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Is the Albania-Greece Maritime Borders Problem Being Solved?



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#### **ANKASAM ANALYSIS**

# Climate Change in the Mediterranean

Climate change and global warming are among the most important issues facing humanity, deeply affecting the world. The after-effects of climate change are also likely to grow and develop over time. In this context, the Mediterranean Basin, which was considered

the cradle of civilization in ancient times due to its water resources, is now one of the areas suffering from drought due to climate change.

The temperature increase in the Mediterranean is estimated to be 20% above the global av-



Sevinç İrem
BALCI
ANKASAM
Eurasia Research Assistant

erage. This data indicates that 500 million people living in the basin will have to face the devastating effects of global warming earlier than people living in other geographical regions.[1] Moreover, according to a report by the United Nations (UN) Environment Program (UNEP), rising inequality, biodiversity loss, the increasing impact of climate change and relentless pressure on natural resources could lead to irreversible environmental damage in the Mediterranean basin.[2]

In the Mediterranean region, water resources are unevenly distributed, with 72% in the north, 23% in the east and 5% in the south. Thus, water shortages are mainly concentrated in the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries. However, severe droughts between 1990 and 2005 highlighted the fragility of water resources even in the industrialized Northern Mediterranean countries.[3]

The problem of water security in the Mediterranean region has been discussed first by the UN's environmental bodies and then by initiatives launched by the European Union (EU), other European countries and countries bordering the Mediterranean. The issue of drought in the Mediterranean, which came to the agenda in the second half of the 2010s, is still being discussed in 2022. At this point, the "Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)", of which 16 countries are members, has taken important initiatives.

One of them is the Integrated Programme for the Protection of Lake Bizerte Against Pollution in Tunisia, 2016-2022.[4] The financial high-light of the program is that it is largely funded by the EU. The European Investment Bank has allocated 40 billion euros, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 19.3 billion euros and the European Commission 14.7 billion euros.

The UfM has also initiated the "Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip." This project will help stabilize and replenish the only source of fresh water in Gaza, which is basically the "Coastal Aquifer" that runs under the Gaza Strip, as well as under Israel and Egypt. It is also a prelude to a broader water and wastewater program, including the development of a range of effluents. It is envisaged to be a concrete step towards effectively reducing pollution in the Eastern Mediterranean through the construction of a desalination plant and a modern water distribution system.[5]

As it is well known, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which border the Mediterranean, have become what is called "high politics" in international relations, mainly due to conflicts between countries due to wars and civil wars.

As mentioned earlier, the increase in temperature in the Mediterranean and the acceleration of climate change will bring many problems. Among these problems is food security. As is well known, the world is facing a food security crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine war. However, the situation here is related to disruptions in food supply rather than insufficient food production. In the Mediterranean basin, where agricultural activity is quite high, the expected food crisis will be caused by water shortages and climate change. As Grammenos Mastrojeni, First Deputy Secretary General of the UfM has pointed out, sea level rise in the Mediterranean is not only about the submergence of some coastal cities, but also about the negative impact of salt water on agricultural land in a region where 40% of agricultural activities are carried out by the sea.[6]

In addition, according to the European Commission, severe declines in rainfall have led to drought threats and increased water scarcity in Italy, Greece, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Iberian Peninsula. As temperatures rise, Italy's longest river Po, which is used to irrigate local crops such as rice, maize, and wine, is drying up. In the Southern Mediterranean, Morocco is projected to be completely water-scarce by 2030.[7] Wildfires in the forests of Greece, France and other countries in the region during the summer months are also fueling climate change and negatively affecting the ecosystem.

From a general perspective, it is possible to say that the initiatives of regional governments are insufficient. Although this issue is discussed in platforms other than the UN Climate Program, the UfM and the EU's environmental bodies, there is a lack of action. The lack of cooperation in the Mediterranean countries in the field of environment and climate is an issue that complicates the search for solutions. Because the area where civilizations were established in the past due to its water wealth is facing extinction in a short period of time.

To summarize, the Mediterranean basin, which has various riches both under the sea and on its coasts, is facing several environmental and deadly problems due to climate change and drought. In this area, where global warming is increasing faster than in other geographies, food security and many vital opportunities are under threat, which may lead to major conflicts in the future.

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## Obstacles to US-Russia Talks

Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States (US), is touring Europe from December 5 to 11. Sherman plans to discuss the situation in Ukraine with US allies during her trip to Europe. As expected, the White House's strategy towards Russia will be updated according to the results of this trip. In this context, Washington will decide on the conditions for negotiating with Moscow. In this context, Sherman will visit England, France, Germany, Italy, and Czechia. In addition, Sherman is scheduled to hold talks at the Vatican during her visit to Italy.

As it is well known, Pope Francis has been offering to mediate peace between Russia and Ukraine for the last few months. Vatican Foreign Affairs Minister Paul Richard Gallagher also offered mediation and expressed that the Vatican is ready to create a platform for negotiations. Similarly, in September 2022, Pope Francis called for the revival of the "Helsinki Spirit." In October of the same year, Pope Francis invited the leaders of the two countries to dialogue. In November 2022, Pope Francis took responsibility for the prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine. Russia's Ambassador to the Vatican, Alexander Avdeev, also stated that the lists from Pope Francis were considered for the release of Ukrainian prisoners.[2]

Sherman was a key participant in negotiations on Russia's security guarantees in early 2022, but negotiations broke down after the war. Sherman has also chaired the American delegation in past ne-



**Dr. Sabir ASKEROĞLU**ANKASAM
Eurasia Expert

gotiations on the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran. Indeed, nuclear issues are also on the agenda in Russian-Western contacts in the context of the war in Ukraine. Moscow's threats regarding the use of nuclear weapons and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant make it necessary to address these issues in the ongoing consultations.

Consultations on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) are also crucial. Although the START talks were supposed to take place in Cairo on November 29-December 6, 2022, Russia decided to postpone these meetings. Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Ryabkov stated that the decision in question was "taken at the political level" and that the inconsistencies between the priorities of the two countries caused this result. According to Ryabkov, while Americans focus only on START; The Moscow administration also attaches importance to the solution to other problems. Of course, the developments in Ukraine also play a role in this situation.[3]

On December 1, 2022, i.e., after the postponement of the START negotiations, US President Joe Biden said that he was ready to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the joint press conference held after he meets with French President Emmanuel Macron at the White House, Biden stated that he could meet with Putin to end the conflict in Ukraine, but Moscow must take some decisions. [4] In this context, Biden said the following:[5]

"If that is the case, that is if Putin intends to end the war in Ukraine, then I will be happy to sit down at the negotiating table in consultation with our NATO partners to see what Putin thinks."

