Bosphorus; a manager for an Armenian school in Istanbul.

[35] “Memo from Al Lehn.” N. d. (probably end of 1989). Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 5, RDA.

[36] In 1951, the Civil Rights Congress published a paper entitled “We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People,” and presented it as a petition to the United Nations. The petition was eventually scuttled by the UN, “largely due to the efforts of US emissaries and none other than Eleanor Roosevelt, head of the UN Human Rights Commission” (Jacobs 134–35).

[37] “Armenian Genocide Survivors Visit Senators.” 27 Feb. 1990. [Dole Photograph Collection, 1900–2009](#), Series 4: Senate, 1969–1996, Sub-Series 3: Foreign Relations, Box 34, Folder 7, RDA.

[38] The time for debate was effectively extended to two hours and twenty-five minutes, from 11:05 am to 1:30 pm.

[39] “Letter from Senate Leader Bob Dole to House Representative William S. Broomfield.” 9 May 1990. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 4, RDA.

[40] That includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Washington DC, which does not have senators.

[41] “Armenian Genocide. Day of Remembrance Senate Should Have Made Official.” Senator Dole Address. 24 April 1990. Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, International Affairs, Box 224, Folder 6, RDA.

[42] Although the Armenian American community's support to Dole was strong and multifold, it is interesting to note that the ANCA did not support him in the 1996 presidential race. Apparently, the choice was difficult to make, but they decided to support Bill Clinton whereas Dole, identified as a close friend of the Armenian Assembly, received the direct or indirect support of many other Armenian individuals or organizations.

[43] In 2001 and 2015 respectively, the ANCA and the National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial (NCAGC) presented Dole awards for his achievements in favor of Armenian Americans and of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

[44] Memorandum (related to Secretary Schultz letter of March 4, 1985), from Al Lehn and Dave Cordova to Senator Dole, non-dated, Robert J. Dole Senate Papers, Legislative Relations, Assistant Leader Files, General, Box 145, Folder 3, RDA.

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