



# ANKASAM

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Melony Era in Italy: What Kind of Future?

A right-wing coalition of the Brothers of Italy (Fdi), the League, and Forza Italia, obtained roughly 44% of the vote in the general elections held in Italy on September 25, 2022. With 26% of the vote, the far right Fdi under Giorgia Meloni was declared as the winning party. The right-wing's electoral potential has grown as a result of the euro crisis, the refugee issue, the Covid-19 outbreak, the Russia-Ukraine War, and the economic, political, and social implications of all these.

Meloni, who is anticipated to be nominated to form a new government by the end of October 2022 and who would eventually become Italy's first female prime minister, describes herself as a conservative who upholds traditional family values rather than a radical right ideology. During the election campaign, it could be claimed that the rhetoric of "I'm a woman, I'm a mother, I'm Italian, I'm Christian" won the public's sympathies and overshadowed all other issues.



**Gamze BAL**

According to Meloni, Italy is a Christian nation and ought to stay that way. Therefore, she contends that it is necessary to fight against foreign cultures. She argued in favor of this position by citing the need to increase Italy's birthrate, fight against the LGBT lobby, stop the flow of immigrants into Italy, and the threat that Islam brings to Europe. Therefore, the emphasis on national identity came into prominence in Meloni's election campaign.

Meloni, who often used the slogans regarding religion, country, family in the campaigning process, takes a curious stance toward the European Union (EU), of which Italy is a founding member. She also considers national interests superior to the goals of the EU and believes that nation-states are important in the EU integration process.[1]

Meloni also points out that Italy needs to stop falling behind Germany and France in order to gain ground. The EU is also skeptical of Meloni, considering that she may act contrary to the norms. As a matter of fact, President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen did not neglect to warn Meloni that they will employ certain "tools" if is a departure from democratic principles.[2]

The contrast between the EU's assessment of Viktor Orban's government in Hungary as an autocrat that undermines EU ideals and Meloni's definition of Orban as an elected democratic leader[3] proves that the Union is right to be wary of Meloni. As a result, the EU's unity is threatened by the rising number of leaders who disagree with its core principles.

The other threat to the EU is the rising far-right. The EU residents express their displeasure with the reduction in welfare levels by supporting parties that use nationalist rhetoric on a continent that has transitioned from a Europe of Prosperity to a Europe of Crises. In fact, thanks to their extreme right-wing policies, Marine Le Pen in France, the Alternative for Germany Party (AfD) in Germany, and the Sweden Democrats in Sweden all saw increases in their support in the most recent elections. This makes it possible to see the extreme right's ongoing ascent in Europe as a shift away from integration and toward nation-statehood.

Other far-right groups in Europe will be energized by Meloni's success in Italy. Therefore, the far-right Vox Party in Spain, where the elections will take place next year, will be encouraged by Fdi's triumph. Of course, there is a chance that the rise of the Meloni-led Fdi in Italy may not go beyond giving hope to other parties since Italy is dependent on financial support of the EU due to its fragile economic structure.

The Covid-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian War, and its associated inflation, the energy and food crises, and the election process have all contributed to the Italian economy's multifaceted struggles. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made unhelpful claims, including that rising energy and food prices related to the Italian economy will have a negative impact on consumers' real income, that high interest rates and an unstable environment will discourage private investment, that businesses will reduce their planned production, and that the funding cost for the state and banks will increase[4]. As a result, from Italy's perspective, the 200-billion-euro fund from the EU is crucial to the current process.

At this point, Meloni has two choices: she can either stick with her populist rhetoric and aggravate the EU, or she may pursue a conciliatory stance by enacting changes to the legal and administrative structures to gain access to the EU financing. It is expected that Meloni will select the latter option and adopt a practical approach based on her pre-election declarations[5] that she would adhere to the EU budget regulations.

Another example of Meloni's pragmatic approach is the Russian-Ukrainian War. While condemning Russia in this process, Meloni unconditionally supported the Ukrainian government. Meloni, a supporter of the Atlanticist strategy and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), promised an Italy that would cooperate with its other Western allies in the struggle between freedoms and autocracies.

To achieve a ceasefire, Meloni's coalition allies Salvini and Berlusconi have softened their stance toward President of Russia Vladimir Putin and questioned the effectiveness of the EU sanctions against Russia.[6] There have been worries that Rome and Moscow may reproache in the new era in light of the rhetoric of Salvini and Berlusconi as well as the historical ties of right-wing parties with Russia. Meloni's assertions that Russia threatens all of Europe and that the annexation of four regions of Ukraine on September 30, 2022, have

no legal or political significance,[7] act as a counterbalance to Berlusconi and Salvini's indecisive positions. Therefore, Italy's current policy towards Ukraine is anticipated to remain in place.

Meloni emphasized the need to help Ukraine by saying both China and Russia pose the same threat to Italy, saying, "If Ukraine falls and the West perishes, the real winner will not be Putin's Russia, but Xi Jinping's China... and Europe, risks finding [itself] under Chinese influence." [8] However, Italy assumed the leading role among the Western nations in the Belt and Road Initiative, which had been finalized with Mario Draghi still in power. As part of this collaboration, China made a number of investments in Italian infrastructure.[9] Some politicians, particularly the Five Star Movement, emphasized the need to seize the business prospects presented by the Chinese market in order to resurrect the Italian economy.[10] However, it is acknowledged that throughout the Meloni era, Italian-Chinese ties would be molded in the shadow of the Atlanticist understanding and that Rome will not be a weak link in the Western alliance.

In conclusion, Meloni succeeded in persuading the base that supports the extreme right with her populist rhetoric, and with the influence of the conjuncture, she achieved a victory that will accelerate the rising extreme right in Europe. With these statements, Meloni is attempting to soothe the groups that are anxious about her triumph. However, the decision of the cabinet will clarify any uncertainty over her intentions during her term as prime minister, including whether she will abandon right-wing politics and whether she will act pragmatically or ideologically.

[1] Alissa Pavia, "Which Giorgia Meloni will Washington get?", Atlantic Council, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/which-giorgia-meloni-will-washington-get/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[2] "EU's Von Der Leyen Delivers Veiled Warning to Italy's Right Wing", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eus-von-der-leyen-delivers-veiled-warning-italys-right-wing-2022-09-23/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[3] Federica Pascale "Italy's Meloni Backs Orbán, Says Hungary Is 'Democratic'", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/italys-meloni-backs-orban-says-hungary-is-democratic/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[4] "Italy: Staff Concluding Statement of the 2022 Article IV Mission", International Monetary Fund, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/05/19/italy-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2022-article-iv-mission>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[5] Angelo Amente, Giselda Vagnoni, Crispian Balmer, "Italy's Meloni Says Public Finances Will Be Safe In Her Hands", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/exclusive-italys-meloni-says-public-finances-will-be-safe-her-hands-2022-08-25/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[6] "Italy's Lurch to The Right Triggers Diplomatic Storm On Eve Of Election", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/italys-lurch-to-the-right-triggers-international-furore-election-vladimir-putin-silvio-berlusconi-matteo-salvini-ursula-von-der-leyen-decent-people/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[7] "Italy's Meloni Slams Russia After Ukraine Annexations", Daily Times, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/1005808/italys-meloni-slams-russia-after-ukraine-annexations/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[8] Ludovica Meacci "Italy's Right Is Torn on Ukraine but United on China", Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/27/italy-china-russia-right/>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[9] "BRI Shouldn't Fall Victim to Italy's Current Political Atmosphere", Global Times, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202209/1276262.shtml>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[10] Nicola Casarini "Italy's China Card in EU-US Relations", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/italys-china-card-in-eu-us-relations/>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# New Line from Central Asia to India: Opportunity or Risk?

In terms of transportation, the most crucial region connecting Eurasia to the north-south and east-west corridors is Central Asia. It can be regarded as a neighbor of Russia, China, and India due to its geographic location. For this reason, new corridor projects involving the region are being developed and launched. One of the most active lines in Central Asia today is the Middle Corridor between China and Europe. In this context, regional actors are taking initiatives to launch new routes.

Uzbekistan, a key nation on the north-south and east-west routes, is one of the most significant actors in Central Asia in terms of corridors. Uzbekistan, one of the Middle Corridor's more stable countries, seeks to become the center of the route connecting Russia with India. Uzbekistan is attempting to develop several projects in this context. The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Corridor, for which feasibility studies have just begun, is the first of these. The goal is to eliminate the biggest shortcoming regarding China's access to the west. In addition, the Tashkent administration aims to implement the



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Trans-Afghan Corridor with the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway route in reconciliation with Pakistan in order to become the center of Central Asia that reaches the seas.

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan stand out as two important countries in the context of corridors in Central Asia, especially in South Asia. As a matter of fact, one of the most discussed issues in the recent period is the construction of a new corridor on the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran (Chabahar)-India (Mumbai) route. For this purpose, the representatives from the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan and United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) convened on September 20, 2022.

Numerous topics were covered during the conference, and it was determined to expedite the feasibility studies for the route. The major purpose of the line is to facilitate the uninterrupted flow of the 3.2-billion-dollar trade between Central Asia and India. This figure is expected to rise much more as a result of the corridor. The goal is to have \$1 billion worth of trade between India and Uzbekistan as soon as possible.[1]

In spite of the fact that the corridor, which includes the Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran (Chabahar)-India (Mumbai) route, offers advantages for connecting Uzbekistan and Central Asia to the seas, it is indeed risky in many ways. First of all, it should be noted that some countries on this corridor are subject to the sanctions of the West. In contrast, the multi-vectored foreign policy of the Central Asian governments aim to forge positive ties with a variety of actors and regions, including Western nations. Therefore, the economic dimension of the sanctions brings the possibility of this corridor initiative to be a dead investment.

On the other hand, the most important issue regarding corridors is ensuring route security. However, some of the nations along the path intended for the aforementioned corridor are experiencing political instability. Although this is thought to be a temporary situation, the terrorist organizations operating in the region make the issue much more complicated. The Baluchistan Liberation Army is the most significant of these, a terrorist group that has gained attention due to its attacks on Chinese investments. It is known that this organization has committed terrorist acts not only in Pakistan, but also in Iran. This, in turn, strengthens the possibility of destabilization of the route and damage to investments.

In addition to all these, Chabahar Port is one of the most controversial ports in the region. Although India invested in and developed the Chabahar Port, the competition on the New Delhi-Beijing route is what led to this decision. Because the Gwadar Port, which

is supported by China and belongs to Pakistan, is located directly across from the Chabahar Port. The Central Asian countries' ambitions to use the Chabahar Port will have an impact on regional dynamics.

At this point, it should be underlined that Central Asian nations, particularly Uzbekistan, wish to travel as little distance as possible to reach the sea and India. However, it may be said that in the medium-long term, this presents more challenges than opportunities and has high security concerns. Therefore, it can be said that initiatives centered on the Middle Corridor are more rational. The increasing interest in Caspian-based cooperation in the recent period shows that the states of the region are aware of this. The vision revealed by Tashkent is extremely important in the development of this consciousness.

The establishment of a route that includes India in accordance with the Middle Corridor, on the other hand, is currently under discussion. The Lapis Lazuli Route, which stops in the Afghan city of Herat, is planned to be extended to India through Pakistan. Combining Lapis Lazuli and the Trans-Afghan Corridor in a center such as Kabul will expand the scope of the Middle Corridor, as well as increase the gains of the Central Asian states. Given the geopolitical and economic importance of the countries that make up the Middle Corridor in Eurasia, the likelihood of its destabilization or unfavorable reception is far lower than that of other possibilities. Moreover, it is crucial for Afghanistan to be involved in regional initiatives because it will contribute to the stability of the country, it will also increase the security of Central Asia.

In conclusion, Central Asia is not only the center of Asia, it is the center of the Eurasian geography. The geopolitical significance of Central Asia is confirmed by the numerous projects that have been completed or are scheduled for completion. At this stage, it can be suggested that medium and long-term benefits of the projects will enhance Central Asia's geopolitical, geostrategic, and geoeconomic importance, especially Uzbekistan's. The states of the region would likely to employ the capital in the most effective manner. By developing risk-free initiatives to reach India, the Tashkent government will consolidate its position on the east-west and north-south routes of both Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

[1] "Development of Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-India Transport Corridor Discussed in Tashkent Meeting", Business Turkmenistan, <https://business.com.tm/post/9199/obsuzhden-proekt-razvitiya-transportnogo-koridora-uzbekistanturkmenistaniranindiya>, (Date of Accession: 26.09.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Has China's Perspective on the Russia-Ukraine War Changed?

It is wondered whether China's views on the Ukraine War have changed after President of Russia Vladimir Putin's last insistence on continuing the war in Ukraine, and especially after resorting to the nuclear threat. According to the general opinion in the West, the Russian-Chinese friendship has reached its limits and has begun to decline. For example, on October 3, 2022, Former United States (US) Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said that Chinese President Xi Jinping thought it was wrong to support Russia in the Ukraine War, and therefore he may have changed his view on the war.[1] According to Kissinger, before the starting of the Ukraine War, President of China Xi Jinping gave a "blank check" to his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. The reason for this support is that Jinping believes that Russia will achieve a quick victory in Ukraine.

It is highly likely that Putin won Jinping's support by convincing his Chinese counterpart that this war would end quickly and painlessly. Because before the war, Russia's senior staff seemed to have convinced and encouraged Putin that the operation plan would be extremely successful. So, before the war, Putin had full confidence that he would win.

It seems that; when Putin went to Beijing within the framework of the Winter Olympics in February 2022, he succeeded in instilling this assurance in the Chinese authorities. On the other hand, China may have thought that it would profit from Russia's attack on Ukraine and that this attack would be useful to undermine the hegemony of the West and to teach it a lesson. Indeed, Beijing may have wanted to side with Moscow in order to combat the percep-



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tion that the West rules the world and it is the sole hegemon of the international order, and to overthrow this notion. However, it can be said that Russia's failure in the war and the economic burdens brought by the Western sanctions were effective in changing China's mind.