According to Biden, Russia's calculations failed in Ukraine's intervention. Indeed, the US President believes that it makes no sense to accept Moscow's victory and argues that the way to end the war is for Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.[6] It can be stated that Washington and Kyiv use similar rhetoric in this regard.

Russia's withdrawal from Ukrainian territory Moscow to pay compensation to Ukraine

Punishment of all war criminals

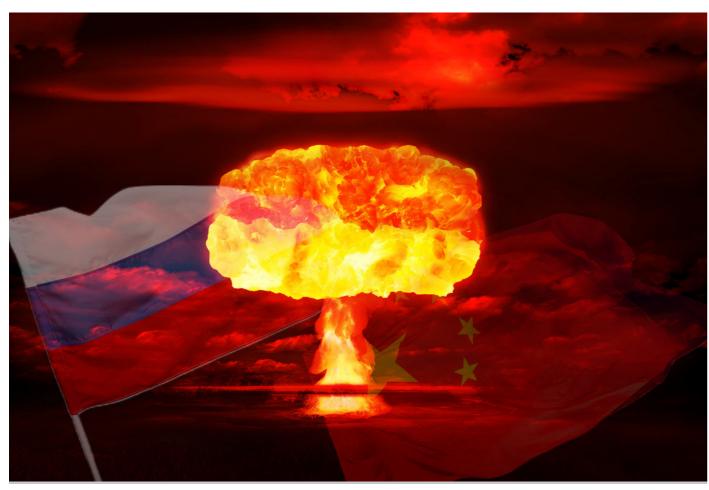
Russia's voluntary surrender of nuclear weapons

On the other hand, there is no sign of a resumption of the negotiation process in the Kremlin administration. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated that the conditions stated by Biden were unacceptable and that the Russian Army would continue its operations in Ukraine. In this sense, Peskov called on Washington to recognize the places where Russia held referendums as Russian territory, arguing that failure to do so would make it difficult to end the conflict.[7]

On the other hand, on 3 December 2022, Defense Minister of Russia Sergey Shoigu visited Belarus and met with President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko. According to Ukrainian officials, Shoigu requested Lukashenko to use the country's infrastructure and military bases, especially weapons and military equipment.[8] This visit can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that the claim that Moscow wants support from Minsk in a military-technical sense reflects the truth. The second is for Russia to launch a new offensive from the north of Ukraine, thereby focusing the Ukrainian Army in two regions and halting its advance in the east, and thereby imposing the status quo on the ground on Western actors.

Lukashenko, on the other hand, in his meeting with Shoigu, said that Russia and Belarus do not want war and that they exchanged ideas on ensuring their territorial integrity in a phone call they had with Putin.[9] In fact, by making such statements, Lukashenko revealed that his support to Russia would be limited to the training activities of Russian soldiers and that he did not want to be involved in the war against Ukraine. In other words, Lukashenko favours a defence-based policy. In response, the US has stated that it will continue to provide arms support to the Ukrainian Army.

As a result, both the US and its allies and Russia are looking for grounds for dialogue and negotiations. However, both sides expect the other actor to back down by making concessions and rejecting the conditions offered to them. This means that the war will be protracted.



# Is China's "Weak Spot" Russia's Nuclear Threats?

According to the latest report by the United States (US) Department of Defense (Pentagon), China's nuclear warhead stock has increased rapidly over the past two years, reaching 400, and by 2035, if China continues to expand this stock at the current rate. It will have approximately 1,500 nuclear warheads.[1] On the other hand, as the legacy of the Cold War, it is estimated that the number of nuclear warheads of both Russia and the US is over 5 thousand. On the other hand, for China to become the

world leader, it is expected that its global deterrence will increase at reasonable levels as well as its economic performance. While the Beijing administration has not yet reached the nuclear stock levels of the great powers; China fears that it will suffer great destruction. This includes nuclear threats from Russia, too. China which is stating that there will be no winner in nuclear war also opposes the threat of using nuclear power.



Dr. Cenk TAMER

ANKASAM

Asia-Pacific

Expert

China is troubled by nuclear threats from both Russia and North Korea and seeks to reduce the risk of such a war that would devastate it. For example, North Korea has recently declared that it will respond to US nuclear threats by firing an intercontinental ballistic missile. Upon this, Chinese President Xi Jinping wrote a letter to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressing that Beijing is willing to work with Pyongyang for world peace.[2]

China is also afraid of nuclear threats originating from Russia. Therefore, some Western analysts, reminding that there have been Russian-Chinese border conflicts in the past, argue that Russia may pose a threat to China on its eastern border, and therefore, China is always on the alert against Russia. For example, American military expert, Dr. John Callahan told the Express, emphasizing Russia "would not have a chance against China without nuclear weapons:"[3]

"Russia's ability will be very limited, especially if we think that they will fight in Siberia. Let's say, The Chinese invaded Siberia. In this case, the probability of the Russians using their nuclear weapons is high. Because they will have to leave Ukraine completely and take their heavy weapons to the other side of the world to fight the Chinese."

Western media often talk about the possibility of a conflict or conflict between Russia and China. Especially, British press organizations want to create a perception that there is a disagreement between the two actors and set them against each other. Because England wants to rekindle these "frozen crises" between the parties. The aim here is to establish the similarity of China-India border disputes on the Moscow-Beijing line. In other words, the aim is to open the gap between Russia and China. And most convenient tool here is nuclear threats.

Moreover, statements in this direction are not limited to the United Kingdom. For example, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said during his Beijing visit that Jinping could use his influence over the Moscow administration to end the war in Ukraine. He also stated that they agreed that Russia's nuclear threats were "extremely dangerous." Chinese authorities have also confirmed their opposition to the use and threat of nuclear weapons in Eurasia. After these words, the Western powers saw that China's "weak spot" was the war in Ukraine and rather the nuclear issue and tried to suppress Beijing over this issue.

According to the West, the way to get China on their side is to shoot him in the "weak spot." In this direction, Western actors have constantly warned China about the "Russian threat" and pressured it to take a front against Moscow. After Scholz, both US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron asked Jinping for support in preventing nuclear threats during the G20 Summit.[4]

Jinping, on the other hand, was disturbed by the reflection of this issue in the press after the bilateral meetings. In this regard, he especially criticized Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.[5] Jinping told Trudeau that all the issues discussed at the meeting were leaked to the press and that this was not in line with diplomatic custom. Trudeau, on the other hand, stated that Canada is a transparent and open state and that these actions should be taken naturally.

