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THE PASHINYAN ADMINISTRATION IS FOCUSING ON PROPAGANDA

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In this age we live in, with the blurring of the difference between foreign policy/domestic policy and the influence of globalization, propaganda, or with its more scientific and systematic form, public diplomacy is of high importance. Because the world is in a period in which the masses, meaning the community, are directing politics and the formation of policies. The new government of Armenia has resorted to utilizing propaganda, which it has made a part of its foreign policy, in order to influence communities of foreign countries and the citizens of Armenian descent residing in other countries.

As Armenia is striving to create propaganda that will catch the attention of the international community, international figures and events are considered as opportunities and tools. The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) will conduct its congress in October in the Armenian city of Yerevan. In order to catch the attention of the other citizens of the world and the younger generation that follow the popular culture, along with the CEOs and engineers of various companies, Armenia has presented Kim Kardashian, who is known by most people as a reality show face, as a speaker at the platform where speeches will be made on information technology.[1] Another example is Pashinyans meeting in Los Angeles and the meetings content. Pashinyan, who was in the US for the UN General Assembly, addressed the Armenian Diaspora in Los Angeles and expressed his view on "pan-Armenianism". Within the context of this idea, he emphasized his call to the diaspora Armenians to consolidate the relations between the countries they reside in and Armenia and to conduct activities towards the presentation of Armenia.[2] This meeting is the most clear form of propaganda or public diplomacy. Pashinyan, who has called out to his own diaspora in Los Angeles, has attempted to influence the US citizens of Armenian descent and other citizens. In this way, Armenia is aiming to keep their claims and discourses on the agenda of the country they are in through the diaspora. Similarly, another speech of Pashinyan was again made to the Armenian Community in Los Angeles. In his speech, Pashinyan stated that US citizens of Armenian descent should purchase houses in Armenia and should also have Armenian citizenship.[3] It is seen clearly that another reason for Armenia conducting propaganda is not only to transform the diaspora into a tool for keeping the 1915 events on the agenda, but to make them invest economically to Armenia. Thus, Pashinyan is conveying his messages to the US citizens of Armenian descent, and through them, to other citizens of Armenian descent.

The aim here is to shape the thoughts of the communities in foreign countries regarding Armenia in favor of the Armenians, concurrently keeping the 1915 events on the agendas. Armenia is aiming to make their discourse and claims international and to encourage investments from its diaspora abroad. Thus, the political interests of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora will be in the foreground. In this sense, the Armenian Diaspora is an important tool for conducting propaganda and ensuring that the propaganda hits home. Therefore, the conducted propaganda stand out the most in the West.

Another example of public diplomacy that is being devised/sustained is the execution style of the event that Armenia will organize in 2020 to commemorate the so-called genocide. The works od Armenian composers will be sung/played accompanied with 105 pianos in Armenia.[4] The subject that leads to this being considered as propaganda in terms of execution is that the commemoration event will be conducted by bringing artists from various countries of the world. The government, which is aiming to conduct an event that will be big and impactful in the commemoration ceremony of the so-called genocide, is planning to make the commemoration event a subject of discussion in the countries of the mentioned artists by bringing the artists from various countries in the world. Another example of propaganda is the agreement signed between France and Armenia on 24 September. According to the signed agreement, archive documents regarding the so-called Armenian genocide and the Holocaust will be exchanged between the Armenian National Archives and the Mémorial de la Shoah Holocaust Museum in Paris.[5] Armenias goal here is to implement a strategy of considering the Holocaust equivalent to the 1915 events and forming a common destiny connection with the Jews. By this means, they aim to blend the Holocaust and the 1915 events, infusing into minds that the two events are similar and send messages to communities. The matter that should be questioned is whether or not the archive information is consistent regarding the subject and legal dimension of the archives together with their objectiveness and variety.

Regarding the 1915 events, Turkey is highlighting academic works. Turkey concentrating on academic works and Armenia focusing on propaganda is aggravating the two states path towards reconciliation. For when propaganda is not used in a measured way, it becomes a weapon that infuses "hate and hostility" to the target group and when reconciliation begins in the long term, the side responsible for the infusion of "hate and hostility" may be questioned by the target group due to its excessive propaganda.

All of these developments display that Armenia is conducting multi-lateral propaganda initiatives in order to remain on the agenda. Its aim to achieve political gain through keeping the 1915 events on the agenda or its efforts to keep Armenia on the agenda in order to attract economic investments brings to mind the question of what Armenia truly wants.

Photograph: Armen Press

[1] Kim Kardashian to visit Armenia to participate in WCIT 2019, *Armen Press*, 10 September 2019, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/987464.html

[2] Pashinyan presents idea of Pan-Armenianism at Los Angeles rally, *Armen Press*, 23 September 2019, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/989010.html

[3] Every Armenian should have a citizenship of Armenia Pashinyan on repatriation, *Armen Press*, 23 September 2019, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/989016.html

[4] Ermeni Soykırımının 105. yıldönümünde 105 piyano Tsitsernakaberd Tepesinde yerleştirilecek, *Ermenistan Kamu Radyosu*, 17 September 2019, https://tr.armradio.am/2019/09/17/ermeni-soykiriminin-105-yildonumunde-105-piyano-tsitsernakaberd-tepesinde-yerlestirilecek/

[5] Ermenistan ile Fransa arasında Ermeni ve Yahudi Soykırımlarına dair arşiv belgeleri değişimi gerçekleştirilecek, *Ermenistan Kamu Radyosu*, 25 September 2019 https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2019/09/25/Ermenistan-Fransa-Soyk%C4%B1r%C4%B1m/165144

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