Considering that foreign policy and economy are closely linked together, it can be concluded that China is facing increasing domestic problems, especially aging population, high financial debts and real estate crisis, which affects foreign policy. Therefore, in the bilateral meetings held during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, the leaders of China and Russia agreed to expand cooperation in areas such as trade and agriculture but there was no mention of military cooperation.[2] In this context, it can be said that Russia and China's partnerships are not permanent, they cannot establish strategic partnerships and they have a temporary cooperation. Because, as seen in the Ukrainian War, the two states have not developed an absolute cooperation in foreign policy. So that; after Russia's announcement of military mobilization, China called for negotiations and a ceasefire in Ukraine. Making a statement on the subject, Wang Wenbin, spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China said that, "we call for a ceasefire through negotiations in a way that responds to the security concerns of all parties." [3]

It can be said that Putin's declaration of mobilization disappointed Beijing. Because one of the actors that suffered the most from this war is China. The main reason for this discomfort is that while Russia is dealing with the war in Ukraine; it will not be able to come to your aid. There is such a risk for Beijing. In other words, while Russia continues its war in Ukraine; China cannot take a comfortable decision regarding Taiwan. Because it cannot count on Moscow's support. Once the war in Ukraine is over, China can muster up the courage for an operation to unite with Taiwan. In short, China wants this war to end more for its own interests.

Moreover, Putin's ambitious policies are no longer reasonable or acceptable to China. The clearest indication of this was experienced at the SCO Summit in Uzbekistan. During the summit, in front of the cameras, Jinping smiled nervously while shaking hands with Putin, and then seriously moved away from the Russian leader.[4] After this attitude, Putin had to make a statement and said "I understand China's concerns." As a matter of fact, at this summit, Jinping gave the message that they could work together with Russia to ensure stability in the world. Despite this, it can be argued that Putin's pro-war stance disturbs China.

Another reason why Beijing has reduced its support for Moscow in the Ukraine War is that China's military-defense securi-

ty will be put at risk. Normally, China is militarily dependent on Russia. However, the losses experienced by the Russian Army in the Ukraine War and the problems in the supply and supply of military products have made Moscow in need of Beijing. Russia now buys back from China the improved or modernized version of the military products it previously sold. As a matter of fact, according to the claim made by Washington in the first months of the war, Russia requested military aid from China as its military ammunition was gradually depleted.[5] Although both Moscow and Beijing have denied this, there is a possibility that the allegations are true. But this help is not the first. Normally, China already ships the products in question to Russia. The difference here is that arms sales qualify as "military aid".

Military products were currently sold by China to Russia are listed as unmanned aerial vehicles components, off-road vehicles, radiation resistant electronic components and chip supply. In the current situation, Russia also demands surface-to-air missiles, UAVs, intelligence-related equipment and armored and logistics vehicles from China due to its losses in the Ukraine War. Therefore, prolongation of the war may also reveal China's own defense weakness. At a time when China is making plans for Taiwan, Beijing will want to be strong militarily and will even want to see Russia's support behind it.

As a result, Beijing is revising its view on the Russia-Ukraine War in line with its national interests. It is possible to interpret this as an effort to recalibrate China's relations with Russia. Because it would not be right to say that there has been a clear break in the Russian-Chinese relations due to the Ukraine issue.

[1] "Xi Jinping May 'Recalibrate' After Miscalculation of Siding with Russia, Henry Kissinger Says", SCMP, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3194737/xi-jinping-may-recalibrate-after-miscalculation-siding-russia-henry>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[2] "Xi And Putin Vow Mutual Support, But Military Backing Unlikely, Analysts Say", SCMP, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3192805/xi-and-putin-vow-mutual-support-military-backing-unlikely>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[3] "China Calls for Negotiations, Cease-Fire in Ukraine After Russia's Military Mobilization Announcement", AA, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/china-calls-for-negotiations-cease-fire-in-ukraine-after-russias-military-mobilization-announcement/2690808>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[4] "Is China About to Turn on Russia?", Unherd, <https://unherd.com/2022/10/is-china-about-to-turn-on-russia/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[5] "China Reverses Roles in Arms Trade with Russia", FT, <https://www.ft.com/content/dc4bc03c-3d9d-43bd-91db-1ede084e0798>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# How Does the Central and Eastern European Countries Approach to the NATO Membership of Ukraine?

On September 30, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed decrees approving the annexation of the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk regions belonging to Ukraine.[1] Following this development, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky stated that Kiev would apply to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through an accelerated procedure.[2]

On October 2, 2022, the heads of state of nine countries in Central and Eastern Europe issued a statement declaring that they will never recognize Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory. These countries include the Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. In addition, the states stressed that they stand behind the decision taken by NATO fourteen years ago, which



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supports Ukraine's desire to join the alliance in the upcoming years. In contrast, among the states not included in the declaration are Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia.[3]

One of the important points of the declaration is that all nine signatories are members of the NATO. It is also known that these countries are states in Central and Eastern Europe with a higher perception of threats to Russia.

It should be noted that it is not surprising that the nine countries have signed such a declaration. Because the Baltic and Eastern European countries are concerned that the turn may come to them after the attack launched by the Moscow administration against Ukraine on February 24, 2022.[4] In particular, the Baltic States are often at the forefront of decisions aimed at limiting Russia, both within NATO and the European Union (EU). So much so that these states have recently closed their borders to Russians and announced that they will not grant asylum even to Russian citizens fleeing from Russian President Vladimir Putin's mobilization decision.[5] Therefore, it can be predicted that the Baltic countries will be the states that will most support Ukraine's NATO membership.

Poland, the Czechia and Slovakia are among the nine countries that have signed the declaration. Considering that Poland is the center of Russophobia in Eastern Europe, it is quite usual for it to sign this declaration. It is seen that Poland and the Czechia have pursued a hawkish policy against the Moscow administration since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War.

The administrations of Montenegro and North Macedonia also have signatures on the declaration. First of all, these two countries are the newest NATO members. Podgorica joined the alliance in 2017, while Skopje became a member in 2020. Because of these characteristics, it can be suggested that both states are looking forward to NATO expansion and therefore Ukraine's membership in the alliance.

On the other hand, the approach of the states that have not signed the declaration is as important as the countries that have signed the declaration. For example, President of Bulgaria Rumen Radev stated on September 4, 2022 that he opposes Ukraine's membership in NATO until the war ends.[6] Following the overthrow of former Prime Minister Kirill Petkov in Bulgaria in June 2022 due to his failure to win a vote of confidence, Radev's influence in Bulgarian politics has also increased.

During that period, there have been significant changes in Sofia's policy towards Ukraine. Because the caretaker government has started gas negotiations with the Russian state-owned company Gazprom and wants to ensure energy security by maintaining natural gas supplies at least until the end of 2022 in accordance with the agreement valid until the end of the year. In particular, the approach of the winter months has caused decision-makers in Bulgaria to adopt a distant approach towards Kiev compared to Petkov. For example, it is known that on September 29, 2022, Ukraine requested heavy weapons from Bulgaria, but the interim government refused this request.[7] In addition, three different parties that are notable for their pro-Russian identity in the elections held on October 2, 2022,[8] their total 23-24% vote and whether they will take part in the new government in Bulgaria may also affect Sofia's attitude towards Kiev's NATO membership.

Another Eastern European country that does not have a signature on the declaration is Hungary. It can be stated that Budapest's approach to Ukraine's accelerated NATO membership will not be positive. This issue is related to Budapest's disputes with Kiev rather than its relations with Moscow.

To clarify the situation, the government of Hungary is concerned about the policies applied by the Kiev administration to minority communities in Transcarpathia, which broke away from Hungary after the First World War and is currently a region of Ukraine. Already for this reason, Hungary was accused of trying to influence the outcome of the elections in the region in 2019, and Budapest blocked Ukraine's NATO membership negotiations because of this dispute.[9] Therefore, it is possible that Hungary will raise this issue again regarding Ukraine's membership.

It is seen that Croatia has not signed the declaration either. On August 8, 2022, Croatian President Zoran Milanovic stated that the sanctions against Russia are not working and stated that the sanctions are hurting Croatia.[10] Thus, Croatia has become the second EU and NATO member state after Hungary to express that sanctions against Russia are not working. Therefore, it can be said that it is not a surprise that the Zagreb administration did not sign the declaration.

Consequently, it should be emphasized that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are not in a consensus on Ukraine's NATO membership. In this case, the size of the threat perceived by the countries from Russia and the energy factor may be effective. Due to the structure of NATO, every decision to be taken must be approved by all member states. This situation, on the other hand, may lead to the fact that Ukraine's membership remains protracted.

[1] "Putin Signs Decrees Paving Way for Annexing Ukraine Territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/29/putin-to-sign-treaty-annexing-territories-in-ukraine-kremlin-says>, (Date of Accession:04.10.2022).

[2] "Zelenskyy is Pushing for Fast-Track NATO Membership. Does Ukraine Have a Fighting Chance to Join the Club?", Atlantic Council, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/zelenskyy-is-pushing-for-fast-track-nato-membership-does-ukraine-have-a-fighting-chance-to-join-the-club/>, (Date of Accession:04.10.2022).

[3] "Presidents of 9 NATO Countries Condemn Russian Annexations in Ukraine", Al Arabiya English, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/10/02/Presidents-of-9-NATO-countries-condemn-Russian-annexations-in-Ukraine>, (Date of Accession:04.10.2022).

[4] Cenk Tamer, "NATO'nun Rusya'yla Mücadelesinde "Bölünme" ya da İşbirliği", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/natonun-rusyay-la-mucadelesinde-bolunme-ya-da-isbirligi/>, (Date of Accession:05.10.2022).

[5] "Baltic States Say They Will Not Grant Asylum to Russians Fleeing Military Mobilisation", Schengen News, <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/baltic-states-say-they-will-not-grant-asylum-to-russians-fleeing-military-mobilisation/>, (Date of Accession:04.10.2022).

[6] "Bulgarian President Against Ukraine's Membership in NATO", Euractiv, [https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short\\_news/bulgarian-president-against-ukraines-membership-in-nato/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short_news/bulgarian-president-against-ukraines-membership-in-nato/), (Date of Accession:04.10.2022).

[7] "Ukraine Asked Bulgaria for Heavy Weapons- the Caretaker Government Refused", Novinite, <https://www.novinite.com/articles/216910/Ukraine+asked+Bulgaria+for+Heavy+Weapons+-+the+Caretaker+Government+Refused>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[8] These parties, according to the percentage of votes they received respectively, are as follows: the Revival Party (Vazrazhdane) has 10.17%, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) has 9.30% and the Bulgarian Rise Party (BV) has 4.62%. For detailed information on the topic, see "Elections in Bulgaria: Can a Government be Formed? Lowest Voter Activity in 32 Years", Novinite, <https://www.novinite.com/articles/216951/Elections+in+Bulgaria%3A+Can+a+Government+be+Formed%3F+Lowest+Voter+Activity+in+32+years>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[9] William Natrass, "Hungary's 'Pro-Russia' Stance was Inevitable", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-pro-russia-stance-inevitable/>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[10] "Croatian President Says Western Sanctions Aren't Working", BNE Intellinews, <https://www.intellinews.com/croatian-president-says-western-sanctions-aren-t-working-252879/>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Is Transnistria Next Address of Russian-Western Struggle?

On 20-26 September 2022, President of Moldova Maia Sandu visited the United States (US) to attend the 77th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). When Sandu returned to her country, she called the Moldovan Security Council to a meeting. It was also seen that, Sandu travelled to the US with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in the same plane. This creates the

impression that the parties have consulted on Russia's regional policies. In her speech during the UN Meeting, Sandu expressed her national theses, which she had expressed since Moldova's independence, with the following words:[1]

"The illegal presence of Russian troops in the region threatens our neutrality and increases risks to our country's security. We want uncon-



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ditional and complete withdrawal of Russian troops and the destruction of ammunition in warehouses in Cobasna, which poses a threat to the entire region.”

Although Sandu’s statement was not different from the previous discourses of the Chişinău administration, it had wide repercussions due to the situation in the international system due to the Russian-Ukrainian War. Because the Moscow administration carried out a military intervention in Ukraine and annexed various regions of this country in violation of international law. Moreover, the Kremlin is threatening to use nuclear weapons. This raises Moldova’s concerns about the Transnistria Issue. Because there are allegations that the Kremlin will try to solve this problem using military force.

Negotiations between the structure in the Transnistria Region and Moldova are currently frozen. This is because Chişinău is taking a break from talks with Tiraspol after the beginning of the Ukrainian War. That’s why, the Moldovan government chose to watch how things would evolve. Thus, Chişinău wanted to create pressure on Transnistria. The following statements Sandu used in her interview on September 28, 2022 have raised Tiraspol’s concerns:[2]

“I have always said that when a geopolitical opportunity arises, we must be prepared to resolve this conflict. When Ukraine wins the war, a geopolitical opportunity may arise. But our goal is to find a peaceful solution to conflict. And now I answer everyone who believes the time has come: The most important thing for us is to keep the peace on both the right and left banks of Transnistria.”

On the other hand, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov must also be remembered for saying that on 1 September 2022, they would accept any action that could be considered a threat to the security of Russian Peacekeepers as an attack on Russia.[3] Following Lavrov’s statement, former US European Forces Commander Ben Hodges said:[4]

“Perhaps it is time for Ukraine and Moldova to solve the Transnistria conflict. The Kremlin cannot stop this. Do the residents of Transnistria want to be chained to Russia? Or is there hope for a brighter future?”

As it can be understood, both Moscow and Tiraspol think that steps can be taken to resolve the Transnistria Issue in line with Chişinău’s expectations and are hesitant to do so. That is why Tiraspol implies that it is in favor of negotiating with Chişinău. In fact, the Kremlin supports it. However, Moldova does not want to meet with the leaders of the administration in Transnistria. In other words, Kisinev does not wish to establish a direct dialog, but to resolve all issues through the “Bureau of Reintegration”.[5]

Moldova seeks to achieve its goals toward Transnistria, particularly by taking advantage of the international conjuncture created by the Russian-Ukrainian War. That’s why, Sandu convened the Security Council on her return from the USA. In addition, Sandu made the following evaluations in her statement on the subject:[6]

“Moldovan citizens in the eastern regions of the Republic of Moldova are at risk of being involved in partial mobilization. To prevent such acts, we analyze the option of removing people with Russian passports from Moldovan citizenship, who will fight alongside Russia. We are also considering the possibility that more severe penalties will be imposed on Moldovan citizens who want to be mercenaries.”

Some of the residents of Transnistria are also Russian citizens. Therefore, Moldova-Russia and Moldova-Transnistria relations may deteriorate further if Moscow mobilizes the region in question. Chişinău opposes the scenario for two reasons. The first is that an initiative in this direction will mean a violation of Moldova’s sovereignty. The second is that Kiev is an ally of Chişinău. Therefore, Moldova considers it unacceptable for its citizens to fight for the Russian Army.