Jinping suggested that the conditions be determined before sitting at the table in the meetings to be held from now on.[6] In other words, China wants to determine the conditions in advance so that the talks at the meeting are not leaked to the press. Sharing the nuclear issue with the press in the negotiations with Westerners may harm China's relations with Russia. Beijing may begin to take measures to prevent this. In general, Jinping may be worried that after the talks in question, the West will leak the talk about Russia in general and the nuclear issue.

In his meeting with Charles Michel, President of the European Council, who visited Beijing upon an official invitation, Jinping called for a political solution to the Ukraine Crisis. At the meeting, Michel wanted Jinping to use his influence over Russia to end the war in Ukraine, just as Scholz and Macron did.[7] Thus, Beijing calls on Russia through Europe to end its war in Ukraine. It is meaningful for China to deliver this message through Europe.

As we can understand, Beijing has begun to show that it is uncomfortable with the prolongation of the war and especially with Moscow's nuclear threats. However, China does not want this weakness to be seen by the West. Because Westerners will want to grab China by the "weak spot" and corner it and separate it from Russia. China intends to rein in Russia and prevent major nuclear destruction in the world. Apart from this, Beijing continues its strategic partnership with Moscow.

China did turn a blind eye to Russia's threats to the West for a long time or remained silent. On the contrary, it cooperated with Moscow to wear down the West. Because the wear of the West is in China's interest. But when there is a greater risk of war between Russia and the West, China backs down. Because he is aware that this war will harm his interests after a point. Moreover, China has the power to prevent Russia from using nuclear weapons. But if there is an actor who can convince Moscow, it is Beijing. Because China says that it is against the Cold War mentality. The Cold War is what Russia is already doing in its dealings with the West, and China seems to want to break that.

As a result, the anger of the West is directed against China as well as Russia. Beijing, on the other hand, has begun to see that its ties with Moscow are damaging its relations with the world. Therefore, by inviting Western states to Beijing, China expresses firsthand that it "is in favour of world peace" and "does not support Russia's war." In this sense, Beijing wants to express itself correctly to the West and reduce the risk of war without offending Moscow. The nuclear issue, on the other hand, comes to the forefront as a sensitive issue that could break China's relations with Russia.

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#### **ANKASAM ANALYSIS**

# Background of China and Saudi Arabia Meeting

The Middle East is an extremely important region in Chinese foreign policy. China, which has a close dialogue with many countries in the region, participated at the Presidential level in the China-Arab Countries Summit and the China-Gulf Cooperation Organization Summit held between 7-9 December 2022 to improve its relations. Within the scope of this visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping first met with King Sal-

man bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia. The meeting of the two leaders is important in terms of strengthening the relations between China and Saudi Arabia.

Xi last visited Saudi Arabia as part of his Middle East tour between 19-23 January 2016. Xi signed 52 cooperation texts with Arab countries during the tour, and 14 of these collaborations were



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with Saudi Arabia. The most important issue of cooperation is the In addition to making China a stronger network economicaldelivery of the construction of the petrochemical refinery of Yan- ly, the Belt-Road Project also offers important opportunities for bu Aramco Sinopec Refining Company (YASREF) in Yanbu city of Middle Eastern countries. The Middle East and especially the Gulf Saudi Arabia to China. Because YASREF is China's largest investment project in Saudi Arabia.[1]

The meeting, which took place on 7 December 2022, offers new the region to shift their economies to new areas. [9] It can be said opportunities to both countries. Official channels of Saudi Arabia stated that an agreement worth 29 billion dollars will be signed at the summit. At the same time, it was stated that upon the invitation of Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Xi visited Saudi Arabia to power of industrial production and expanding the downstream strengthen the historical ties and strategic partnership between value of the petrochemical sector, the Belt-Road Project overlaps the two countries.[2] It should be asked what are the issues that come to the fore in the close relations between China and Saudi based on?

The close relations developed on the Beijing-Riyadh line have many dimensions. The first of these is energy security. Since the 1990s, the Beijing administration has been looking at the Middle East geography with the aim of "securing the energy supply." Bei-Chinese economy, the increase of the welfare of the people, the modernization of the military and the stabilization of the regime. [3] Therefore, the continuity of cooperation in the field of energy crease of 19.4%.[12] with Saudi Arabia, which has 17% of the world's petrol, is of vital importance for China.[4] Currently, China's largest petrol supplier is Saudi Arabia.[5] For Saudi Arabia, China is the most strategic market for petrol exports. The Riyadh administration, especially afrelations with the great powers and adopted the "Look to the East" policy.[6] As a matter of fact, on December 7, 2022, Saudi Arabian Arab countries will increase even more.[13] Minister of Energy, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, said, "Cooperation Arabia, the world's largest petrol exporter, helps maintain global petrol market stability." He emphasized that the energy relationship between the two countries is complementary.[7]

Another prominent issue between the two countries is the Belt-Road Project. Within the framework of the project announced by Xi in 2013, the Middle East has become even more valuable in the eyes of China with its strategic location. For this reason, while Beithe context of energy security; after 2010, they started to include more different factors.[8]

countries face various risks in terms of sustainability due to their economies based on the petrol industry. The fact that petrol and natural gas reserves will run out one day has led the countries of that, in the case of Saudi Arabia, considering the Vision 2030 Document, which addresses issues such as encouraging investment in Riyadh's new infrastructure and industrial cities, increasing the with Saudi Arabia's goals.[10]

Arabia, and what is the cooperation between the two countries Another prominent issue in China-Saudi Arabian relations is trade. Imports of Saudi products constitute a significant part of China's manufacturing for global markets. Saudi Arabia's imports from China help to meet Saudi Arabia's growing need for economic and social development.[11] Trade relations on the Beijing-Riyadh line have been growing rapidly since the 1990s. China's exports to Saudi Arabia were 905 million dollars in 1995; in 2020, it increased jing's energy security policy is closely related to the growth of the to 31.8 billion dollars, increasing at an annual rate of 15.3%. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia's exports to China increased from 393 million dollars in 1995 to 33.4 billion dollars in 2020, an annual in-

In this respect, the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between China and the Gulf Cooperation Organization to remove trade barriers has been an issue that has been discussed for a ter the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, tended to balance its long time. Removing barriers to trade offers significant mutual benefits. With the signing of the FTA, trade between China and

between China, the world's largest energy consumer, and Saudi Bilateral relations with China are of strategic importance for the Middle East in general and Saudi Arabia in particular. Especially after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the US started to lose its influence in the Middle East, China came to the fore as a new global partner for the countries of the region.[14] In the recent period, US-Saudi Arabian relations have been strained due to the US's criticisms of Saudi Arabia and Riyadh's support for Moscow in the debate on the restriction of petrol production.[15] Considering all these; in addition to priorities such as energy, trade and econojing's policies towards the Middle East have traditionally been in my, it can be argued that the development in relations between China and Saudi Arabia is also related to Riyadh's search for an alternative to the US. In this sense, China's proposal to price petrol

in yuan in the negotiations is a great departure. As it is known, petrol is dollar indexed and priced accordingly. Pricing petrol in yuan could be a move to erode US global dominance. [16] As a result, it is possible to say that China-Saudi Arabia relations are progressing within the framework of a win-win policy.

