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Peace or War?

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At present, the attention of many countries around the world is also focused on the South Caucasus. The results of the parliamentary elections to be held in Armenia on June 7 may significantly influence the current situation in the region. If Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his party win again, many believe that long-term peace may finally come to the region. Pashinyan is openly interested in signing a peace agreement with Azerbaijan. I will return to this point shortly.

Pro-Russian political forces, on the other hand, accuse Pashinyan of “selling” Karabakh to Azerbaijan. They openly declare that if they come to power, they will pursue a pro-Russian policy and may once again start a war over Karabakh. This rhetoric can clearly be seen in the programs and election campaigns of the “Hayastan” Alliance led by Robert Kocharyan, the “Strong Armenia” alliance led by Karapetyan, and almost all opposition parties against Pashinyan.

Pashinyan, meanwhile, has clearly turned Armenia toward the West and Europe, and he does not hide this. The Russian leadership is also aware of this and, as Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has stated, openly supports the revanchist forces in Armenia. It is no coincidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin, during a press conference held in the Kremlin after the May 9 parade in Russia, openly pressured Armenia. He called on Armenia to choose between Europe and Russia and did not hesitate to use harsh language regarding the country.

It is worth briefly recalling that in the early 1990s, Armenia occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s territory with Russia’s support. Following the 44-day war in 2020 and later military operations, Azerbaijan restored control over its territories. Azerbaijanis often describe this conflict as “a war fought to achieve peace,” and,

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in my opinion, not without reason.

As Pashinyan himself has repeatedly stated, Russia used the Karabakh issue to maintain control over Armenia and preserve its influence in the region.

Throughout history, Russia has repeatedly set these two nations against one another in order to maintain its presence in the Caucasus and for a long time, it succeeded. Now, however, that instrument of influence is slipping from its hands.
Pashinyan appears to be the most realistic leader Armenia has had in years a leader focused on preserving the Armenian state and strengthening the country. He himself has repeatedly admitted that his primary goal is the survival and development of Armenia. He has also openly acknowledged that Karabakh has always been internationally recognized as Azerbaijani territory and should remain so.

Russia, however, behaves as though it is the guarantor of Armenia's existence and security. The reality is quite different: Russia has become a source of instability for the entire Caucasus. The possibility of pro-Russian forces returning to power in Armenia poses risks not only for Armenia itself but also for the whole South Caucasus.
For this reason, Azerbaijan has, on several occasions, indirectly expressed support for Pashinyan. One example is President Ilham Aliyev's statement:
"We know that there are circles in Armenia's political sphere that live with hatred toward the Azerbaijani people and state. If they come to power, the Armenian people themselves will face serious problems."

According to BBC News Az?rbaycanca, this statement was widely interpreted as indirect support for Pashinyan and a warning against the Armenian opposition.
Azerbaijan has also demonstrated in practice that it wants peaceful relations with its neighbors, including Armenia. One clear example is Azerbaijan's export of petroleum products to Armenia, which began in December of last year.
Azerbaijan and Armenia are now very close to peace. In August last year, Aliyev and Pashinyan signed a peace document in Washington, once again demonstrating their intention to move toward normalization.

Azerbaijani experts also emphasize that the June 7 elections in Armenia are critically important for both the region and the peace process. For example, well-known journalist, political analyst, and Doctor of Philology Gulu Maherremli wrote on his Facebook page:
"From the latest interview of the Speaker of Parliament (Armenia), Simonyan, it is clear that the June 7 election is about war or peace for Armenia, real independence or becoming an amorphous state. The victory of Pashinyan in these elections, which many hope for, is also of vital importance for Azerbaijan.

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Meanwhile, after the well-known parade, Putin has actively started interfering in Armenia's internal affairs: sometimes drawing parallels with Ukraine, sometimes talking about a 'cultural divorce,' and sometimes saying that a referendum should be held for Armenia's accession to the European Union. In short, developments in the South Caucasus are entering a very dangerous phase in the context of the June 7 elections."

Indeed, the upcoming parliamentary elections in Armenia are extremely important for the entire region. Will the Armenian people vote for European-oriented forces led by Pashinyan, or for pro-Russian politicians? Will they choose peace or war?

These elections may reveal whether the majority of Armenia's population truly wants peace or not. Whether they have learned from the tragedies of the past. Whether they are prepared to build a stable future for the region.

The answers to all these questions will become clear in the upcoming elections.

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