On the other hand, if Transnistrian government sends people living in the region to the war to support Russia, it is possible that the region will become a target of the Ukrainian Army. Whereas, Kiev is both a guarantor and a mediator in the Transnistria Issue. However, it is also known that the presence of Russian Peacekeeping Forces in the region is disturbing Ukraine.

The Kremlin understands that the region is far from the Russian border and therefore difficult to defend. Moreover, the deterioration of the current status quo could create an equation that is contrary to the interests of Russia. Despite this, the Kremlin’s intervention in the Transnistria region remains a possibility. But such a move requires Russian forces to control Odessa, which is located in the southwest of Ukraine. In this case, Moscow can intervene in Transnistria, annex it and define it as its own territory. But given the balances on the field, it is likely that this possibility is weak.

As a result, Government of Moldova stopped the negotiations on the solution of Transnistria Question and decided to wait for the course of the Ukraine War. If Russia’s losses increase, it can be foreseen that Chişinău will want to move with Kiev and the West to turn status quo in the region in its favor. In the opposite scenario, Russia may try to annex Transnistria depending on the areas it controls in the southwestern part of Ukraine.

[1] “Санду призвала с трибуны ООН вывести российские войска, незаконно размещенные в Приднестровском регионе”, JurnalTV, <https://www.jurnaltv.md/news/cd3725c38431984f/sandu-prizvala-s-tribuny-oon-vyvesti-rossiyskie-voyska-nezakonno-razmeshchennye-v-pridnestrovskom-regione.html/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[2] “Победа Украины может поспособствовать решению проблемы Приднестровья-президент Молдовы”, Evropeyskaya Pravda, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/09/28/7147708/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[3] “Лавров заявил, что действия против миротворцев в Приднестровье будут считаться нападением на РФ”, Tass, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/860242>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[4] “Генерал Ходжес: Возможно, пора Украине и Молдове решить приднестровский вопрос”, Evropeyskaya Pravda, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/09/4/7146141/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[5] “Лавров заявил, что Россия следит за интересами русскоязычных в Молдове: реакция Кишинёва”, SP, <https://esp.md/ru/sobytiya/2022/09/01/lavrov-zayavil-chto-rossiya-sledit-za-interesami-russkoyazychnyh-v-moldove#>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[6] “Санду пригрозила лишить гражданства молдаван, которые будут воевать на стороне России”, Tass, [https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/15866543?utm\\_source=google.com&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=google.com&utm\\_referrer=google.com](https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/15866543?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com), (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Quests for Strong Cooperation in Uzbekistan-Hungary Relations

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan and Hungary began to establish relations at various levels. Although the relations between the two countries were limited due to geographical distance in the early periods, both the Middle Corridor and the Organization of Turkic States accelerated the development

of relations between the parties. On September 3, 2018, the leaders of the two countries also participated in the sixth summit of the Organization of Turkic States, whose name was the Turkic Council at that time. At this summit, Hungary became an observer member, while Uzbekistan became a full member at the seventh



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summit on October 15, 2019. This development has allowed relations to progress in a multidimensional and structural format

Mutual visits organized by heads of state are decisive in the development of relations between Uzbekistan and Hungary. One of the visits was made by Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban on March 29, 2021. During the visit, a common attitude towards the development of cooperation in the political, commercial, technical, cultural and humanitarian fields was demonstrated. In addition, the parties stated that they are ready to increase their relations to the level of "strategic partnership."

The visit can be interpreted as a sign of goodwill for the development of economic relations between the parties. In particular, the tripling of the trade volume between the two countries in the last four years and the holding of the First Meeting of the Uzbekistan-Hungary Business Council are indicators of this.[1] Furthermore, on the occasion of the visit, it was emphasized that Uzbekistan-Hungary cooperation is based on solid foundations and that the two states have established contacts at the right time. In this context, it was stated that relations will develop in all areas from agriculture to nuclear and even expressed that there will be a Central Asian-Central European dimension to this. In this regard, Orban asked to assist from the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev.[2]

As a reflection of the developing bilateral relations, Mr. Mirziyoyev visited Budapest on October 3-4, 2022. While economic, cultural and humanitarian relations formed the agenda of the visit, deepening of strategic partnership and expansion of multifaceted cooperation were also discussed. Moreover, the leaders exchanged views on international and regional policies, including cooperation processes carried out within the Organization of Turkic States.[3]

It can be said that Mr. Mirziyoyev's visit is important in many ways. First of all, both states are full and observer members of the OTS. The fact that the visit was held before the OTS Summit to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on November 11, 2022, reveals that the states intend to accelerate the cooperation and integration process.

On the other hand, it is known that Hungary is the center of the Middle Corridor in Europe. Considering that Uzbekistan is also of key importance in the Middle Corridor, it can be argued that there is a geographical interdependency between the parties. It can also be argued that this geographical relationship is tried to be deepened through various sectors. Already for this reason, after the meeting between the leaders, 15 agreements were signed before the governments and ministries. Moreover, it was also decided to cooperate in the agricultural, transportation, pharmaceutical, textile, food, electricity, water saving and industrial sectors. In addition to all these, the parties agreed on the goal of increasing the trade volume between the two countries to 500 million dollars.[4]

As can be understood, both Tashkent and Budapest are committed to strengthening diplomatic relations. With the visit of Mr. Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has decided to open a diplomatic mission in this country. On the other hand, Hungary already has an embassy in Tashkent. Undoubtedly, the fact that Uzbekistan will open an embassy in Budapest will allow relations to acquire a more institutional nature.

Finally, it should be emphasized that on the occasion of the visit, the parties signed a "Joint Declaration" to raise relations to the level of "strategic partnership." The situation shows that the integration processes among the Turkic states have strengthened. Because the steps taken by Uzbekistan in this regard are remarkable. For example, it is stated that Uzbekistan, which signed the "Declaration of



Alliance" with Kazakhstan in December 2021, aims to deepen its "strategic partnership" relationship with Turkmenistan through established high-level contacts.

Consequently, the relations between Uzbekistan and Hungary tend to develop and deepen. In this regard, the mutual visits of the heads of state are decisive. The situation reflects positively on the Middle Corridor and ensures that the parties become key actors of East-West interaction.

[1] "Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Viktor Orban Hold a Narrow-Format Meeting", Uz Daily, <http://www.uzdaily.com/en/post/64516>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[2] "Orbán: Hungarians and Uzbeks 'Held Hands at the Right Time'", Hungary Today, <https://hungarytoday.hu/orban-uzbekistan-hungary-mirziyoyev-szijjarto/>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[3] "President of Uzbekistan to Pay Official Visit to Hungary", President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://president.uz/en/lists/view/5572>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[4] "Uzbekistan to Open Diplomatic Mission in Hungary", AKI Press, [https://akipress.com/news:681606:Uzbekistan\\_to\\_open\\_diplomatic\\_mission\\_in\\_Hungary/](https://akipress.com/news:681606:Uzbekistan_to_open_diplomatic_mission_in_Hungary/), (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# What Does Russia Expect from the Referendums?

On September 23, 2022, Russia held referendums in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine. This development demonstrates that Russia is using the same strategy in the ongoing conflict as it used in the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Following the referendums, it was revealed that 98.42% of voters in Luhansk, 99.23% in Donetsk, 93.11% in Zaporizhzhia, and 87.05% in Kherson approved of joining Russia.[1]

At this point, it should be mentioned that the contested referendums violate Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty by violating both the United Nations (UN) Charter, which is international law, and the Ukrainian Constitution. As a matter of fact, Article 73 of the Ukrainian Constitution mandates that any referendum, including the accession of a part

of the country to another state, must take place across the entirety of Ukraine.[2] The referendum is not in accordance with the laws of Russia either. Russian law also states that any referendum must be announced at least four months in advance.[3] So why did Russian President Vladimir Putin strive to speed up the procedure in an effort to make it happen?

Putin may have first wished to dispel the somber tone brought on by the start of Russia's retreat following the Ukrainian army's successful operations in Kharkov. Furthermore, it may be argued that the Russian president's responses at the Samarkand Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) influenced his decision. The SCO Summit demonstrated that Russia's reputation has suf-



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ferred as a result of the escalating tensions and its inability to secure tangible victories. Therefore, Russia is becoming more isolated with each passing day. He chose to escalate the war in this isolating setting. Because the liberation of Balakliya, Kupiansk, and Izyum by the Ukrainian Army caused a lull in the fighting and undermined the Russian people's confidence that the war could be won, Putin decided to convey that Russia is still capable of winning the war.

The referendums' purpose, as anticipated, is to give Russian society a justification for continuing the war. At the same time, referendums also provide basis for partial mobilization because, as a result of the referendums, it is now claimed that the relevant regions have joined the Russian territories. Thus, the Kremlin administration asks for the Russian people to protect their borders.

Putin's referendum decision, however, was also influenced by the current international conjecture. The United States (USA) midterm elections will take place on November 8, 2022, and the National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party will be held on October 16, 2022. Undoubtedly, these elections will also affect Russia's Ukraine policy. In a way, Putin raises the stakes because he does not want to be caught unprepared for the possible bargaining atmosphere following the key elections. In other words, Russia sees referendums as a tool. However, it should not be ignored that the international community and especially Western states condemn Moscow's actions.

Moscow viewed the referendums as a measure to halt the offensive of the Ukrainian army which means, Russia will portray Ukrainian activities against the referendum regions as an attack on its own territory and will attempt to have a deterrent effect. Dmytro Kuleba, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, issued the following comment on the subject:[4]

"Sham referendums will not change anything. Neither will any hybrid 'mobilization'. Ukraine has every right to liberate its territories and will keep liberating them."

In response to Kuleba's assertion, Sergey Lavrov, the Foreign Minister of Russia, cited the country's nuclear doctrine and declared that all Russian laws and doctrines would be applicable in the areas where the referendums were held.[5] In truth, this assertion may be seen as a ploy to use nuclear deterrence to keep the areas under Russian control.

However, protests against the mobilization decision were organized in numerous Russian regions, particularly the North Caucasus. Contrary to what the Kremlin believes, these referendums will not persuade Russian society to enter a war; rather, the protests raise the possibility that it could create more instability in the nation. The absence of a robust protest culture in Russia is also well known. Street demonstrations are therefore not expected to rise. Therefore, it is doubtful that something will happen to cause the Moscow government to reverse course.

As a result, the Russian-organized referendums demonstrate that Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty have been breached. It is therefore against international law as well. However, it appears that Moscow is trying to force Kiev to accept the situation as it is with its move to intensify the conflict and impose its nuclear deterrence. It would not be unexpected if referendums were staged across the nation to force Ukraine to impose this status quo.

[1] "Херсонской и Запорожской областях подвели итоги референдума", E1.ru, <https://www.e1.ru/text/politics/2022/09/28/71687603/>, (Date of Accession: 29.09.2022).

[2] "Референдумы" на захваченных Россией территориях Украины-почему они незаконны", BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-63001280>, (Date of Accession: 29.09.2022).

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Псевдореферендумы: Ни Украина, ни международное сообщество не признают их ничтожные результаты", Русская служба «Голоса Америки», [https://www.golosameriki.com/a/referenda-occupied-territory/6755\\_544.html](https://www.golosameriki.com/a/referenda-occupied-territory/6755_544.html), (Date of Accession: 29.09.2022).

[5] "Ядерная доктрина РФ будет распространяться и на "новые" территории – Лавров", Украинская правда, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2022/09/24/7368942/>, (Date of Accession: 29.09.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# South Korea-NATO Rapprochement

On 28-30 June 2022, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Leaders' Summit was held in Madrid. In addition to the members of NATO, the partners of NATO; Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and South Korea (for the first time) attended this summit. South Korea was a sole nation which has not mission to NATO amid NATO's other Asian partner states. In the summit, South Korea has reflected the desire to establish a mission to NATO and this demand was accepted in September 28, 2022.[1]

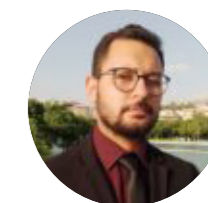
While South Korea was pursuing a foreign policy that aim to establish a balance between great powers, it initiated to approach NATO because of changing conjuncture. First of all, it is important to express that South Korea has become a first Asian state which joined NATO Cooperative

Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) and this situation disturbed China. On behalf of China, Hu Xijin, editor of Global Times which is China's state affiliated media, reply the situation by stating that "If South Korea takes a path of turning hostile against its neighbors, the end of this path could be like Ukraine" in a tweet.[2]

On the other hand, the Ukrainian War increased the danger of North Korea with the nuclear threat after Russia's declaration of partial mobilization. All these situations accelerated the approach of South Korea to NATO.

NATO Heads of State Summit

Although the agenda at NATO Heads of State Summit held in Madrid on June 28, focused on



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Russia, both the security priority of South Korea and the talks between Japan, South Korea and the US brought Asia-Pacific into the forefront.

The situation can be examined in the context of both Russia and North Korea. First of all, Russia tried to legitimize the occupation of the territory of another sovereign state in the Ukraine War by using security concerns as an excuse.

This development strengthens the possibility of an attack by North Korea by using security concerns as an excuse. For this reason, it is unacceptable event for the Seoul administration. As a matter of fact, during his speech at the summit, South Korean leader Yoon Suk-yeol expressed that he wanted to combine Seoul's security and foreign policy with NATO's solid stance against Russia.[3] In addition, the Pyongyang administration's 32 missile tests in 2022 encourages Seoul to establish strong relations between South Korea and NATO.[4]

Moreover, as mentioned above, talks took place between Japan, South Korea and the US at the summit. The emphasis was on "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" in the talks. It can be said that this reflects the rising objection to China's activities in the region. For example, the leak of the draft security agreement signed between China and the Solomon Islands in April 2022 to the press is a good example in terms of events that increase the concerns of the states. The leaked draft has alarmed the US and Australia as China has the potential to open a naval base in the Solomon Islands as well as training police forces.[5]

Although South Korea stated that its participation in the summit should not be perceived against China, the Beijing administration took steps to show that they are uncomfortable with it. As a matter of fact, in the analysis published in the Global Times on September 28, it was stated that the South Korea-NATO rapprochement would deepen the divisions in the region and it was underlined that this move would harm Seoul in terms of economy and security in the long term.[6]

#### South Korea's NATO Mission and NAC+4 Meeting

The request of South Korea to reorganize the Brussels Embassy as a NATO mission was accepted by the alliance on September 28, 2022. This development is the most important indicator of the improvement of NATO-South Korea relations, as a continuation of the positive atmosphere at the Madrid Summit, on an international area pregnant with uncertainties.