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[13] "China-Arab Summit: What's on the Table? Perhaps the Future of the Gulf", Middle East Eye, https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/ china-arab-summit-future-gulf-table, (Date of Accession: 08.12.2022).

[14] Erkan-Yüce, op. cit., p. 13-14.

[15] "Çin Lideri Şi Cinping, 'Pekin-Arap İlişkilerinde Çığır Açan Dönüm Noktası' için Suudi Arabistan'da", Euronews, https://tr.euronews.com/2022/12/07/cin-lideri-si-cinping-pekin-arap-iliskilerinde-cigir-acan-donum-noktasi-icin-suudi-arabist, (Date of Accession: 08.12.2022).

[16] "China-Arab Summit...", op. cit.



ANKASAM **ANALYSIS** 

## The Position of the Croatian Decision–Mak– ing Mechanism on the Russia-Ukraine War

One of the regions most negatively affected by the Russia-Ukraine War, which began on February 24, 2022, is the Balkan geography. It is seen that Croatia, which is in the Balkans, is having a hard time trying to form a policy regarding the war. The main reason for this is that the decision-making mechanism in Croatia is far from being able to reach a consensus on the war in Ukraine. There are particularly deep differences between Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and President Zoran Milanovic regarding the war.

This difference between Croatian President Milanovic and Prime Minister Plenkovic arose even before the start of the Russia-Ukraine War, Milanovic stated in his statement dated on January 25, 2022, that Kyiv is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and described the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as a crisis in which the internal dynamics of the United States (US) are effective.[1]

In this context, it can be said that Milanovic is a politician who stands out with pro-Russian views, while Plenkovic advocates that the country pursue integrated policies with the West. Therefore, it can be argued that the difference between the two leaders has shaped Croatia's foreign policy regarding the war.

Milanovic's stance towards the conflict between Moscow and Kyiv did not change after the war began. Milanovic, for example, stated on



Cemal Ege ÖZKAN

April 8, 2022, that Western sanctions against Moscow would not stop the Russia-Ukraine War and that the war could only be resolved through diplomacy. He also suggested that Croatia could not do much for Ukraine, while it could do a lot in the Western Balkans. [2]

As can be seen, Milanovic takes a different stance on the European Union (EU) sanctions against Russia, both from the Prime Minister of his own country and from other EU member states. Milanovic opposes Western sanctions. In this regard, the Croatian President To summarize, there are great disagreements in Croatia regaris the second EU member state leader after Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to oppose sanctions against Russia.

On the other hand, Plenkovic reacts sharply to Milanovic's attitude towards the war in Ukraine. In his statement dated on April 21, 2022. Plenkovic claimed that Milanovic has pro-Russian views. Moreover, he also suggested that the President of Croatia has caused enormous damage to the country's foreign relations. Finally, Plenkovic further in the future. announced that no cabinet minister will travel with the President of Croatia or attend joint meetings and conferences as long as he is the Prime Minister.[3]

As can be understood, it is seen that the stance of the decision-making mechanism in Croatia towards the Russia-Ukraine War has been shaped by divisions since the beginning of the war. This causes Croatian foreign policy to experience an ambivalent situation.

that Western sanctions against Russia are not working. Moreover, he stated that the sanctions did not harm Moscow, but Zagreb.[4] In turn, Plenkovic expressed that Brussels has the political will to expand sanctions against Moscow.[5] In other words, there are also tics/short\_news/croatian-president-says-western-sanctisignificant disagreements between the Croatian Prime Minister and the President on the functionality of sanctions. This makes it difficult for the Zagreb administration to follow a monolithic policy regarding the war.

In addition to all this, if it is necessary to place particular focus, it can be argued that the war conjuncture has increased the importance of Croatia in European geopolitics. Croatia is one of the two countries in the Balkan geography that has a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal together with Greece. Therefore, this situation has led to positive developments for Zagreb, especially in terms of ensuring Europe's energy security.

On the other hand, the latest conflict experienced by the decision-making mechanism in Croatia regarding the war in Ukraine is

related to the training of Ukrainian soldiers in Croatia. In this regard, Milanovic rejected the letter of Defense Minister Mario Banozic, who asked him on November 22, 2022, to approve the training of Ukrainian Forces in Croatia. According to Milanovic, the Minister of Defense does not have the authority to request such approval. According to the Constitution of Croatia, only the President, the Croatian Government and the Croatian Parliament have the authority to make such a decision.[6]

ding Ukraine. According to Milanovic, Croatia should not get involved in the war more than necessary. Therefore, the President of Croatia opposes any military assistance to Ukraine. Milanovic pursues a policy that avoids directly confronting Russia. This prevents Croatia from acting in harmony at the point of the Russia-Ukraine War. This can be interpreted as an indication that the tension between the Croatian Government and the President will increase

Consequently, Plenkovic supports sanctions against Russia, while Milanovic is in the opposite position. Therefore, it is foreseeable that the disagreement over Ukraine and Russia in Croatia may continue. Milanovic wants Zagreb to pursue a neutral policy, while Plenkovic does not hesitate to target Moscow at every opportunity. Therefore, it seems that the decision-making mechanism in Croatia is in a "dilemma" regarding the Russia-Ukraine War.

[1] "Milanovic, Ukraine Does Not Belong in NATO", N1, https://n1info. Milanovic went further in his statement on August 8, 2022, claiming hr/english/news/milanovic-ukraine-does-not-belong-in-nato/, (Date of Accession: 04.12.2022).

> [2] "Croatian President Says Western Sanctions Will Not End Ukraine War", Euractiv, https://www.euractiv.com/section/polions-will-not-end-ukraine-war/, (Date of Accession: 04.12.2022).

> [3] "Croatia's PM Plenković Cuts Ties with President Milanović for His Pro-Russian Stance", Republic World, https://www.republicworld. com/amp/world-news/russia-ukraine-crisis/croatias-pm-plenkovic-cuts-ties-with-president-milanovic-for-his-pro-russian-stance-articleshow.html, (Date of Accession: 04.12.2022).

