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Hrant Khachatrian

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## Armenia Is Sitting On a Powder-Keg

*Mr. Khachatrian is an Armenian Member of Parliament the Union of Constitutional Rights party.*

Dear, friends, this is a good opportunity for me to present the point of view of my party, and the Armenian United Opposition, on the crucial processes going on inside the Caucasus region and Armenia, in this large and important forum.

As an Armenian elected representative of the young, independent country Armenia, I am proud that we succeeded to solve one of the most complicated problems of the region: the Karabakh problem. And that we celebrated this May, the tenth anniversary of the cease-fire between Armenia and Azerbaijan. That exists without involving any peacekeeping forces on the line of the conflict.

But I am worried, and I feel responsibility for the future,

and for the dignity of the next generations. I am worried, because we started a very clear and honest struggle for freedom, justice, and prosperity; but we faced violation, disaster, crisis, war, and poverty. We lost patriots' lives, and a developed economy and science. We lost the social safety of the population. We lost, not because we were not aware of the rules of the game, of the world policymakers, but because we acted against those rules.

We did our job on the basis of international recognized rights. We lost because some people in Armenia accepted the crazy rules of the game and became agents of influence of those evil forces, implementing in Armenia the idea of extreme liberalism and shock therapy.

As a part of the world society, we lost for a very simple reason. The reason is that the millions and billions of peaceful people have a permanent problem to come together and prevent the negative developments of their preliminary stages, while the international oligarchic structures are well organized and flexible.

We lost more, but Armenians, in their homeland and all over the world, are strong enough to get in the front position in the struggle for freedom, justice and prosperity.

Coming here together, we, the representatives of different countries and nations, hope to encourage Mr. LaRouche and his American team, to go and to make a victory for the Democratic candidate in the Presidential elections on Nov. 2. To finalize this effort is the job of the millions of American voters. I am glad to report to you, that Armenians in the United States will vote for Democrats, for Democratic candidate Kerry.

I am optimistic enough to discuss only what we have to do after the victory of the Democrats in the United States: to reduce the danger of explosion, and to make an atmosphere of confidence among nations, for middle-term and long-term creative projects, like the Land-Bridge project, and monetary system restoration.

So, I will briefly point to several artificially made points of tension, and give their main characteristics.

### The Karabakh Problem

First tension point: the Karabakh problem. The Karabakh problem was known as an internal problem of the U.S.S.R., as there existed an Armenian population enclave inside the borders of Soviet Azerbaijan. It arose in the 1920s, after historically Armenian Nakhichevan and Karabakh were put under Soviet Azerbaijan's administrative rule, with a status of autonomy. The Karabakh problem was brought by the Armenians before the Soviet administration in 1988, as a legal question, and was solved *de jure* and *de facto*, according to the Soviet Constitution, and international rights, before the U.S.S.R. stopped its existence as a state. The Karabakh problem doesn't exist any more, after the Soviet collapse.



*Hrant Khachatryan: "Compared to other countries of Caucasus, during the last ten years, Armenia succeeded in keeping peace and keeping the genie in the bottle. But we are sitting on the bomb that can explode any moment."*

Second point, on the Karabakh conflict: One week after the Armenians raised the Karabakh problem with a legal resolution and peaceful demonstration in 1988, in Sumgait, a massacre occurred in Azerbaijan's Sumgait city. Many Armenian families, children, old men and women, were killed and shot in that Azerbaijan city. This way, the elements of violation emerged into the process of resolution of the Karabakh problem.

So-called dark forces brought violence and expanded it into the Karabakh war. Ten thousand people were killed and hundreds of thousands were casualties in this war. The Armenians were able to defend their legal resolutions and freed territories. A stable cease-fire was established after more than ten years. Diplomatic negotiations are going on under the control of international organizations, particularly the Minsk Group of the OSCE [Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe], established to look for a peaceful solution for the Karabakh conflict. For a long time, the line of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been the most quiet place in the Caucasus. So far, the Karabakh conflict is living its own life, after the resolution of the South problem, and is one of the most dangerous points in the world to provoke a new war. The background is, we have a potential point of tension to serve the geopolitical interest with the use of arms.

## Relations With Turkey

The third point: Armenia-Turkey relations. The historical problems between Armenia and Turkey are very well known. I would like to stress only, that Turkey is the only third party country of the world that has implemented sanctions against independent Armenia. Armenia suffers economic blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan only. All the time, Armenian offi-

cials propose to Turkey to establish diplomatic relations and to begin economic collaboration, without any precondition. Armenia is ready to open its borders with Turkey. Turkey set the precondition of a Karabakh conflict resolution, and Armenia's genocide recognition task, using its geographical position with illegal methods. Thus Turkey takes sides in the conflict, and forces Armenia to be limited, making its choices by geopolitical reasons.

Compared to other countries of Caucasus, during the last ten years, Armenia succeeded in keeping peace and keeping the genie in the bottle. But we are sitting on the bomb that can explode any moment.

## Polarization in Armenia

I would like to focus your attention on the significant social and political polarization inside the country. These problems of the shadow economy, corrupted structures, . . . and illegal relationships between government and the population, are similar to those reported here [by other speakers]. Not to mention the official figures of economic growth in Armenia, when the government officials report that 14% of GDP growth is not for the simple people, but for the oligarchical structures and that's normal for this transition period. And people ask, "How long will the transition period last?" The recent internal situation is much complicated with the violated Presidential and parliamentary elections. The united opposition led by the political bloc and parliamentarian faction named "Justice"—I am a member of this faction—is now boycotting the Parliament, calling for the restoration of the Constitutional order in the country, by arranging and passing the referendum of confidence in the powers of the President, as the Constitutional Court of Armenia decided, and stated after the elections.

## Looking to LaRouche

Dear friends: I thank the Schiller Institute, personally Michael Vitt and Anno Hellenbroich, for lasting collaboration and support to make our analysis and investigation.

The people of Armenia, and I believe the people of all formerly developed and now only developing countries, are not only potential but also real fighters for the ideas mentioned by Mr. LaRouche's representatives of the Schiller Institute, and other participants. The Eurasian Land-Bridge program, the financial system restoration, and the other projects mentioned here, are in Armenia's national interest. But to start, we first need a political solution. We call upon you to raise the question to your governments, of not promoting the new totalitarian regime of the liberated former Soviet republics. I call upon you to recognize Armenia as a unified and independent country, and to promote its stability and development. I call upon Mr. LaRouche, to go and to win in the American elections.

Thank you.