Although the foreign policy understanding of the Seoul admin-

istration, whose slogan was "Korea first," sometimes gives signals of convergence to states such as China and Russia, recent developments have caused she to distance herself from Beijing and Moscow.

As stated above, North Korea's direct or indirect threats are at the center of South Korea's security understanding. In this context, Russia's expansionist policies by ignoring international law have the potential to indirectly encourage the Pyongyang administration. In addition, the fact that China has not given a satisfactory response to North Korea's nuclear law [7] pushes Seoul to act cautiously towards Beijing.

On the other hand, it is very important for South Korea to participate in the NAC+4 meeting held on September 27, 2022. NAC+4 refers to the thirty NATO members, the four Asia-Pacific partner countries, Sweden and Finland that wish to join the alliance. The states which participate in the meeting stated that the nuclear threat from North Korea is related to European security and drew attention to the fact that nuclear danger is a non-negligible threat during the Russia-Ukraine War.[8]

As a result, besides the security concerns that have existed since the Madrid Summit of NATO, there have been many developments that could make South Korea to concern. Rise of North Korea's nuclear capacity and her nuclear law have increased these concerns. Moreover, Russia's actions indirectly encourage North Korea. Beijing, on the other hand, does not give the reaction that Seoul expects. This development accelerates progress of South Korea's relations with NATO.

[1] Nam Hyun-Woo, "South Korea's Mission to NATO Approved", The Korea Times, [www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/09/113\\_336900.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/09/113_336900.html), (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[2] Charlie Campbell, "South Korea's Intelligence Agency Has Joined NATO's Cyber Defense Unit. China Isn't Happy", Time, [time.com/6173812/south-korea-cyber-nato-china/](http://time.com/6173812/south-korea-cyber-nato-china/), (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[3] Sukjoon Yoon, "Can South Korea Bridge NATO and the US Indo-Pacific Strategy?", The Diplomat, [thediplomat.com/2022/07/can-south-korea-bridge-nato-and-the-us-indo-pacific-strategy/](http://thediplomat.com/2022/07/can-south-korea-bridge-nato-and-the-us-indo-pacific-strategy/), (Date of Accession: 03.10.2022).

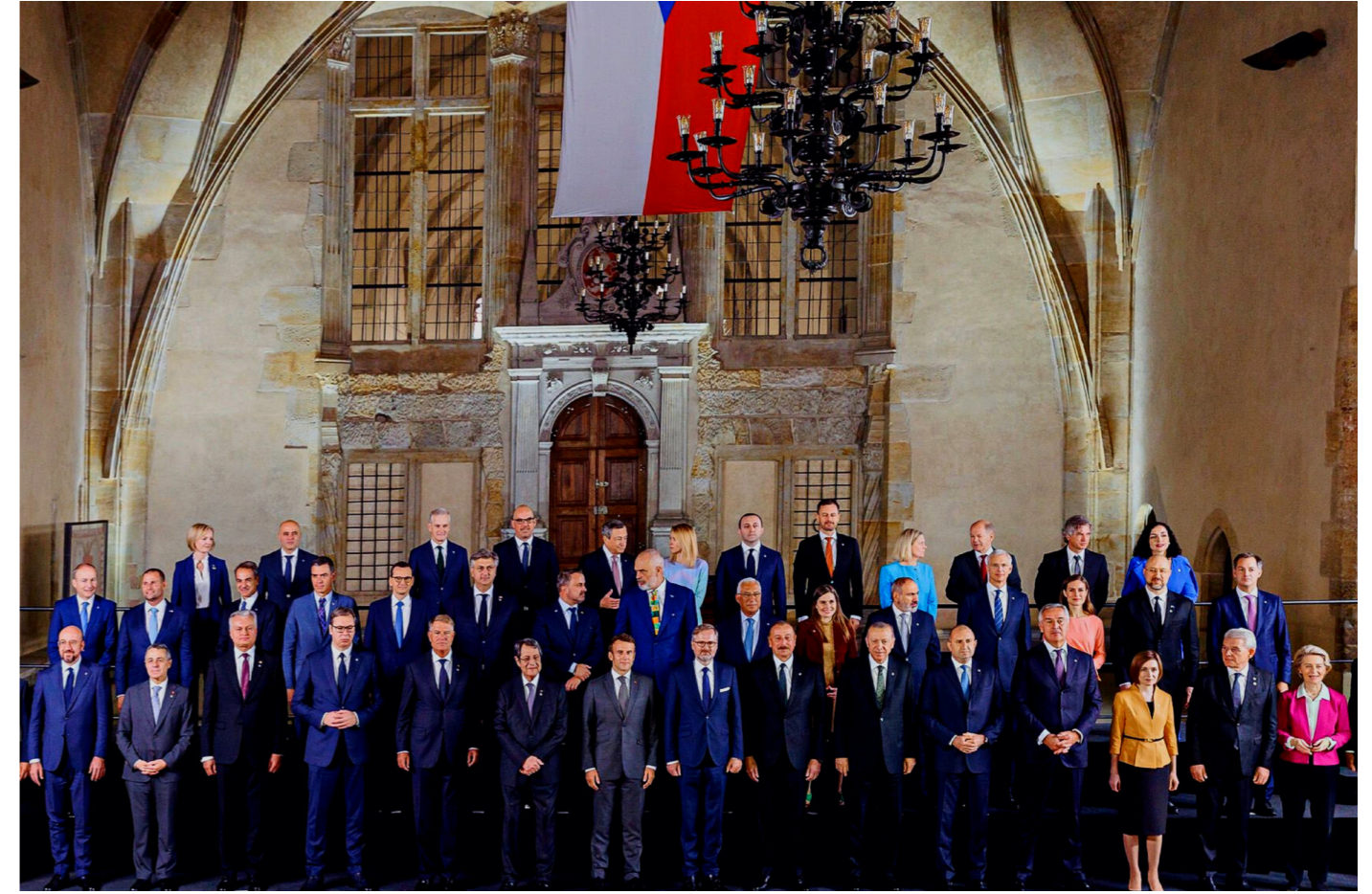
[4] Hyun-Woo, op. cit.

[5] John Ruwitch, "Leaked Draft of an Agreement between China and the Solomon Islands Has U.S. Concerned", NPR, [www.npr.org/2022/04/28/1095365212/leaked-draft-of-an-agreement-between-china-and-the-solomon-islands-has-u-s-conce](http://www.npr.org/2022/04/28/1095365212/leaked-draft-of-an-agreement-between-china-and-the-solomon-islands-has-u-s-conce), (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[6] Fan Anq-Du Qiongfang, "NATO Accepts SKorea's Request to Set up Mission; Closer Security Alliance 'Risks Exacerbating Regional Division'", Global Times, [www.globaltimes.cn/page/202209/1276344.shtml](http://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202209/1276344.shtml), (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[7] Kawala Xie, "China's Reaction to North Korea's Nuclear Weapons First-Use Law Tipped to be Uted", South China Morning Post, [www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3192253/chinas-reaction-north-koreas-nuclear-weapons-first-use-law](http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3192253/chinas-reaction-north-koreas-nuclear-weapons-first-use-law) (Date of Accession: 21.09.2022).

[8] Hyun-Woo, op. cit.



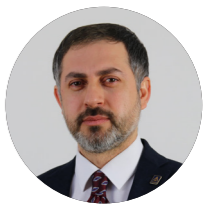
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The European Political Community: A New European Order in the Absence of Russia?

The first meeting of the European Political Community was held on October 6, 2022, in Prague, Czech Republic, with 44 European leaders in attendance. 27 European Union (EU) countries, including candidate states as well as countries affiliated with the EU through economic agreements and sharing of European values attended to the meeting. Belarus and Russia were not invited to the meeting. The European Political Community's leaders are expected to meet once or twice a year. Furthermore, contrary to the format's name, the Summit's agenda covered a wide range of topics, from the economy to security.

The idea of creating a new platform came from French President Emmanuel Macron in May 2022. The proposal was then approved by the EU. The Union has defined the community as a new cooperation platform rather than an alternative to EU membership. Within this framework, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, made the following statements:[1]

"With the dramatic consequences of Russia's war affecting European countries on many fronts, we agreed to launch the European Political Community with the aim of bringing together countries on the European continent



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and providing a platform for political coordination. The ambition is to bring leaders together on an equal footing and to foster political dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest so that, together, we work on strengthening the security, stability and prosperity of Europe as a whole.”

As it is expected, the Russian-Ukrainian War, the energy crisis, and economic issues dominated the agenda of the Prague Summit. The main discussions took place around the developments centered on Ukraine. In this context, Michel said the following:[2]

“The war in Ukraine is having a dramatic impact on the energy situation in Europe, with a spillover effect on our economy. Our primary objective is to ensure that we guarantee security of supply and affordable energy for our households and businesses, particularly as the winter cold approaches. We will assess the decisions already taken in this regard and give guidance on further action needed to ensure a well-coordinated European response.”

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, on the other hand, made the following statements criticizing Russia:[3]

“For the foreseeable future and probably as long as Putin is in power, it is impossible to conceive of a new security order or ‘peace architecture’ in Europe of which Russia’s Putin would be an integral part, respecting shared principles again. Russia remains a geographical neighbor and a member of the international system, but now we have to build a European political community without Russia.”

Borrell, on the other hand, emphasized the need for a more comprehensive security architecture that goes beyond the EU in order to build a stable and prosperous international system and ensure Europe’s security. In addition, Borrell called for the EU to allocate additional funds to Ukraine.[4] In this context, the meeting in Prague resulted in actual decisions on a new package of sanctions against Russia.

Secondary restrictions are also contained in the package. These are mostly regular sanctions imposed on natural and legal persons. Other sanctions cover Russia’s export and import restrictions. As previously stated, the sanctions package also includes the establishment of a price cap for Russian oil. The figure has not yet been disclosed. However, the price cap will go into effect in December 2022 for oil imports and in February 2023 for petroleum products. These prices will also have to be considered for non-EU European countries. However, some exceptions can be made to ensure the energy security of third countries. But, in essence, the Summit served to further isolate Russia, which is one of the EU’s primary goals.

The majority of European countries believe that Russia is not only at war with Ukraine but is also fighting against the West as a whole. Furthermore, according to these countries, Russia does not recognize national borders and operates under the concept of “Russian Civilization” or “Russian World,” which is incompatible with the European order.

The West believes that Putin’s stance closes the door to dialogue and diplomacy, making Russia more belligerent and isolated. As a result, as long as Putin is in power, no new security structure, or “peace architecture,” is being considered in Europe, of which Russia will be a part. For this reason, it is desirable to create a new European security system in which Russia will not take part. In fact, the Prague Summit is the first step in that direction.

In conclusion, the European Political Community seeks to exclude Russia from the European security system while also establishing a dialogue platform for addressing problems in Europe and seeking solutions to contentious issues. This European policy’s outcome will be determined over time.

[1] “Европейское политическое сообщество впервые соберется в Праге”, Reformation, <https://reform.by/332314-evropejskoe-politicheskoe-soobshhestvo-vpervye-soberetsja-v-prage>, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] “В Праге состоится первый саммит Европейского политического сообщества с участием Украины”, Evropeyskaya Pravda, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/10/6/7148169/>, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Price Cap Discussion on Gas in the EU

It is known that the European Union (EU) countries are going to face a crucial energy crisis in the upcoming winter due to Russian-Ukrainian War. That’s why, different measures were taken by the EU officials to escape from this crisis. The middle and long-term measures is on the agenda of the EU; however, short-term measures are more important at that point. The leak of energy due to the sabotages in the Nord Stream I Pipeline on September 26, 2022 showed that the energy security is in danger.

On the other hand, the EU does not want to give Russia any compromises. Under these conditions, some of the EU countries demanded price cap on energy from the European Commission (EC) for lifting the effects of crises on their economies. Especially Greece showed a significant effort for

that issue. However, some of the EU countries keep at a distance on that issue with different reasons. However, on September 30, 2022, after Extraordinary Energy Commission meeting held in the European Commission, the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen has announced that a temporary price cap will be applied.

Price cap on energy, especially on gas, firstly discussed at the beginning of September 2022. On September 9, 2022 in the meeting of Extraordinary Energy Commission, that the Ministers of Energy of the countries participated, it is announced that there will be measures on electricity savings and price cap will be applies. The details, on the other hand, were left to the Brussels. Since, there are divergence within the member of the EC.



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It is expressed that price cap is demanded due to prevent the unfair competition. According to the states defending price cap, if there is not a limit, the energy firms, especially based on Russia, will sell out the gas to the European countries with the price that they desire. Against the states who try to protect their economies, the actors such as Austria, Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands expressed that, this approach will jeopardize the energy security. In addition to these states, Kadri Simson, European Commissioner for Energy has indicated that she also has the same concerns.[1]

After the meeting of September 9, 15 EU member states, who desire to this issue become visible, has delivered their demands with a document of September 27, 2022 to the European Commission. Within these 15 countries, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain take place. The signatory states have clarified price cap "to lessen the inflationist pressure, handle the expectations, provide a framework in a possible supply cut, and limit the extra profits in the sector".

After the demand was submitted, Germany started to remonstrate. Berlin believes that price cap on gas prices will negatively affect the energy supply. Therefore, the Berlin administration put forward that, such a price cap will cause the suppliers of gas to direct the gas resources to other countries and caused a scarcity in Europe.[2] In fact, the other countries objecting to that decision have similar concerns.

At that point, since there is a duality in the Union, countries defending price cap, especially Greece, has increased diplomatic connections with the Commission. As a matter of fact, Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis has held a meeting with the EC President in Sofia, after the opening ceremony of Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria on October 1, 2022.[3]

Right after, Mitsotakis continued his activities on that issue. For instance, on October 3, 2022, in Bloomberg's website, the Greek leader has published an article titled "Europe Can Fight Putin by Capping Gas Prices." In this article, Mitsotakis has claimed that Russia is using the energy as a weapon and in that kind of extraordinary situations, control on the markets is needed. In that sense, Mitsotakis expressed in the following:[4]

"A cap on prices carries risks, of course. But as we move into winter, the dangers of inertia compound. We cannot afford to sit back and watch as Russia uses our market institutions against us... Imposing a cap on gas prices is an inevitable step in that process."

