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DIASPORA PERSPECTIVES ON ARMENIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND TÜRKİYE

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Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyans long-standing pro-Western policies have become even more prominent along with the growing disappointment in Russia after the defeat in the Karabakh War. The meetings held in Washington in August 2025 may be regarded as one of the milestones in this process. In recent months, the EU and the US have continued to provide political and economic support to Armenia, viewing it as a strategically important actor, while also expressing, directly or indirectly, their support for Pashinyan during the electoral process. In return, Russia has increased its political and economic pressure and, at times, reacted to Armenias westward orientation through statements that could be regarded as threatening

Armenias position between these two major powers has also brought anti-Pashinyan Armenian Diaspora groups back to the center of political debate. Having traditionally positioned themselves through their relations with major powers, diaspora organizations and media outlets with close ties to the Russian-backed Armenian Church and former ruling elites have not remained silent in the face of recent developments and have intensified their criticism of Armenias foreign policy orientation. In this context, views within the Diaspora advocating that Armenia should pursue a more independent and autonomous foreign policy, rather than relying on any external power, have become increasingly prominent. What is particularly noteworthy is that even diaspora circles commonly regarded as harsher and militant have emphasized the risks of Armenia becoming dependent on any foreign power and have argued in favor of pursuing an independent foreign policy.

This approach entails not only a criticism of the Pashinyan government but also a broader reassessment of the foreign policy outlook of previous administrations that had been supported by the Diaspora.[1] The fact that both the former administrations, which pursued Russia-oriented policies, and the current administration, which has increasingly turned toward the West, are being evaluated within the same critical framework points to a significant shift in diaspora discourse. In this way, the Diaspora appears to be adopting a

more critical position that assesses Armenias foreign policy choices not merely in terms of the actors it aligns with, but on the basis of dependence on external powers.

On the other hand, some voices within the Diaspora argue that foreign policy should be conducted on the basis of interest and rationality rather than emotional reflexes. In this context, it is emphasized that Armenia has historically faced difficulties in producing influential leaders in international politics, while the foreign policy maneuverability and pragmatic approaches of the leaders of the Ottoman State and the Republic of Türkiye are presented as noteworthy examples. These assessments suggest that, within diaspora circles, traditional emotional and historical reflexes are gradually giving way to a more realist and strategic perspective.

In this context, Türkiyes foreign policy experience is regarded not as a direct model, but rather as an example of a pragmatic and realist approach to diplomacy. The objective is for Armenia to move beyond emotional reactions in foreign policy and adopt a more strategic, multidimensional, and interest-based approach.

In conclusion, these debates emerging within the Diaspora demonstrate that the traditional understanding of dependence in relation to Armenias foreign policy orientation is being increasingly questioned. Views advocating that no major power should be trusted unconditionally and that Armenia should formulate an independent foreign policy guided by its own national interests are gaining greater prominence.

By contrast, Pashinyans victory in the 7 June elections, which allowed him to secure a parliamentary majority, has conferred democratic legitimacy upon Armenias westward orientation. This development has undoubtedly served as a strong warning to the Armenian Church and the more radical-militant segments of the Diaspora to adopt a more realistic approach.

[1] Russia, the U.S., and the EU Should Keep Out of Armenias Domestic Affairs, May 5 2026, https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/russia-the-u-s-and-the-eu-should-keep-out-of-armenias-domestic-affairs-by-harut-sassounian/

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