

the door to the realization of the dreams which we all hold for our children and for their children.

Let our statements today, remembering and openly condemning the atrocity committed against the Armenians, help renew a commitment of the American people to oppose any and all instances of genocide. As we enter the new millennium let us commit ourselves to finding new and peaceful paths for resolving differences which inevitably arise.

I thank you for the honor of sharing these thoughts and words with you today.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, together with my colleagues, to commemorate the Armenian Genocide of 1915–23. On this day, in 1915, over 200 Armenian leaders were systematically massacred by the Turkish Government. Yet these horrific murders were only a precursor to the brutality and aggressiveness that would follow. In just 8 years, over 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were murdered and an entire population was faced with annihilation. I stand today, not only to acknowledge and remember the horrors of this tragic event but to denounce the government of Turkey for their denial of these historically documented truths. The official position of the Turkish Government is that, during World War I, a series of internal conflicts contributed to the unfortunate deaths of many Armenians. This claim shamefully ignores the premeditated murder of these people. As Members of Congress and as human beings, it is our responsibility to defend the memories of those who needlessly suffered. We must preserve the dignity of lives destroyed by the cruelty of a government. Their plight deserves remembrance and the world deserves the truth. The Turkish Government's refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide is disgraceful and I find it to be an injustice, which should not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is essential to recognize the devastation that was incurred by ignoring the Armenian genocide and allowing such horrors to reoccur through the Holocaust. We remember the trauma befallen upon the Jews and we must now stand up for the suffering forced upon millions of Armenians. The world can no longer refute history. Instead we must come together as Armenians, as Jews and as human beings to guarantee that no person shall ever endure such pain again. I thank my colleagues, Congressman JOHN PORTER and Congressman FRANK PALLONE, for leading this effort in the House of Representatives, and am proud to be a member of the Armenian Issues Caucus in order to work on this issue of concern to all human beings.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I am appreciative of the efforts of my colleagues in taking out this special order and making it possible for us to reaffirm our absolute determination that the Armenian genocide will not go unnoticed. The world made a terrible mistake, with disastrous consequences, when it ignored the terrible crime committed by Turkey against the Armenian people 80 years and more ago. I continue to be baffled by the unwillingness of the current Turkish Government to acknowledge this horrible crime. I do not blame the current inhabitants of Turkey for the sins of their ancestors, but their refusal to acknowledge these terrible actions do them no credit.

As do many of my colleagues, I greatly admire the fierce commitment of the current gen-

eration of Armenians to honor the memory of the innocent people who were slaughtered simply because they were Armenian. They do a great service for the world by not only commemorating their own ancestors, but by focusing world attention on the terrible consequences of allowing crimes like this to go unopposed and unnoticed. Remembering the Armenian genocide is both an important tribute to those who were slaughtered and one step in making sure that this does not happen again.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this special order on the Armenian genocide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from California has nothing else, I would thank him for participating with me.

TWO GREAT AMERICANS: BOB DORNAN AND BILL BLAKEMORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HUNTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Georgia, JACK KINGSTON, for giving me some time here ahead of his 1 hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few things about two great Americans. One of them is my good friend Bob Dornan, who is no longer with us, but may be back soon depending on the outcome of the election challenge that he has offered; and the other one is Bill Blakemore, a private American citizen who right now is in the hospital, the Methodist Hospital in Houston, TX, who is in pretty serious condition, but who was very, very important to this country in the 1980's when he helped to put together a group of Texas conservatives who rallied the country behind the idea that Central America was worth saving, and particularly that we needed to support the Contras, the freedom fighters who were fighting the Communist-backed, Soviet-backed insurgents or Soviet backed Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and also that we needed to protect the very fragile government of El Salvador, the government of Jose Duarte, which at that time was holding off the Soviet-backed FMLN.

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When Ronald Reagan came into office in 1980, and I was lucky to be one of the people that came in with him as one of the 54 Republican Congressmen who were elected that year, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua were all under some sort of a military dictatorship. Today all those nations have fragile democracies, imperfect, certainly not totally cast in the image of democracy that we have in the Unit-

ed States, but represented I think by a determination that was manifested in one of those voting lines in the 1980's, when one woman who had been ordered by the FMLN Communists not to go to the polls that day was standing in a voting line with a bullet wound in her shoulder and was asked by one of the reporters if she was not going to leave the line and she said "no". Essentially she said "We fought for a long time to get to this point, I'm going to vote." And they had a great turnout that year.

Jose Duarte remained the leader of El Salvador and, because of the steadfastness of Ronald Reagan a lot of his supporters and guys like Bill Blakemore of Texas, who was a real leader of the business community, we have a chance for real democracy in our own hemisphere.

Let me say just a word, Mr. Speaker, about my great friend Bob Dornan. There will never be another one like him. He was of great value to this House, and I think there is a good chance he will be of great value to this House again. I am just reminded when they had the incident in Somalia and those Americans were killed, Bob Dornan was the only Member of the National Security Committee who went over, flew that long distance, some 40 hours in the air, to Somalia, went over the event in detail, and came back and contacted the family of every member of that Ranger unit who were killed in that debacle.

That was Bob Dornan. A heart as big as all outdoors, a keen intellect, a great ability to speak. He has still got it. Obviously we have heard from him across the airwaves lately, but I just wanted to say that Bob Dornan was a great, great asset to the National Security Committee, flew all of the aircraft, knew all of the countries with whom we had treaty relations and knew what the treaty relations were and was a real expert in national security. God bless you, Bob. I hope to see you back soon.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. KINGSTON. Before he leaves the Chamber, I want to say to the gentleman from California that many, many Members and in fact I am sure most Members of this Chamber agree with him in his comments about Representative, the Honorable Bob Dornan, because he was such a viable part of this body for many years. He is an extremely dedicated patriotic American of great intellect and energy, and I hope that the years are as good to me as they have been to Bob Dornan in terms of getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker, tonight is the eve of the trustees report on Medicare. Each year