Furthermore, in the declaration of Ministry of Energy of Greece on October 3, 2022, they will submit a demand on price cap on gas to the Commission.[5] The insistent attitude of the Athens administration show that Greece will be negatively affected, if the price cap is not applied. Because Greek economy is still not that powerful even though it is in the process of recovery. On the other hand, it is known that the relations between Russia and Greece worsen as time goes by. Therefore, it can be predicted that Moscow will submit high prices on energy. However, that kind of insistence has given some results. Since, on October 5, 2022, the Commission has announced that there will be provisional price cap until a new price index will be applied on gas.[6]

As a result, price cap on gas is both preventive and risky step. The 15 EU countries defending that policy tried to prevent the negative effects of unfair competition and protect their economies. In contrary, including Germany, other EU countries also had drawbacks for their national interests. However, it should be noted that, provisional price cap decision tries to please the all countries of the EU at once. Yet, it is just a retardation of the problem. Therefore, the European countries, who are not willing to give concession to Russia face a serious dilemma.

[1] Kiro Taylor, "EU Countries Call On Brussels to Cap Gas Prices, But Leave Out Details", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/eu-countries-call-on-brussels-to-cap-gas-prices-but-leave-out-details/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[2] Hans Von Der Burchard, "Germany Opposes EU Price Cap on All Gas Imports", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-oppose-eu-gas-price-cap-domestic-price-limit/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[3] "Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis met with the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen", Helen Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlığı, <https://primeminister.gr/en/2022/10/01/30332>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[4] Kyriakos Mitsotakis, "Europe Can Fight Putin by Capping Gas Prices", Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-10-03/greece-pm-mitsotakis-europe-must-put-a-cap-on-natural-gas-prices>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[5] "Greece to Present Proposal on EU Gas Price Cap This Week", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/greece-present-proposal-eu-gas-price-cap-this-week-energy-minister-2022-10-03/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[6] "EU Executive Chief Proposes Temporary Gas Price Cap", e-Kathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1194884/eu-executive-chief-proposes-temporary-gas-price-cap/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Is a Stable Government Possible in Bulgaria?

After Slavi Trifonov, Chairman of the Party of There is Such a People in Bulgaria (ITN), announced that they were withdrawing from the coalition on 8 June 2022, the government under the Prime Minister Kirill Petkov fell from power on 27 June 2022 and the negotiations for the formation of the new government could not yield results, President Rumen Radev, he has announced that early general elections will be held on October 2, 2022.

In the process, in the early general elections held on October 2, 2022, in Bulgaria, which was governed by the interim government with Galab Donev, who is known as pro-Russian, as Prime Minister, seven parties passed the 4% threshold and were entitled to enter the 240-seat parliament.

In the elections, ex-Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's party, "Citizens for European Develop-



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ment of Bulgaria (GERB)", took the first place with 25.37% of the votes. On the other hand, the We Continue the Change Party (PP), which ruled the country for six months as the leader of the coalition government established after the last early general election, finished the race in second place by receiving 19.9% of the votes. Movements for Rights and Freedom (DPS) came in third with 13.66% of the votes.

In Bulgaria, where elections were held four times in eighteen months, the lowest voter turnout of the last thirty-two years was realized with a rate of 37%. There is serious uncertainty about how the new government will be formed in Bulgaria. The fact that the people who are tired of going to the ballot box make different choices in the elections and the decrease in participation makes it difficult to achieve political stability.

Looking at the election results, it is seen that none of the political parties achieved a supremacy over others. However, it can be said that ideological differences also make the established governments fragile. Because the sharp differences of opinion between the parties make coalition talks unpredictable.

After his party finished first in the election, Borisov; The Prime Minister called for negotiations, stating that he did not want to be a Minister or a deputy and that about 80% of Bulgarians wanted to see a stable government rather than a new election. Emphasizing that the most important issue in this process is to determine who support and who did not support the Kyiv administration in the Russia-Ukraine War. Borisov said, "let this be the first issue where we clearly stated our stance."<sup>[1]</sup> He drew the general framework for his own expectations. Borisov said that other issues that potential coalition partners should agree on are inflation, energy costs, joining the Eurozone and becoming a part of the Schengen area.<sup>[2]</sup>

On the other hand, the fact that Vazrazhdane (Revival Party), Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and the Bulgarian Rise Party (BV) are among the seven parties entering the parliament in the country is in response to this statement of Borisov. For this reason, it is not expected that the We Continue to Change Party, Vazrazhdane, BSP and BV will support the possible government to be formed under the leadership of GERB.

Borisov is aware that negotiations for the formation of the government will not be easy. Because, in the statement he made on October 5, 2022, he emphasized that the new government would be Euro-Atlantic oriented, implying that he did not particularly like to work with pro-Russian parties.<sup>[3]</sup> For this reason, it can be said that Borisov will try to come together with parties that are not pro-Russian for his country, which is a member of the European Union (EU).

Considering the issues mentioned above, it can be said that the negotiation process regarding the formation of the government will be long and difficult. Therefore, it is unclear with which parties GERB will form a coalition and how sustainable this will be. The country is already dealing with many issues including energy crisis, economic problems and North Macedonia issue. This highlights the differences between the parties.

If GERB fails to secure a sufficient parliamentary majority to form a government, it is expected that Petkov, the leader of the We Continue to Change Party, which emerged as the second party from the elections, will receive the task of forming the government. If a government cannot be formed in this case, it is likely that President Radev, who is claimed to be close to Russia, will act as a mediator in the attempt to form a government. Considering that the West, especially the EU, will react to this, it can be claimed that the country may hold elections for the fifth time.

As a result, it was seen that no party could gain a strong advantage in the elections held in Bulgaria. This makes reconciliation difficult. As a matter of fact, it seems difficult to come up with a reasonable picture in coalition scenarios. This means that the country may go to re-election. Moreover, even if a coalition government is formed, it can be said that a fragile political atmosphere will emerge due to the differences of opinion between the parties.

[1] "Eski Bulgaristan Başbakanı Borisov, Muhalefete Koalisyon Teklif Etti", TRT Haber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/eski-bulgaristan-basbakani-borisov-muhalefete-koalisyon-teklif-etti-713482.html>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Bulgaria's Borisov Languishes in Post-Election Limbo", Euractiv, [https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short\\_news/bulgarias-borisov-languishes-in-post-election-limbo/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short_news/bulgarias-borisov-languishes-in-post-election-limbo/), (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Turkmenistan's Full Membership to the Organization of Turkic States

The Organization of Turkic States held its 8th summit with the theme of "Green Technologies and Smart Cities in the Digital Age" in Istanbul on November 12, 2021. The summit was of great importance both because it coincided with the 30th anniversary of the independence of the Turkish states and Turkmenistan participation

as an observer member. Because when Turkmenistan was in the 30th year of its independence; it has also 25th anniversary of the Permanent Status of Neutrality. This situation made the summit valuable for Ashgabat in particular and for the Turkish World in general. In the 9th summit planned to be held in Samarkand, Uz-



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bekistan in November 2022, it is suggested that Turkmenistan will become a full member of the Organization of Turkic States.

One of the issues discussed during Turkmenistan's observer membership has been the issue of impartiality. However, the fact that the Organization of Turkic States is an organization that strengthens cooperation on social, political and economic issues did not harm Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality Status. Because, the Organization of Turkic States is not a military structure. On the contrary, the organization aims to develop friendly relations between the parties within the framework of Article 2 of the Nakhichevan Agreement dated 3 October 2009.

In addition, the Organization of Turkic States focuses on issues such as promoting political, commercial and economic cooperation. In terms of security, the organization is not only for the Turkish World; yet it aims to contribute to international security by giving importance to the issues of terrorism, separatism, human trafficking and anti-drugs, which are also threats to Asia, Eurasia and the world system.[1]

As it can be understood, Ashgabat's membership of the Organization of Turkic States would not harm the Neutrality Status of Turkmenistan. Instead, it can be interpreted as a development, which could contribute into strengthening of the neutrality of the Organization, and enhancing the process of rational decision making in the framework of common interests. Because Turkmenistan aims to build a peace basin in the heart of Eurasia, thanks to its healthy relations with the world. This goal is also in line with the Organization's regional and global mission. Therefore, it can be said that Turkmenistan will make significant contributions to the Organization with its constructive approach in its foreign policy.

On the other hand, it is seen that the countries of the Turkish World follow a pragmatic foreign policy based on common interests. Although this understanding of politics is characterized by different names such as balance policy or versatility, it basically envisages the development of healthy relations with the Western World, Russia and China. Because the Organization of Turkic States encourages its member states in this regard. Thus, the Turkish states are positioned as a bridge and touchstone between the East and the West.

It is known that Turkmenistan, with its balanced foreign policy, maintains constructive relations with Russia and China, as well as with the United States of America (US) and Europe. At this point, Turkmenistan's full membership to the organization will contribute to the pragmatic foreign policy of the Organization of Turkic States or the Turkic World, free from conflicts and based on balance.

Another important dimension of Turkmenistan's participation in the Organization is Afghanistan. Because various regional and global powers want to increase the instability in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Turkish states, especially Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, take various initiatives to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan. In particular, Turkmenistan's efforts to include Afghanistan in various regional projects, the humanitarian aid it sends and the energy supply it provides to this country are very important. Therefore, Ashgabat's full membership to the Organization will facilitate the collective adoption of a peaceful mission and its more effective implementation.

Turkmenistan is one of the geopolitically important countries in Central Asia in addition to hosting important underground resources. The fact that Turkmenistan has a coast to the Caspian Sea and the relations it has developed with Azerbaijan play a decisive role in removing the obstacles with the Turkish World. Both countries are important stops of the Middle Corridor in the Caspian Sea. Making the Middle Corridor effective will be possible thanks to the strong cooperation established between Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In other words, it is obvious that Turkmenistan's membership to the Organization will accelerate these cooperations. Because, as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan become members of the Organization, the friendship between them will gain a more corporate identity.

As a result, Turkmenistan, with its Permanent Neutrality Status, is the mind of the Turkic World and Central Asia. Ashgabat's full membership to the Organization means important gains for both Turkmenistan and the Turkic World and for the geopolitics of Eurasia. The Organization of Turkic States whose members have stable and strong relations will contribute to the construction of a healthy communication, transportation and transfer line between the West and the East. Since this development will strengthen regional peace and stability, it will serve the founding mission and purposes of the Organization. Moreover, membership to the Organization is highly compatible with Turkmenistan's understanding of peaceful foreign policy.





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Rising Left in Latin America and the Growing Influence of Russia and China in the Region

Latin America, widely regarded as the United States' (US) backyard, has seen a resurgence of left-wing ideology in the post-Cold War era. Hugo Chavez, known for his left-wing ideology, won the elections in 1998, causing a domino effect throughout the region. Following that, socialist, social democratic, populist, or center-

left parties took power in 14 Latin American countries. Left-wing leaders coming to power in the region's largest states, such as Brazil and Argentina, has had a significant impact. The region's left-wing developments and the resulting effect are referred to as the "Pink Tide."



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Since 2015, populist rhetoric and commodity price declines have pushed left-wing parties out of power. Furthermore, as a result of various military coups, contentious trials, and parliamentary decisions, left-wing leaders have lost their seats. However, due to the contentious policies of the right-wing parties that replaced them, the negative impact of the Covid-19, and the leaders' criticized attitudes, left-wing movements have begun to regain ground in Latin American societies. This includes the democratic return to power of the Bolivian left, which was ousted from power in a military coup. As the Cold War process demonstrated, military coups and various claims cannot prevent left-wing administrations from coming into power. Thus began the second period of the left's rise in Latin America.

Mexican elections were won by left-wing candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in 2018. Mexico is significant because it is the neighbor of the US. After that, elections in Argentina, Bolivia, Panama, Peru, Chile, Honduras, and Colombia were won by left-wing leaders. In recent Brazilian elections, former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva emerged as the most powerful candidate against right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro. Lula received 48% of the vote in the elections, surpassing Bolsonaro, who received 43% of the vote.[1] The second round of elections, scheduled for October 30, 2022, is expected to be won by Lula. This situation indicates that right-wing administrations will remain in power in only a few small Latin American countries. In other words, the region will be governed by left-wing leaders in general.

Left-wing movements in Latin America have a direct impact on countries' foreign policies. To begin with, it can be stated that left-wing leaders will adopt a more distant attitude toward the US or reduce the intensity of relations. Furthermore, Latin American countries will strengthen ties with one another as well as with Russia and China. Colombia-Venezuela relations, for example, began to normalize after left-wing leader Gustavo Petro was elected president. Also, relations between Bolivia's left-wing government and China are improving by the day. While the US's influence in Latin America has waned under left-wing administrations, Russia and China's influence is growing. Between 2005 and 2021, China is known to have loaned more than \$136 billion to Latin American countries.[2] In addition, countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay are a part of the Belt-Road Project.[3]

Argentina's participation in the Belt-Road Project is the most significant recent development within the scope of the project. President of Argentina Alberto Fernandez signed a memorandum of understanding with Chinese President Xi Jinping to participate in the Belt-Road Project after competing in the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February 2022. There is also the possibility of the countries' relationship deepening. Given the contentious nature of relations between Washington and Buenos Aires, China may view Argentina as a source of food and agriculture and invest in the country. Furthermore, the Beijing administration may be recognized as an actor capable of ensuring the processing of various mines, particularly lithium.[4]

Many projects in Latin America are being carried out or financed by China. These include ports, bridges, canals, highways, and railways built in countries ranging from Mexico to Cuba, Colombia to Brazil. This situation highlights China and the Belt-Road Project in the region's reconstruction.

Furthermore, while China exports textiles, electronics, and chemicals to Latin America, it imports soy, crude oil, and mines from the region. These trade products strengthen the parties' interdependence even further.[5]

China, on the other hand, is increasing its investments in countries with limited economic capacity but significant underground wealth, such as Bolivia because the country's lithium wealth makes it a valuable player in the eyes of Beijing. Furthermore, Chile and Argentina have abundant lithium resources.[6]

Buenos Aires, on the other hand, condemned Moscow for the Russia-Ukraine War but opposed the imposition of economic sanctions on the country. Argentina explained that because it had not any economic relationship with Russia, the sanctions would harm both Buenos Aires' and the world's economies, and thus participation in the sanctions would be wrong.[7]

Due to the influence of left-wing leaders in Latin America, Russia, on the other hand, is receiving contradictory reactions from the region. This strengthens the hand of Russia. Because most Latin American countries opposed the US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, as Argentina has demonstrated, there is no clear stance against Russia. The primary reasons for this are ideological alliances and mutual interests in bilateral relations.