> [4] "Western Sanctions Won't Harm Russia, But Harmed Croatia, Says President", Total Croatia News, https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/64874-western-sanctions-won-t-harm-russia-but-harmed-croatia-says-president, (Date of Accession:

> [5] "EU Has Political Will to Extend Russia Sanctions, Croatia Says", Bloomberg, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-23/ eu-has-political-will-to-extend-russia-sanctions-croatia-says?leadSource=uverify%20wall, (Date of Accession: 04.12.2022).



# Overlapping Perceptions of Central Asian States and India on Security

Geographically, Afghanistan is one of the most important countries connecting Central Asia and South Asia. During the intervention stage of the United States (US) in Afghanistan, during the withdrawal process and the second Taliban period, Central Asian governments and India, a South Asian state, followed various policies. Security and interests are the most important

factors shaping the policies and perceptions of the administrations.

During and after the withdrawal of the US, Central Asian states in general, such as solving the problem in Afghanistan as soon as possible, building a healthy system in the country, including Afghanistan in regional projects and



**Dr. Emrah KAYA**ANKASAM
Central Asia Expert

cooperation by developing pragmatist policies, and taking various measures against security threats. Various similar attitudes have been adopted and policies have been developed. In this process, for example, Uzbekistan took the initiative to solve Afghanistan-centered problems using various international conferences; Turkmenistan tried to prevent the deepening of the crisis in Afghanistan with its humanitarian aid.

Tajikistan, on the other hand, brought various criticisms to the administration, which it declared after the Taliban seized Kabul after the withdrawal of the US. Dushanbe argued that the Tajik population was ignored. Relations between the parties have been strained due to Tajikistan's support of Tajiks in Afghanistan. However, as can be seen, the conflict between them does not provide any benefit to the parties. Therefore, the isolation process of the Taliban continues, and the economic problems deepen. On the other hand, the Dushanbe administration becomes the target of various threats caused by tensions and incurs a significant cost due to the economic resources it spends on defence.

India, on the other hand, is one of the largest states in South Asia and is a rising power in Asia. In this context, it is closely interested in various developments and threat sources in its geography. India, which supports the US intervention in Afghanistan, is one of the states that does not support the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, as can be seen in the example of Tajikistan, New Delhi seems to have realized that the policies it followed did not bring any benefits to it and the security problems in the region deepened. Thus, it can be said that there have been some changes in India's Afghanistan policy.

First, the Indian government contacted the Taliban rather than excluding them. In this context, on June 2, 2022, Indian officials visited Kabul to meet with the Taliban. During the visit, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation headed by senior diplomat J. P. Singh met with the Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mottaki. During the meeting, bilateral relations and humanitarian aid were discussed. In this process, India sent 20,000 tons of wheat, 13 tons of medicine, 500,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine and winter clothes to overcome the problems experienced by the Afghan people.[1]

The New Delhi administration has shown that it is both in favour of resolving the Afghanistan crisis and will continue to use soft power elements as in the pre-Taliban period.

On the other hand, on 6 December 2022, the national security advisers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan held a meeting hosted by India. However, Turkmenistan was represented by the Ambassador in New Delhi. Looking at the issues discussed at the meeting, it is seen that states have adopted similar policies against Afghanistan and security threats in the region. The fact that the shared news regarding the talks emphasizes that India and Central Asian countries have common interests in peace, security and stability in the region is proof of this.[2]

When the developments are examined, it can be said that India's changing attitude coincides with the policies of Central Asian countries, that New Delhi tried to turn the conjuncture that it perceived as negative with the coming to power of the Taliban into gains with various contacts and that it took the regional states that followed constructive policies as a reference.

The parties' approaches to security will ensure stronger relations. Because, considering the influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, it can be stated that the relations will continue to develop in a bilateral and multilateral way. In particular, the perception of a common threat will bring about the strengthening of the perception of common interest.

Although security is the basis of the relations established between India and Central Asian countries, the parties aim to strengthen economic relations, create geographical ties, and build corridors between them. The economic and political gains that the objectives will bring to the parties will positively affect the stability of Central and South Asia.

On the other hand, the construction of a corridor between regions including Afghanistan will provide important gains to Dushanbe and Kabul. Because these gains and the returns of the realized projects will also allow the tension between Dushanbe and the Taliban administration to abate.

As a result, relations between Central Asian countries and India are developing in a multi-faceted way. A parallel line of perceptions between the parties, especially against security threats, will accelerate the development process of relations. When the developments after the Taliban's capture of Kabul are examined, a significant change is seen in the policies of New Delhi. On the other hand, the Taliban will pay more attention to the sensitivities of the regional states. In this context, the intensification of relations on the Central Asia-Afghanistan-India line and the construction of corridors will gain momentum. Thus, instead of isolation, win-win policies to be developed within the pragmatist framework for Afghanistan will contribute to the stability and security of Central Asia and South Asia at the maximum level.

[1] "Indian Officials Meet Taliban in Kabul in First Visit since US Exit", The Times of India, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/indian-officials-meet-taliban-in-kabul-in-first-visit-since-us-exit/articleshow/91967042.cms, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[2] "India to Host Conclave of Top Security Officials of Central Asian Countries on December 6", The Hindu, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-host-conclave-of-top-security-officials-of-central-asian-countries-on-december-6/article66228336.ece, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).



#### **ANKASAM ANALYSIS**

## Visit of Taliban Defense Minister to UAE: What does the Taliban Aim?

The delegation, led by the Taliban Defense Minister Mullah Mohammed Yaqub Mujahid, went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 4 December 2022. It is known that Anas Haqqani, one of the young leaders of the Haqqani Network, also took part in the delegation. Although Mullah Yaqub is young, he is the son of Mullah Omar, the founding leader of the Taliban and one of the strongest figures of the Taliban.

In a statement issued before the visit, the Taliban Ministry of Defense declared that the purpose of the visit was to improve relations with the Gulf countries, especially the UAE, and to meet with Afghans in the UAE. The Abu Dhabi visit was the second overseas visit of Mullah Yaqoob. It is known that the Taliban Defense Minister had previously been to Qatar.

During the visit, Mullah Yaqoob met with Afghanistan citizens and businessmen. During his meeting with the Afghans, the Minister of Defense of the Taliban stated that Afghanistan's borders are under control and that no one will be allowed to enter Afghanistan, even for a meter. It was noteworthy that Yaqoob stated that all ethnic groups living in Afghanistan are the people of Afghanistan, that they should unite and participate in Afghanistan's politics and economy, and that he will work for all ethnic groups to be in government.[1]

Yaqoob also met with UAE officials during his visit. During the meeting between the Emir of the UAE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Yaqoob, it was announced that the development of bilateral relations and regional issues were dis-



Ahmad Khan DAWLATYAR ANKASAM AF-PAK Expert

cussed. [2] It can be said that Yaqoob's visit to Abu Dhabi is impor- Finally, on Jacob's visit to Abu Dhabi, it was seen that he met with tant for various reasons. First, the Taliban administration attaches Tom West, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan.[3] It is importance to the Gulf countries in its foreign policy. The reason also known that West went to Abu Dhabi from New Delhi, that for this is that the Gulf states supported the Taliban in the first there has been a normalization process in the relations between period and the Taliban had a political office in Doha, the capital the Taliban and India recently, and that the Former President of of Qatar.

On the other hand, it should be noted that; there is a rivalry be- it is claimed that Thomas Nicholson, the European Union's Spetween Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE regarding the geopolitics cial Envoy to Afghanistan, is also in Abu Dhabi. It is possible that of Afghanistan. The Taliban, on the other hand, believe that this Yaqoob also met with Nicholson, although this has not yet been competition harms Afghanistan. Through these contacts, it tries confirmed. to prevent the instability that competition will bring. Therefore, Mullah Yagoob's contacts, first in Doha and then in Abu Dhabi, As can be understood, Yagoob's visit reflects the efforts of the aim to serve a constructive process centered on cooperation.

As it is known, Doha played a critical role in the start of the second without reconciliation with the international community and es-Taliban era, as it hosted the political office of the Taliban. The UAE, on the other hand, was among the few states that recognized of recognition; in economic terms, for the Taliban, the 40 million the Taliban in the 1990s. That's why Yaqoob said that he respects dollars that the West regularly sends every week is important for the interests of the UAE in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the Taliban showed that they attach importance to relations with Abu humanitarian aid is not enough to solve the problems in Afghan-Dhabi by giving the transfer of Kabul Airport to the UAE, despite istan's economy, it gives the country a breath of fresh air. In this Doha's request.

It can be argued that the second goal of the visit was the Taliban's request for support from the UAE in overcoming the recognition problem. As it is known, the Taliban is not officially recognized balance between the Gulf countries through Yagoob's visit to Abu by any state. This increases the influence of opposition groups Dhabi, showed that they wanted to improve their relations with against the Taliban. The international community presents the the UAE as in the 1990s, and showed their will to improve their re-Taliban's establishing a pluralistic government, respecting hu-lations with the West. For this reason, it is possible to state that the man rights, especially women's rights, and taking a determined Taliban are trying to establish relations with the USA and its allies stance in the fight against terrorism as a prerequisite for recog- through the Gulf and thus overcome the recognition problem. nition. The UAE, on the other hand, is home to many Taliban opponents, especially President Ashraf Ghani of the deposed Afghan [1] "عبطوبا رد نابلاط عاف د ريزو و دياز نب دمجم راديد" [1]. ISNA, https://l24. regime and former Balkh Governor Ata Muhammed Nur, one of im/oKstipM, (Date of Accession: 06.12.2022). the leaders of the Afghan Tajiks. During Mullah Yaqoob's visit, it can be argued that he wanted these people to be encouraged [2] "دندرک رادید زایهن ل آ دایز زییب دمجم ځیش و بوقعی دمجم الم" [3]. "Can be argued that he wanted these people to be encouraged to return to Afghanistan. Because the Taliban believes that they can overcome the recognition problem by showing that the opposition can live in the country in this way.

It can be said that the third step of the visit is to ensure that Afsion: 07.12.2022). ghan businessmen in the UAE invest in the country. Because after the Taliban dominated Afghanistan, it was seen that many wealthy businessmen settled in the UAE. At this point, the Taliban cares about these investors to overcome the economic problems. It is possible to state that Yaqoob, who is known as a nationalist and compliant person among the Taliban, tried to persuade these people during his contacts in Abu Dhabi.

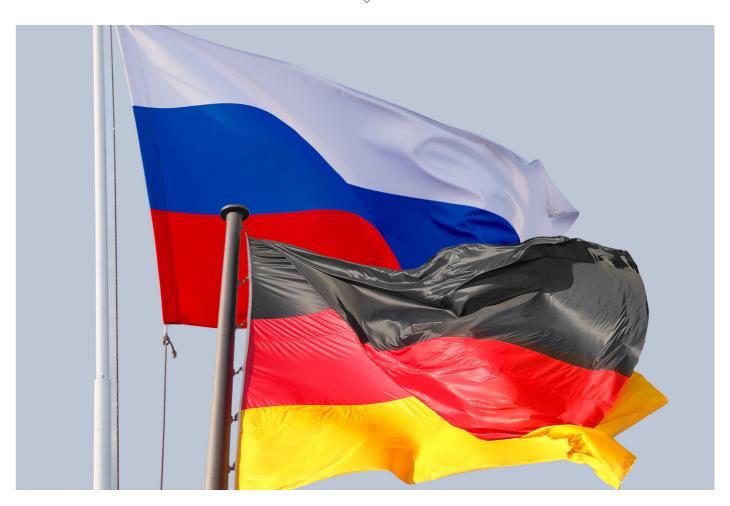
Afghanistan is also in the UAE. This indicates that there is a mediation process for the solution to the Afghan Question. Moreover,

Taliban to repair their relations with the West. Because the Taliban is aware that it cannot overcome the recognition problem pecially with Western actors. Moreover, it is not only a problem the continuity of the Taliban administration. Because, although sense, the Taliban gave the message that they were open to dialoque with the West on Yagoob's visit to Abu Dhabi.

As a result, the Taliban showed that they wanted to establish a

nik, https://l24.im/8RPgDaq, (Date of Accession: 06.12.2022).

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#### ANKASAM **ANALYSIS**

# Why Does Germany Want Russia to Return to the European Order?

According to The Times, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated at a roundtable discussion at the Berlin Security Conference that he is willing to sit at the negotiation table with the Kremlin on problems such as gun control and missile deployment if Vladimir Putin stops trying to expand Russia's territory by attacking its neighbours.[1]

Scholz added that all "shared security challenges" should be resolved after relations between Europe and Russia have reverted to the "peace order" that existed before Russia's engagement in Ukraine and the cessation of hostilities. Scholz responded as follows when asked how Berlin would build relations with Moscow when the conflict ended, considering the strong partnership that existed between the parties:[2]



Dr. Sabir **ASKEROĞLU** ANKASAM Eurasia Expert

"Russia has disrupted the peaceful order we have been working on for decades. And we agree that there should never again be attempts to change the borders by force... And what Russia is doing today is going back to the imperialistic approach of the 19th, 18th, and 17th centuries... These practices are unacceptable... We must return to the agreements that have been in force in recent years and which are the basis of peace and security in Europe ... For Russia, this means recognizing the existence of open societies, and democracies with a completely different system of government ... All issues of general security can be discussed and resolved. There is preparation for this... If Russia is willing to return to such a peaceful order, we can return to the peaceful order that works and makes the world safe again."