Left-wing ideology in Latin America criticizes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion and believes Moscow has the right to retaliate. The countries that advocate this are Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. However, some countries, such as Colombia, support Ukraine. The most significant contradiction can be observed in state foreign policy. Because, despite their condemnation of Russia, countries such as Mexico approach sanctions with caution.[8]

In conclusion, as left-wing movements gain strength in Latin America, Russia and China's social, political, and economic influence grows. Russia's legacy from the Soviet Union, in particular, and China's endeavors with the Belt-Road Project, strengthen both countries' influence. This, in turn, reduces the influence of the US in the region.

[1] "Brazil's Lula and Bolsonaro Face Run-off After Surprisingly Tight Result", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-63112509>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[2] Devonshire-Ellis, Chris "China's Belt&Road Initiative and South America", Silk Road Briefing, <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2019/05/29/chinas-belt-road-initiative-south-america/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[3] Kevin P. Gallagher-Margaret Myersi "China-Latin America Finance Database", The Dialogue, [https://www.thedialogue.org/map\\_list/](https://www.thedialogue.org/map_list/), (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[4] Marc Lanteigne, "Argentina Joins China's Belt and Road", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/argentina-joins-chinas-belt-and-road/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[5] Ben Miller "Beyond Commodities: China's Economic Footprint", Americas Quarterly, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/fullwidth-page/china-latin-america-2-0-the-economic-footprint/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[6] A. Daniel Peraza, "Lithium Monopoly in the Making? Beijing Expands in the Lithium Triangle", Geopolitical Monitor, <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/lithium-monopoly-in-the-making-beijing-expands-in-the-lithium-triangle/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[7] "President Fernández Questions Economic Sanctions Against Russia", Buenos Aires Times, <https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/economy/president-fernandez-questions-economic-sanctions-against-russia.phtml>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[8] J. Luis Rodriguez "Explaining Latin America's Contradictory Reactions to the War in Ukraine", War on the Rocks, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/04/explaining-latin-americas-contradictory-reactions-to-the-war-in-ukraine/>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# LNG Option in Balkans and Europe's Search for Energy

After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the European Union (EU) faced the fact that its dependence on natural gas to Moscow constituted its own "weak spot." Moscow, on the other hand, has started to use this as a "blackmail material" because it is aware of the EU's dependence on natural gas. Accordingly, the Balkans and the EU member states have turned to alternative searches in order to ensure their energy security. In this context, the

liquefied natural gas (LNG) option has come to the agenda.

As is known, natural gas is transported by ships in cases where it is not possible to transport it by pipeline. LNG, which is the liquefied form of natural gas, is a clear, colorless, odorless and clean burning fuel. LNG, which is cooled to -162 °C and becomes liquid, shrinks 600 times at the end of this process. Thus, it becomes easier



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and safer to store and transport.[1] After reaching the destination, the LNG is processed in the relevant facilities and regasification. Afterwards, transportation to industrial areas is realized through pipes.[2] Therefore, LNG comes into the prominence in cases where the pipeline cannot reach.

Before the war in Ukraine, Russia pursued a policy of trying to make Europe dependent on it with cheap gas pipelines. So much so that, given the high cost of LNG, this situation was not a priority option for European countries until the Russia-Ukraine War began. However, in the current process, it is possible to say that LNG will be preferred by Western European countries with a high level of prosperity. At this point, the economic development of European countries may play a decisive role in their orientation towards LNG.

In addition, whether the EU and Balkan countries have seaports or not is also seen as an important element in their orientation to the LNG option. In other words, in order for countries to supply LNG, they must have coasts to the sea and build LNG terminals in their ports.

Currently, there are only two LNG terminals in the Balkans. One of them is located in Greece, the other is located in Croatia. On the other hand, Athens plans to build three more LNG terminals, while Zagreb aims to increase the number of LNG terminals in the country. In the Balkans, Albania is also considering building an LNG terminal.[3] In this context, it can be said that Greece will be one of the leading countries in the region regarding LNG. Athens has already started the construction of an LNG terminal in Alexandroupolis in May 2022. This terminal is expected to be operational in November 2023.[4] Therefore, a certain period of time is needed for the construction of the LNG terminal. Hereby, it is worth emphasizing that LNG is an option that will be more spread over the long term today, when the winter season is beginning to be felt.

Among the EU countries, Spain is the country with the most LNG terminals with six terminals. Spain is followed by France with four terminals. In addition, the Paris administration is planning to build another terminal. Looking at other European countries, while there are three LNG terminals in Italy, it is aimed to increase this number to seven. There are three LNG terminals in the UK and one terminal is being built. In Belgium, there is one LNG terminal and two are being built. The Netherlands also has an LNG terminal, a terminal is also under construction. It is planned to build two more terminals in the country. On the other hand, there are also one LNG terminal each in Portugal, Lithuania, Malta and Poland. In addition, the Warsaw administration is considering increasing this number to two. However, countries that do not have LNG terminals in Europe, but are planning to build them, include Ireland, Germany, Finland and Estonia.[5]

It is noteworthy that there is no LNG terminal in Germany, which is the most powerful member of the EU economically and politically. Because Germany, with the process starting under Gerhard Schröder and continuing with Angela Merkel, has turned to supplying cheap natural gas from Russia through the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 Natural Gas Pipelines. Therefore, it is a geopolitical choice for an economically rich country such as Germany not to turn to LNG. However, the Berlin administration, which was in a difficult situation with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, decided to build five LNG terminals. The natural gas to be obtained from these five terminals will constitute only 20% of the natural gas to come from the Nord Stream 1 Natural Gas Pipeline.[6] As can be seen from this example, it is quite difficult for LNG to replace Russian natural gas. However, it can be said that LNG will be important in terms of diversifying the energy sources of Germany and some other European countries.

The US is one of the world's largest LNG suppliers. The Washington administration, which wants to take advantage of the deterioration of Moscow's relations with European actors, encourages European countries to turn to the LNG option. Because US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in a statement on September 30, 2022, referring to the gas leak in the Nord Stream 2 Gas Pipeline, drew attention to the fact that this event can be a tremendous advantage in order to definitively eliminate dependence on Russian energy.[7]

As it is clear, the US sees the Russia-Ukraine War as an opportunity to get into the European market and, consequently, to export LNG. Moreover, with the war in Ukraine, it can be said that the dispute between Germany and the US over the supply of natural gas has come

söylenbilir. Örneğin Almanya Ekonomi Bakanı Robert Habeck, 5 Ekim 2022 tarihinde ABD'nin ve diğer dost doğalgaz tedarikçisi ülkelerin Ukrayna Savaşı'ndan kâr elde ettiklerini öne sürerek, arza astronomik fiyatlar uygulandığını öne sürmüştür.[8]

Kısaca özetlemek gerekirse, Rusya- Ukrayna Savaşıyla başlayan süreç ele alındığında, bazı Avrupa ülkelerinin LNG'ye yönelmelerinin bir tercihten ziyade; zorunluluk olduğu görülmektedir. Bunun en belirgin örneğinin de Almanya olduğu söylenebilir. Sıvılaştırma ve ulaştırma maliyetlerinin yüksek olması nedeniyle boru hatlarına göre daha pahalı bir alternatif olan LNG'nin Balkan ülkelerinden ziyade; Batı Avrupa devletleri için daha geçerli bir seçenek olacağı öne sürülebilir. Sonuç olarak LNG'nin Avrupa'nın enerji kırılganlığı yaşadığı bir süreçte, birçok ülke için uzun vadede enerji güvenliğinin çeşitlendirilmesi konusunda önemli bir alternatif olacağı; fakat mevcut krizin aşılmasında yetersiz kalacağı söylenebilir.

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[3] "Number of Operational and Planned Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Import Terminals in Europe as of April 2022, by country", Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/326008/lng-import-terminals-by-country-europe/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 08.10.2022).

[4] Harry Aposporis, "Launch of Works on Alexandroupolis LNG Terminal in Greece", Balkan Green Energy News, <https://balkangreenergynews.com/launch-of-works-on-alexandroupolis-lng-terminal-in-greece-heralds-reduced-dependence-on-russian-gas-for-the-balkans/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 05.10.2022).

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[6] "Germany Builds New Gas Terminals to Succeed Russian Pipelines", France 24, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221002-germany-builds-new-gas-terminals-to-succeed-russian-pipelines>, (Erişim Tarihi: 08.10.2022).

[7] "Secretary Antony J. Blinken And Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly At a Joint Press Availability", U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-and-canadian-foreign-minister-melanie-joly-at-a-joint-press-availability/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 08.10.2022).

[8] "German Minister Criticizes U.S. Over 'Astronomical' Natural Gas Prices", CNBC, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/10/05/german-minister-criticizes-us-over-astronomical-natural-gas-prices.html>, (Erişim Tarihi: 08.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# 2022 Bosnian General Elections: What Kind of a Change?

Bosnia and Herzegovina has an almost unprecedented political system posed by the Dayton Agreement. This complicated political system brings along many challenges. One of those challenges is the elections held in the country. On October 2, 2022, the Presidency Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina went to the polls to determine the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb members of the Presidency. While voting for the Presidency Council as well as the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina; members have been elected for the parliaments of the two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), and the parliaments in ten cantons within FBiH.

In addition to that, voters went to the polls in RS for president and vice president in RS.

According to the system, voters in FBiH elected the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the House of Representatives of the FBiH, and the cantonal parliaments; voters in the RS voted for the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, the RS Presidency, and the RS vice Presidency. On the other hand, while FBiH citizens voted for the Bosniak and Croat members of the Presidency, RS citizens went to the polls to determine the Serbian member. The participation of ninety



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parties in this election process creates a further entanglement.

According to the statement made by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEC BiH), the voter turnout in this election is 50%.<sup>[1]</sup> Compared to past elections, this is a low rate. Because the voter turnout in 2018 was 54.02%; this rate was 54.47% in 2014 and 56.52% in 2010. Taking these ratios into account, one may observe that voter turnout is on a downward trend. This could be explained by the emigration of Bosnians. One should also mention the important factor that voters who do not believe in the elections and lose their hope do not go to the polls.

According to the statement made by (CEC BiH), Bosniak member Denis Becirovic, Croatian member Zeljko Komsic, and Serbian member Zeljka Cvijanovic were elected to the Presidency Council. In the parliamentary elections, the tradition was not broken and the three ethnic parties, the Democratic Action Party (SDA), the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH), and the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), received the highest votes in the parliamentary elections. It is known that the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Christian Schmidt, announced that he would impose changes to the Election Law shortly before the elections and that these amendments would be in favour of ethnic parties of Croatian origin. This created a lot of tension in the country. On the other hand, Milorad Dodik, who rose to prominence with his separatist rhetoric and is known for his closeness to Russian President Vladimir Putin, constantly emphasised the RS's independence, raising tensions during the election. However, observing the preliminary results of the elections according to the ballot box opened by almost 90%, one may comment that elections have been quieter than the previous years, considering past elections with fake voter lists, corruption, and allegations of vote stealing.

Even though it is claimed that there have been various violations during the elections, these violations have been detected in time and necessary action has been taken with the devoted work of the Pod Lupom organization. According to Pod Lupom's statement, 91 violations affecting the electoral process have been reported. In addition to the party and independent observers, international observers were also assigned to the elections.<sup>[2]</sup> Taking into consideration the comments of these observers, a positive perspective emerges. The general opinion is that new technologies to be used on election day should be introduced to Bosnia and the quality of the election should be increased. Since, despite many precautions, the number of violations is quite high. As in previous elections, it has been not-

ed that there are people who have passed away in the voter files. However, the implementation of a semi-open system, with the back of the voter facing the observer instead of the booth, during the voting process assisted with detecting possible violations.

Observing the election results, one may argue that the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina bears witness to a "beginning." This beginning points to a serious change, but positively projecting this change depends on the attitude of the politicians. On the other hand, the defeat of SDA candidate Bakir Izzetbegovic, who was running for the Bosniak member of the Presidency, sparked heated debate. Furthermore, Zeljko Komsic's rally may exacerbate tensions between Croats and Bosniaks. In addition, as soon as the polls closed, Schmidt's introduction of a new change to the election law elicited reactions. Contrary to expectations, the elections, which were expected to be tense, were completed in a calm atmosphere. The measures taken against violations, are promising for Bosnian politics. Indeed, the voters who went to the polls stuck in a limbo of hope and hopelessness were pleased with the results as there were no significant issues to criticize at the polls in Sarajevo. Looking at the results, Bosnian voters saw that their votes were effective and that they could affect change in a democratic setting.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, is on the verge of a new beginning. It is a significant development that two members of the Presidential Council were not elected from an ethnic party. However, three major parties continue to hold seats in parliament. Some comments claim that the fates of SDA, HDZ BiH, and SNSD are intertwined. Based on recent events, it is clear that maintaining the status quo is in these parties' best interests. As a result, even though the country is on the verge of a new beginning, significant change is unlikely.

Finally, it should be noted that the newly elected members of the Presidency face difficult days ahead as it is unclear to what extent they will be able to reflect changes in domestic politics on the regional stability. However, Becirovic and Komsic's statements are aimed at increasing cooperation and ensuring long-term stability. However, only time will tell whether they are successful, especially given the High Representative's controversial actions, who is keeping a close eye on the processes, and at a time when hate speech is on the rise.

[1] "Opći izbori 2022- Preliminarni odziv sa redovnih biračkih mjesta", Centralna izborna komisija BiH, <https://www.izbori.ba/?Lang=3&CategoryID=64&id=4284>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).

[2] "Koalicija "Pod lupom": Preliminarna ocjena izbornog dana za Opšte izbore 2022. godine" Pod Lupom, <https://podlupom.org/press-kutak/vijesti/koalicija-pod-lupom-preliminarna-ocjena-izbornog-dana-za-opste-izbore-2022-godine/>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Is the US' Perspectives Towards Pakistan and India

In September 2022, the Washington administration declared a support program of F-16 fighter jets to contribute anti-terrorism struggle of Pakistan. India, on the other hand, has criticized this decision by claiming that F-16 jets given to Pakistan would be used against the war itself, not anti-terrorism.[1] On this development, the discussions on the perspective of Pakistan and India has increased. According to international society, the US could decide to enhance the relations with Pakistan, to teach a lesson to India, who rejected to front Moscow after the

attacks of Ukraine. Because, for a year, due to the Afghanistan-centered developments, the US relations with Pakistan were estranged from, and that created pro-India conjuncture. However, in the last period, the situations started to change.