The German leader's stance contrasts the sentiments of Poland, Romania, and the Baltic nations toward Russia, particularly in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) eastern wing. Ukraine is in a similar position. At the same time, these countries do not think the Kremlin will make compromises or follow through on post-conflict peace agreements.

In this context, Germany disagrees with other NATO member states. However, Berlin also lays the groundwork for a new European security architecture and reconciliation with Moscow. In this context, Germany's and the United States of America's (USA) positions on certain subjects overlap, while others differ.

One point where the perspectives diverge is the resolution of the wars, as well as Russia's abandonment of its aggressive attitude and signing of a peace agreement. The expected peace agreement from Moscow is to guarantee security to Kyiv and ensure that it does not make territorial claims against European nations. This indicates that Russia will acknowledge European boundaries. In exchange, the possibility of reviving German-Russian collaboration is open to discussion.

The USA has similar expectations from Russia. Washington wants the peace agreement to include European security in a

limited sense and the Euro-Atlantic security system in a broader sense. So, it wants Russia to fulfil Western expectations.

As it may be recalled, a similar process occurred following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia had expressed its willingness to participate in the Euro-Atlantic security framework and to be an ally of the USA. However, due to a variety of issues, Moscow's expectations and the demands made by Russia were not met. The Moscow administration decided to abandon this idea and follow a different strategy. The strategy was based on fighting against the USA.

The disparities in attitudes toward Russia between Germany and the USA are tied to Moscow's role in Europe. Germany wants Russia to return to the pre-February 2022 world order. The USA, on the other hand, envisions Russia following the Ukraine War in two ways. First and foremost, the Washington administration favors restoring Russia to the way it was in the early 1990s. There is a demand for a militarily weak Russia that wants to be an economic and political ally of the USA rather than Europe.

Secondly, Washington is against the strengthening of economic cooperation between Russia and Germany. This is because there is a chance that a Russia-Europe reconciliation will call the Euro-US economic integration into question once more.

Scholz's desire to re-include Russia in the European security architecture at the Berlin Security Conference is connected to the second expectation that the USA has imagined for Russia. Because Germany aims to re-establish an energy alliance with Russia. It wants to bolster its economy with cheaper Russian energy resources and re-enter the Russian market, which is important for German industry. In exchange, it is anticipated that Russia would be accepted into the European security system and reintegrated into the European economy.

At this point, the German economy is having trouble finding alternate supplies of Russian natural gas and oil. The economic decline of Germany, the European economy's driving force,

implies that both the country and a political entity such as the European Union (EU) loses power. It is believed that the weakening of the economy, which is one of the foundations of the EU, which is based on shared security, economics, and democracy, may lead to instability in the union. Europe's political power is based on its economic capacity. As a result, if the European economy weakens, the continent may become dependent on the USA and cease to be a global actor.

As can be understood, the continuation of the Russia-Ukraine War means that the problems in the German economy will continue. Berlin, on the other hand, lacks the means to end the war. Before the operation, Germany attempted but failed to persuade Russia not to invade Ukraine. In the current circumstances, Berlin must pursue a new strategy since Moscow does not heed Germany's word. As a result, Germany, on the one hand, expects Russia to be punished, but on the other, does not want this punishment to continue long. However, it is also insufficient in making such a decision.

On the other hand, there is the notion that Germany is on Russia's side. Kyiv and Eastern European nations have criticized Berlin for not being harsh enough on Russia. Germany's passive stance is strongly tied to the fact that it is regarded as an actor who prefers not to wear out Russia and is hesitant to back Ukraine. As a result, Scholz's recent comment that he wants to include Russia in the European system demonstrates that Berlin supports reconciliation with Russia within the context of its economic ambitions.

[1] "Times: канцлер ФРГ Шольц призвал вернуться к «мирному порядку» с Россией", Gazeta.Ru, https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2022/12/02/19174801. shtml, (Date of Accession: 02.12.2022).

[2] "Olaf Scholz Hopes Russia Will Return to the Fold After Ukraine War", The Times, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/olaf-scholz-ukraine-war-peace-order-putin-w99zlnnw7, (Date of Accession: 02.12.2022).



# The Pentagon and The White House's China Strategies

The United States (US) is trying to restrict China, which is challenging it, in order to maintain its global hegemony. In doing so, American government agencies analyze and report on the dimensions and combat capabilities of China's military power, in particular, in the reports they publish. Accordingly, the reports prepared by American think tanks and universities, especially the Department of Defense (Pentagon), are submitted to the Senate for consideration and then to the White House. Simulations of a possible war over Taiwan are being prepared and the results are being reported. Therefore, the Pentagon and the White House take these reports into account when determining their strategies regarding China. In line with the latest reports from both domestic agencies and the Pentagon, the White House mentioned the importance of maintaining and strengthening deterrence against China in the latest National

Security Strategy Document published in October 2022.[1]

As a result of their research, American military analysts have come to the conclusion that it is very important to prevent the outbreak of a war against China in Taiwan. According to reports by many American think tanks and universities, China could quickly seize the island in a fait accompli until the US comes to protect Taiwan. The Pentagon has recently published its annual assessment report regarding the Chinese Army. In this report, it was emphasized that China has doubled its satellite coverage in the Western Pacific over the past four years and has increased its ability to detect American naval vessels.[2] In this context, Pentagon reports indicate that the US cannot win a conflict close to the Chinese coast and defend Taiwan, whether it wants to or not. It is even



**Dr. Cenk TAMER**ANKASAM
Asia-Pacific Expert

claimed that due to these views of the Pentagon, US President Joe Biden met with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in November 2022 in order to avoid military conflicts.[3]

It can be said that the Pentagon has a great influence on the decisions of the White House, but it cannot influence the final decision. The clearest example of this was seen before the visit of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in August 2022. The Pentagon has informed Biden that it does not support this visit.[4] Despite the Pentagon, the White House has taken the risk of carrying out this visit. As a matter of fact, the Pentagon continues to share the view that the risk of war is high and that this will be dangerous for the interests of the US.

In this context The Pentagon considers the White House's policies on Taiwan to be dangerous and constantly warns the Biden administration about this. The Pentagon, which has recently taken the initiative to reduce the risk of this conflict, has held talks with China's military authorities to reopen channels of dialogue.