From 2018, the US decreased military aid to Pakistan; even though it was not disposed to contribute into India in terms of defence. This situation has started to change after Russian-Ukrainian War. India continued its eco-



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omic, military and political relations with Russia, despite Ukrainian War. Therefore, Washington has expressed that it could supply aids to New Delhi on defence industry and they demand to replace Moscow. In that sense, Washington has increased its efforts to separate New Delhi from Moscow. On this issue, Spokesperson of the US Secretary of State, Ned Price, said that, "Reorienting a country's foreign policy or a country's security establishment or defence procurement practices away from a country like Russia is not something that we can do overnight. We do see this as a long-term challenge." [2]

India's main criticism towards the US is that it does not support itself enough in the field of defense and, worse still, it has started to support Pakistan, which it sees as one of its enemies. Another point that India criticizes is the decision to aid Pakistan was taken during the US-India 2+2 meeting in New Delhi. In this process, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu held talks with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi within the framework of 2+2. While India is trying to increase cooperation with the US in the region; the tendency of the Washington administration to improve its relations with Islamabad has increased the distrust in bilateral relations. Shortly after that, the Pentagon announced that they had no problems with India and that they would continue to work together.[3] Which means, the US indicated that they do not have to make a choice between Pakistan and India.

Regardless of the US's F-16 aid to Pakistan, it is seen that India started to take a stand against Russia in the Ukraine War. In other words, whether the US supports Pakistan or not, it can be said that India has begun to feel uncomfortable with the mobilization decision of Russian President Vladimir Putin to continue this war and Moscow's threats to use nuclear weapons. That is to say, the determinacy of Putin to continue Ukrainian War, may cause rapprochement of India to the US in the latest period.

At the same time, it can be claimed that New Delhi, seeing that the US is supporting Pakistan, took action to reconcile with Washington. In that context, Minister of Foreign Affairs of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has stayed in the US for 11 days, in which he visited for the UN General Assembly, and had met with senior officials. In this visit Jaishankar has expressed that India demands to contribute into regional security more, and in that sense, it is ready to take more responsibilities.[4]

Since Washington, who desires India to contribute into regional security more, and take a stance against Russia and China,

did not reached adequate support on this issue, continued to pressure on New Delhi. Therefore, in a short term, it is doubtful that in what degree would India support to the US policy on Indo-Pacific and in what degree is it sincere. Because, if it continues on its current policies, India would not join to the many alliances of the US in the region. However, lasting contacts of Jaishankar in the US may show that India really try to change something in the foreign policy.

As a result, the US expresses that India's foreign policy in a line, that it desires. What motivated India was that the US took a step towards improving its relations with Pakistan. Washington did not mend the fences with Islamabad yet. However, it pretended as such to scare New Delhi. Therefore, Washington has proven once again that it is quite capable of bringing both countries to the desired line.

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[3] "US Has Very Close Partnership, Defence Relationship with India: Pentagon", Business-Standard, [https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/us-has-very-close-partnership-defence-relationship-with-india-pentagon-122091400062\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/us-has-very-close-partnership-defence-relationship-with-india-pentagon-122091400062_1.html), (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022).

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Messages from Putin at the CIS Summit

The informal leaders' summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held on October 7, 2022, in St. Petersburg. The leaders of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan attended the summit hosted by Russia. In terms of the messages delivered, the Summit was critical for both CIS countries, Russia, and the rest of the world.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin spoke at the Summit about the strengthening of economic relations between the nations. In this regard, it can be said Putin has focused on developing CIS trade and investment partnerships, strengthening economies, and establishing technological dominance. He also discussed the conflicts and security issues that exist between Russia's leader, CIS members, and



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post-Soviet countries. Putin cited Ukraine as an example, stating that some conflicts have occurred between states and that measures should be taken in this regard. He also stated that ideas about combating terrorism, extremism, drug smuggling, and organized crime should be exchanged.[1]

Based on what Putin has said, it is possible to conclude that Moscow is attempting to avoid the Western sanctions imposed on Russia through CIS member countries as Russia is experiencing economic difficulties. Therefore, it exports energy to countries such as China at lower costs. Due to the deterioration of its relations with the West, Russia is shifting its focus to Central Asia and the Caucasus. Therefore, Putin's emphasis on economic resilience is becoming increasingly important at this point.

As is well known, Western and Chinese companies have recently increased their presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This situation will erode Russia's ability to compete economically with these countries in the long run. Furthermore, the fact that both Europe and China see Central Asia and the Caucasus as viable energy sources will reduce the pressure that Moscow exerts on the West through energy. However, energy is a major source of revenue for countries in the region such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. As a result, Putin's speech focused on the economy rather than energy.

One of the reasons Putin mentioned post-Soviet conflicts was the increased propaganda following the Russia-Ukraine War about Moscow not being a peace-seeking actor and pursuing policies that seek to achieve its interests by utilizing various frozen conflict zones. As a result, during his meeting with the CIS countries, Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted to give the impression that the Kremlin could play a peaceful and constructive role by declaring that measures should be taken to prevent conflicts.

Due to the Russia-Ukraine War, the Moscow administration prioritized the western borders and the economy. The current situation has weakened Moscow's regional influence. However, it can be stated that Putin intends to maintain his influence through the CIS by implementing various measures and establishing mechanisms in conflict zones.

Finally, since Central Asian states are neighbors to a country with various security threats, such as Afghanistan, Putin's statements on the fight against terrorism, extremism, drugs, and crime are especially important in Central Asia. Furthermore, radical and separatist movements that are growing and spreading around the world pose a threat to all CIS countries. As a result, Russia places this emphasis to keep these states together, maintain its influence, and eliminate threats.

While the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) military exercises in Kazakhstan continue, exercises are planned in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This can be interpreted as Russia continuing to contribute to the aforementioned countries' security issues. However, the cancellation of the exercises in Kyrgyzstan and other countries' discussions about joining the CSTO indicates that Moscow's job is far from easy.

The points raised by Putin are significant not only for the post-Soviet region but also for the entire Eurasian geography. Putin's goal for the CIS Summit was to demonstrate that Russia maintains healthy political, economic, and military ties. However, determining the exact impact of the messages delivered on the geography of the CIS is difficult. Because, while tensions in the CIS geography tend to decrease, conflicts persist. Furthermore, the West and China's interest in CIS countries other than Russia is growing by the day.

[1] "Informal Meeting of CIS Heads of State", President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69551>, (Date of Accession: 08.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Cooperation of Xi and Putin under the Shadow of the Ukrainian War

The Ukraine War, did not weaken the West, and so did not weaken the United States (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but contrary to this, it strengthened the Western alliance. While Chinese President Xi Jinping is preparing to take permission from office for the third term from the Chinese Communist Party Congress to be held on October 16, 2022;

The current situation in Russia may serve as a warning to Jinping.

The fact that Russian President Vladimir Putin could not achieve the desired results in Ukraine and the tacit acceptance of the failures in the field with the partial mobilization decision he announced caused China to reconsider its



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strategic cooperation with Russia.[1] As the Moscow administration's success in the Ukraine War becomes more difficult, Beijing considers that Russia's losses, with which it has an "unlimited partnership" relationship, are damaging to the rise of China.

At the same time, Putin is making nuclear threats. While many analysts and strategists argue that Putin is bluffing and cannot resort to nuclear power, Jinping also considers the worst-case scenario. After all, Russia's military doctrine justifies the use of nuclear power if the country's territorial integrity is threatened. Putin has also made statements stating that if Russia's territorial integrity is endangered, they will use nuclear power.[2]

At the same time, Russia; as a result of the referendums in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia, annexed the regions in violation of international law. In this context, Putin declared that he approved the "decision to join Russia" of the relevant regions.[3] In this case, Ukraine's attacks to recapture those regions may constitute a pretext for Russia's use of nuclear weapons, in line with Putin's statements. Such a possibility is enough for Jinping to consider the worst-case scenario.

Jinping, on the other hand, includes more peaceful discourses in China's foreign policy and tries to prevent a possible Third World War. A possible nuclear attack by Russia on Ukraine is a possibility that could cast a shadow over Jinping's third term, as it would mean the first use of nuclear weapons after the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Xi and Putin met at the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February 2022 to sign the Sino-Russian Cooperation Agreement.[4] At the first stage of this meeting, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia may have seemed rational to Jinping, since the process would weaken the US and NATO, and it might divert the attention of the US and the West from China. However, the resistance put forward by Ukraine, and therefore the course of the war has led to a change in this perception. The President of China also revealed his dissatisfaction with Russia's failure at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Leaders' Summit held in Samarkand, the ancient city of Uzbekistan, on September 15-16, 2022. Therefore, the Russian leader stated that he understood the Beijing administration's concerns about the Ukraine War.[5]

Despite expressing that he cares about China's concerns, Putin decided to declare partial mobilization on September 21, 2022, and called 300,000 reserve soldiers to duty.[6] However, this situation caused serious protests in Russia and about 200,000

Russian citizens fled abroad.[7] For this reason, the mobilization move could not prevent Russia's losses in the field. Moreover, the prominence of the tendency to escalate the war further deepened China's concerns.

As mentioned above, Beijing thought that the war, and especially a quick victory by Russia, would weaken the West and NATO. However, the situation on the ground has largely repaired the crack in Trans-Atlantic relations, and the sense of togetherness within NATO has strengthened, while the USA has become the most profitable actor. Thus, the USA had the opportunity to put the European pillar of its global hegemony on solid ground.

Moreover, even Sweden and Finland, which stand out with their neutrality policies, have applied for NATO membership.[8] On the other hand, it was seen that Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea supported the Ukraine policy of the West. In other words, the war did not make it easier for China to challenge American hegemony; on the contrary, it has made it difficult even in the regional equation. Therefore, at this point, Beijing began to question its relations with Moscow.

Based on all this information, it can be said that the Beijing administration has evaluated the possible nuclear war scenario to consider all possibilities. Because, considering the statements of US President Joe Biden stating that such a war would have very serious consequences[9], although he did not give details, it can be predicted that the international economic and military security environment will become fragile and the pressure of sanctions on Russia will increase, leading to deterioration in global supply chains. In short, Moscow's use of its nuclear card within the framework of the claim of "defending" the lands it has annexed may cause developments that will put the whole world, especially China, into difficulties.

At the same time, Russia's annexations may harm the "One China" policy, which is accepted by almost the whole world. If the Beijing administration, which strongly defends the principle of territorial integrity, does not oppose this action of Moscow, remains silent, and accepts it, it may cast a shadow over its consistency. Thus, China's stance in the Ukraine War could lead to the kind of political and economic disintegration that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This worries the Jinping administration at least as much as the risk of nuclear war. As a result, all these developments push Beijing to question its relations with Moscow. This was revealed at the SCO Samarkand Summit.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Would Russia Demand to Activate Frozen Conflict Areas?

The Russian-Ukrainian War, which began on February 24, 2022, was based on the Kremlin's assumption that a regime change in Kiev would be achieved within a week and was described as a "special operation" by Russian authorities. In the first stage, the Russian Army, seeking to dominate the entire Ukraine, targeted the country's strategic facilities and kept Kiev under siege. However, it became clear during this process that Russia would be unable to

achieve its objectives, and in April 2022, Moscow announced that they would be moving on to the second phase of the "special operation." Since then, the conflict has been centered in Ukraine's east. In September 2022, the Ukrainian Army went on the offensive in various regions, while Russian forces withdrew from others. As a result, from the Kremlin's perspective, things are not looking good.



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While all of this is going on, it should not be forgotten that Russia is under a lot of sanctions. The Moscow administration, which has not achieved the expected military successes, is also feeling the economic consequences of the sanctions more and more. Moreover, Russia did not receive the support it expected from its main allies, including China, India, and members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). This has revealed the reality of an increasingly isolated Russia.

President Vladimir Putin declared a "partial mobilization" on September 21, 2022. This decision, without a doubt, serves as an admission by Moscow that it is suffering from a severe personnel shortage in the Ukrainian War. Despite this, Russian authorities, by threatening nuclear weapons, imply that a war in which Russia is defeated will escalate into a process in which the entire world loses. However, whether he will implement this rhetoric is still in doubt. In fact, Moscow has been working hard in recent days to change this attitude and discourse. This is a very extreme scenario. However, there are serious allegations that Russia will want to divert Western attention from Ukraine by creating different conflicts in various regions. This possibility is much more reasonable compared to nuclear war. So, the question that needs to be asked is whether Russia wants to activate the frozen conflicts?

Indeed, leaving the West to cope with problems in various geographies, and being provided respite in Ukraine is quite a possible scenario. However, whether Moscow has the capacity to do this is debatable. Because it is difficult to argue that the Moscow government, which is dealing with manpower shortages and economic challenges as a result of sanctions, has the energy to focus on new conflict areas. Furthermore, if frozen conflict areas are activated, it is also likely that the status quo in the areas may shift to Russia's disadvantage.

At this point, it is important to note the Kremlin's overall attitude to frozen conflict areas. Russia is pursuing a strategy targeted at maintaining the ceasefire while avoiding the signing of a permanent peace treaty, particularly in the contested regions of post-Soviet geography. Thus, it keeps soldiers in crucial regions under the guise of peacekeeping and consolidates its power by inciting controlled conflicts when required and then mediating. As a result, Moscow may be reluctant to convert the existing frozen conflict areas into heated war zones. Because, in the case of a war, Russia will need to boost the number of peacekeeping forces and perform mediation diplomacy in these areas. This will deflect not just the West's focus, but also Russia's attention away from Ukraine.

Proceeding with the above-mentioned information, the status of the frozen conflict areas, where Russia is supposedly trying to activate, should be discussed. First of all, it should be noted that the Moscow government made no remarks during the border confrontations between Azerbaijan and Armenia on September 13-14, 2022. Following the conflicts, it was observed that the address of the negotiations between the parties shifted to the United States of America (US) and France. This means that Russia's influence in the South Caucasus is dwindling. As a result, Moscow has revealed that it would prefer the region's post-Second Karabakh War status quo to the escalation of larger wars.

On the other hand, the situation in the Transnistrian issue, which came to the forefront with the Ukrainian War, is not much different. Transnistria is part of Moldova's territory, but it is an area with a tendency to join Russia. This is due to the presence of separatist groups, much like Ukraine's east. Currently, Russian Peacekeepers are on duty in Transnistria. As a result, if conflicts begin here, the balance of power may shift against Moscow.

Furthermore, in order for Russia to ignite the Transnistrian issue, it must seize the city of Odessa, which is located on Ukraine's border with Moldova. However, because to the Grain Corridor Deal, Odessa has become a focal point in attempts to alleviate the food crisis. In other words, Russia has implicitly assured the West that it would not seize Odessa, at least not in the immediate term. Therefore, it will not intervene in Transnistria. Furthermore, if the Transnistria issue is activated, it is likely that the Chisinau government, which will get Western backing depending on the outcome of the Ukrainian war, may resolve the matter in line with its own national interests. Therefore, Moscow will want the Transnistrian issue to remain frozen.

Another issue similar to Transnistria is the situation in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. Separatist administrations exist in both territories, and Moscow recognizes these so-called states. It is well known that both areas have a strong desire to be reunited with Russia. It was also reported that a referendum would be conducted in South Ossetia in April 2022 with the goal of joining Russia; however, this referendum was ultimately canceled. Of course, this development may be seen as the Kremlin's desire to avoid a new conflict area.

Looking back at the events in Karakalpakstan and Badakhshan Mountainous Autonomous Region during the Russia-Ukraine War, it is clear that Moscow wanted to monitor the process and

avoided making remarks that would elicit a reaction from the nations in the region. It is possible to argue that the activating of Badakhshan would boost the influence of England in particular and the West in general.

On the other hand, it is suggested that the Moscow administration may cause some confusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina by launching pan-Slavic actions against the Serbs. Given that the Balkans are actually in Southeastern Europe, it seems reasonable for Russia to make a move that will destabilize Europe in order to exacerbate the fragility of transatlantic relations. However, it is unclear to what extent Serbia will support the Bosnian Serbs in a conflict. Because, like any nation-state, Serbia prioritizes its own national interests. As a matter of fact, despite its close relations with Moscow, Belgrade continues to pursue its goal of joining the European Union (EU). Furthermore, the process was concluded with the EU's mediation in the tensions on the Serbia-Kosovo border.

To summarize briefly, due to the Ukraine War, the Kremlin has largely lost its power to create and manipulate crises in line with its own interests. Therefore, Moscow activating frozen conflict areas is not a rational option. It should be mentioned, however, that Russia's military activity in Ukraine did not appear to be rational prior to February 24, 2022. In this respect, Russia's success in the 2000s might be attributed to its unpredictability. However, the same unpredictability is also at the root of Ukraine's problems.

Moreover, Russia is also sending messages that it can activate frozen conflict areas. Indeed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's words that any attack on Russian Peacekeeping Forces in Transnistria will be deemed an attack on Russian land are still fresh in people's minds.[1] Similarly, Russia has stated in several films that there is a "Nazi presence" in Bosnia. This reminds one of the rhetoric used to justify the Ukrainian War: the country will be "De-Nazified." All of these are interpreted as Russia trying to activate frozen conflict areas. However, given that such a move is unrealistic, it is reasonable to conclude that Moscow exploits the frozen conflict areas as a kind of coercion and leverage against the West.

In conclusion, it could be claimed that the Moscow administration is attempting to draw the attention of the West to various geographies instead of the Russia-Ukraine War. Within this framework, frozen conflict areas have become a trending issue. However, the Moscow administration will not want to create different crisis zones due to the pressure of sanctions and the difficulties it faces in meeting the number of personnel it requires in the war.

[1] "Лавров заявил, что действия против миротворцев в Приднестровье будут считаться нападением на РФ", TASS, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/860242>, (Date of Accession: 05.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# What Causes the Increase in North Korea's Nuclear Tests?

After enacting the law declaring North Korea as a nuclear power on September 9, 2022,[1] Pyongyang conducted a total of 6 nuclear missile tests within two weeks.[2] Some moves have also been made by the United States of America (US) against the growing nuclear threats created by the Pyongyang administration. On September 25, 2022, South Korea declared that North Korea was launching nuclear missiles into the seas, and then on September 29, 2022,[3] The US Vice President Kamala Harris made a visit to the DMZ which is the demilitarized zone on the North Korea-South Korea border.[4] Aim of this visit was to show the Washington administration's support for the Seoul

Government. Meanwhile, the actions of the US, which started to deploy weapons to South Korea, accelerated North Korea's ballistic missile tests with nuclear warheads aside from creating deterrence.[5]

After all these events, on October 4, 2022, North Korea launched a test nuclear missile at Japan,[6] causing the whole region to be concerned. For this reason, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a telephone conversation with Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea Park Jin and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan Yoshimasa Hayashi.[7]



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The US President Joe Biden had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida regarding the steps to be taken.[8] After the meeting, the US and Japan started to organize joint exercises.[9] In short, North Korea has created a regional "security dilemma" due to its nuclear tests. But it should be noted that; the increase in the actions of the Pyongyang administration is not a coincidence.

First of all, this development is important in that the Pyongyang administration demonstrates to other states the development of its own military technology, offensive capacity and nuclear weapons. At this point, it can be read that the military capacity of North Korea has reached the highest level. But the issue is not just that. There are various reasons why Pyongyang chose such a timing.

The first of the reasons mentioned is that the actions taken against North Korea, which are supposed to be deterrent, actually have a provocative effect on Pyongyang. Because the fact that North Korea's nuclear tests took place after the US and South Korea resumed large-scale naval exercises and Harris' visit to the DMZ confirms this. In other words, the activities carried out by the USA and its ally's anger North Korea and make it difficult for Pyongyang to take a step back.

Another reason is the political instability on a global scale. As it is known, the Ukrainian War and the energy crisis are on the agenda of the international public opinion. At the same time, Taiwan-based developments still maintain their importance. North Korea, on the other hand, takes advantage of this instability and thinks that the international community is busy enough. Therefore, Pyongyang believes that a new sanctions package cannot be imposed on it.

In addition to all these, the Ukraine War is an issue that preoccupies the Washington administration. But the war was not only an issue on which the US should direct its energy; it also led to the development of ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. Indeed, on October 7, 2022, Kim Jong Un celebrated Russian President Vladimir Putin's birthday and congratulated the Russian leader for "crushing the challenges and threats posed by the US." [10] In addition, Kim Jong Un stated that the cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow is "strengthened like never before." [11] At this point, it can be said that the Pyongyang administration has benefited from Moscow's increasing need for allies due to isolation. The timing of missile drills should also be read from this perspective.

At the same time, just as with the Ukrainian War, the crisis over Taiwan also enabled North Korea to take advantage of the

growing tension between Washington and Beijing. Because the exercises organized by the US with South Korea and Japan are basically a part of China's containment policy. The fact that the Washington administration stated that the reason for its activities in the region is the actions of North Korea can be interpreted as the make-up of the main target. Because the current stance of North Korea provides a legitimate basis for the US presence in the region. For this reason, the activities of the US in the region, contrary to popular belief; it encourages North Korea.

Finally, it should be underlined that; there is currently no strong sense of unity in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which imposed heavy sanctions on North Korea in 2017. Indeed, Russia is at war. China, on the other hand, is dragged into a defensive position at the UNSC over human rights reports. In such an environment, it is difficult for the UNSC to take new sanctions against North Korea. For Pyongyang, this means a favorable timing for nuclear missile tests.

As a result, Russia's increasing need for allies, the lack of unity within the UNSC to impose sanctions on North Korea, and the US activities in the region provoking Pyongyang have led North Korea to think that the right time has come for nuclear tests. This indicates that the security dilemma in the region will deepen.

[1] "Much Ado About Nothing: North Korea's New Nuclear Law", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/much-ado-about-nothing-north-koreas-new-nuclear-law/>, (Date of Accession: 13.09.2022).

[2] "North Korea Carries Outh Sixth Missile Launch in Two Weeks", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63153903>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[3] "South Kore Says North Korea Test-Fired Missile toward Sea", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/south-korea-north-ronald-reagan-joint-chiefs-of-staff-063174c44cb01ab2dd32df975abfd04>, (Date of Accession: 25.09.2022).

[4] "Kamala Harris Visits DMZ after North Korea Missile Launch", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/29/kamala-harris-prepares-for-dmz-visit-after-n-korea-missile-launch>, (Date of Accession: 29.09.2022).

[5] "N.Korea Flies Warplanes Near S.Korea After Missile Launches", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/japan-seoul-south-korea-north-joint-chiefs-of-staff-6cbb36c582a09b7c9b6005eb>, (Date of Accession: 06.10.2022).

[6] "North Kore Sends Missile Soaring Over Japan in Escalation", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/seoul-south-korea-north-joint-chiefs-of-staff-1026206c80666f1fcdcb3983ebf45e14b>, (Date of Accession: 04.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Election Results in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Electoral Law Reform

The general elections held on October 2, 2022 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), was realized under the shadow of the discussions of Electoral Law. Therefore, looking at the results of the elections held twitchily, it is seen that there are some changes in the BiH Presidential Council, including the Bosniak, Serbian, and Croatian members. As a matter of fact, according to the results shared by BiH Electoral Commission, Bosniak member of Social Democrat Party Denis Becirovic, is in the first place with 57,2% votes, President of Party of Democratic Action (SDA) Bakir Izetbegovic is in the second place

with 37,59%. Within Croatian candidates, Zeljko Komsic was in the first place with 54,21%, his opponent Borjana Kristo is in the second place with 45,79%. Within Serbian candidates, under the leadership of Milorad Dodik, Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) candidate Zeljka Cvijanovic got 52,67% of the votes and holds the first place; his opponent Mirko Sarovic had 35,90% of the votes.[1]

Central Election Commission has declared that voter turnout is 50%. Therefore, has become Denis Becirovic Bosniak member, Zeljko Komsic



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has become Croatian member and Zeljka Cvijanovic has become Serbian member of Presidential Council

When the result of the election is analyzed, it is observed that the Bosniak, the Croatian and the Serbian supports the opposition, which means that the public demand a change in the country. Economic crisis deepening due to the Russian-Ukrainian War escalated this. The public, demanded change while facing this challenging period.

Competing for the Bosniak membership of the Presidential Council, Becirovic won the election with a margin of 7%. The support of Becirovic by the eleven opposition parties as a bloc was the decisive factor in the victory of the SDP. As a matter of fact, SDA candidate Izetbegovic pointed to this situation and said, "It was difficult for us to be successful against the alliance of eleven parties. SDA has increased its votes over the last two elections. SDA is still the strongest party in BiH." [2]

In the country where the Bosniak and Serbian members of the Presidency Council have been changed and the Croatian member has been re-elected, it is wondered what kind of policy the relevant members will follow in the fragile political structure of the country. In his post-election statement, Becirovic stated that BiH will continue to be determined in the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership processes.[3] Komsic expressed his satisfaction with the results and pointed out that some changes will occur in the political scene of BiH.[4] It is stated that Komsic defends the interests of Bosnians in the country and therefore received votes from some Bosniak voters.[5] Considering this issue, it can be predicted that he will act with a policy understanding that defends the interests of the country.

On the other hand, as it will be remembered, the policy adopted by the former Serbian member Dodik caused the political crisis in BiH to deepen. Therefore, it is a matter of debate whether the new Serbian member of the Presidential Council, Cvijanovic, will pursue a different policy. However, it is not expected that Cvijanovic will behave much differently from Dodik, who is in the same party. As a matter of fact, in his statement after his election victory, Cvijanovic said that he would defend the interests of Republika Srpska.[6] Therefore, Cvijanovic is a person who has internalized the views of SNSD led by Dodik. Cvijanovic's continuation of Dodik's separatist policies may increase instability in the country. Of course, Cvijanovic's relations with Serbia and Russia will also play a critical role in this regard.

What Does the Amendment to the Election Law Mean as the Vote Count Continues?

As it is known, while the vote counting process continues right after the closing of the ballot boxes in BiH; High Representative Christian Schmidt, making a significant move in terms of timing, announced that he changed the Election Law, which has been the subject of controversy since March 2022. Based on his Bonn authorities, Schmidt enacted the election law amendments on which the Bosnian politicians could not agree, by "imposing." Schmidt emphasized that the change was made in order to "reflect the will of the voters to the administration and to ensure that the country is not paralyzed by the blockade policies." [7] In this change, it is indicated that functionalism of administration of entity in the Federation of BiH (FBiH), and previous blockages on establishing a government will be prevented.[8]

With the amendment made in the Electoral Law, the number of delegates of the founding peoples (Bosniak, Croat, Serb) in the FBiH People's Assembly will be increased from 17 to 23, and the number of seats from 58 to 80. This will increase the representation of regions mostly populated by Croats in the ten cantons of FBiH. It is claimed that this decision is in favor of the nationalist Croatian party, the Croatian Democratic Union, that it will pave the way for the strengthening of the right to representation, and that Croats can have a say in many issues in the future.[9] The change in the Electoral Law mostly pleased Croatia. Because, Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenkovic, has confessed that he met "secretly" with High Representative Schmidt "for months." After the change of law, Plenkovic indicated that the Croats' political representation in Bosnia is under a guarantee.[10]

On the other hand, President of Croatia Zoran Milanovic criticized Schmidt's decision and said, "Croatia has been given a life sentence and unfortunately we celebrate it. This decision is disastrous for Zagreb's foreign policy. It is hostile behavior." he said.[11] Therefore, developments in BiH have deepened the conflict between the Prime Minister and the President in Croatia.

As a result, with the declaration of the election results in BiH, a new and challenging process has become. Change in the electoral law for the favor of the Croats may escalate the political crisis in the country. Although it is said that this change was made to facilitate the establishment of the government and to maintain political stability, it is possible that the crisis would escalate. That's why, with a change in favor to HDZ could increase the influence of Croatia in the country.

# ANKASAM IN PRESS

## 11 October 2022

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, evaluated the current situation in the Russia-Ukraine War on TRT News.

## 13 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Leaders' Summit held in Uzbekistan on the TVNET "Günlük Bülten" program.

## 13 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Eurasia Expert Dr. Sabir Askeroğlu evaluated the CICA Summit, which will be held in Astana, to Haber-24.

## 13 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Kazakhstan for Haber 24 Television, one of the leading media organizations in Kazakhstan.

## 13 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol made evaluations about the Türkiye-Kazakhstan High Level Strategic Cooperation Council Meeting.

## 13 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Eurasia Expert Dr. Sabir Askeroğlu evaluated the attack on the Kerch Bridge to Haber Global.

## 14 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the 6th Conference on Cooperation and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Summit held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, to TVNet.

## 14 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Eurasia Expert Dr. Sabir Askeroğlu evaluated the Russia-Ukraine War on Haber 24 Television, one of the leading media organizations in Kazakhstan.

## 14 October 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Asia-Pacific Expert Dr. Cenk Tamer evaluated the Xi Jinping period in China to Haber Global.



*The latest issue of the International Journal of Crisis and Politics Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Center for Crisis and Politics Studies (ANKASAM), has been published. Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Sindex and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases are scanned by our journal can be accessed via the link below.*

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# JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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