In short, the Pentagon calculates that the war in Taiwan will be difficult to win. As a matter of fact, if China, the first to act, seizes Taiwan in a short time, it will take time for the US to come to the aid of its closest troops from Guam, South Korea, Japan and Singapore. Therefore, the US may not be able to defend Taiwan. Due to this security weakness, the US may begin to pursue a deterrence-based policy in the near future, which can also be characterized as a war of attrition against China.[5] On this issue, the White House has announced that it will work closely with Congress to increase deterrence regarding Taiwan. The most fundamental factor that the US takes into account is that China's military capacity. Especially after the researches and war simulations conducted on China's military power and combat capability starting from the year 2021, the Pentagon and the Senate have seen that the US is not ready for a possible war in Taiwan[6] and has taken action to improve the military capabilities and strategies of the army.[7] For example, in 2021, It is claimed that in the war simulation conducted at the Naval War College in the US state of Rhode Island, alarming results were revealed for the American Army.[8] The officials did not disclose the results of the war, but it is known that this report has been submitted to the Pentagon and Congress and is being considered.

What attention getter in these studies is that China's superiority over the US in a possible war is not only due to conventional capabilities. On the contrary, what is more worrying for the US is that China has significantly increased its military technology and combat capabilities.

In its latest report, the Pentagon noted that China's military capacity has improved both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, the Pentagon claimed that the Chinese Navy would reach 400 ships by 2025, while the stockpile of nuclear warheads would reach about 1,500 by 2035.[9] The White House has been revising its policies on China and Taiwan, especially based on the reports submitted to it by the Pentagon and the Senate over the past year. In the National Security Strategy Document of October 2022, the White House used the following statements:[10]

"More capable competitors and new strategies of threatening behavior below and above the traditional threshold of conflict mean we cannot afford to rely solely on conventional forces and nuclear deterrence. Our defense strategy must sustain and strengthen deterrence, with the China."

American officials always consider such a possibility, even if they suggest that China will not be able to act in Taiwan anytime soon. What the US wants to do is to deter China from attacking Taiwan and delay this operation as much as possible, or prevent it if possible.

These reports are decisive in whether the US takes action on Taiwan. If China is victorious on paper, the US will not take steps to protect Taiwan. That is why US officials, in statements they have made over the past year, have stated that all options are on the table to deter China. In doing so, the US is trying to keep dialogue channels open with China in order to avoid a possible crisis and conflict. This can also be called the "push and pull strategy" of the US against China.

Within the scope of the strategy mentioned above, first, the US is provoking China by conducting patrols for navigation safety in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Thus, it is testing China's strength and limits. Second, it is trying to reduce tensions with China by saying that it has always adhered to the principle of "one China" and does not intend to change the status quo. Thus, it aims to be able to advance its interests in the Indo-Pacific by keeping dialogue channels open with China.

The first strategy is mostly adopted by the White House. The American political will is of the opinion that it is beneficial to take risks in order to respond to challenge of China. The second strategy belongs, rather, to the Pentagon. The American military-security circles are working to mitigate the risks of a war with China in Taiwan.

Overall, an alignment among the Pentagon, the White House, and the Senate regarding Taiwan policies seems difficult to achieve. Perhaps this clash leads to the view that "US policy on Taiwan is ambiguous." This is also called the "gray strategy." It is a question mark whether the US is deliberately pursuing this grey strategy or whether it has unknowingly led to it.



# Seeking Dialogue on the Taliban-Washington Line

Taliban Defense Minister Mullah Mohammed Yaqoob visited Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on 4 December 2022. Although the visit was mainly evaluated in terms of the Taliban's relations with the UAE, Mujahid also met the United States (US) Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Tom West, during his

contacts in Abu Dhabi. This situation shows that there is a search for dialogue on the Taliban-US line.[1] Of course, there are mutual reasons for

Considering the priorities of the Taliban, it can be said that the issue of recognition comes



**Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN**ANKASAM
AF-PAK Expert

first. As it is known, the US withdrew from Afghanistan on August 31, 2021, within the scope of the Doha Agreement signed with the Taliban on February 29, 2020, and thus the twenty-year occupation in the country came to an end. However, the Taliban, which dominated Kabul on August 15, 2021, has been struggling to find solutions to the country's fundamental problems, despite being in power for 1.5 years. Because of this difficulty lies the inability of the Taliban to establish a healthy relationship with the international community due to the recognition problem. Because the US did not recognize the Taliban administration even though it accepted the Taliban as its interlocutor and signed the Doha Treaty. Accordingly, a sensitivity has developed in the international community, such as not establishing official relations with the Taliban. In other words, the way to the recognition of the Taliban passes through reconciliation with the US. For this reason, the Taliban feel the need to establish a dialogue with the US. Because the opening of a healthy communication channel between the parties may open the door for the Taliban to overcome the recognition problem. Moreover, the Taliban is aware that it will not be possible to solve the investment problem without overcoming the recognition problem.

The second issue that caused the Taliban to have contact with the US is the economy of the country. Currently, the Washington administration has confiscated Afghanistan's national reserves. Although the Afghan Fund has been established to evaluate these reserves, the Taliban is not represented in the fund, which functions as the "Central Bank of Afghanistan." [2] This prevents the Taliban from producing a solution to overcome economic problems. Therefore, the Taliban feel the need to negotiate over national reserves and funding.

Moreover, the economic dimension of the issue is not limited to this. Because the Washington administration has been sending 40 million dollars in aid to Afghanistan every week since April 2022, despite all the conflicts.[3] Undoubtedly, these aids are very important for Afghanistan's economy, given the lack of investment in the country and the employment problem experienced in this context. As can be understood, the Taliban administration believes that there should be continuity in the flow of aid.

Thirdly, it can be stated that the fact that the Taliban did not get what they expected in terms of aid, investments and recognition from Russia and China, among the global actors with which they were closed during the period when they were dominating Afghanistan, was one of the factors that led to the acceleration of his contacts with the US.

On the other hand, it is not just the Taliban; the US is also aware of the need for dialogue. In this sense, it can be said that various factors lead the West to come together with Yaqoob. The first of these factors is related to the Central Asian policy of the Washington administration. As it is known, after the Russia-Ukraine War, the importance of the said region in the eyes of the West increased.

The USA and its European allies want to develop energy-based relations with Central Asian countries. On the other hand, the expectation of the regional states is foreign direct investments. At this point, the security of investments gains importance. This leads the Washington administration to security-based cooperation with the states of the region and brings it to understand the region's approach to the Afghan Problem. The main sensitivity of the Central Asian republics is based on resolving the Afghan Question through dialogue. The regional states think that if Afghanistan is not withdrawn to the ground of international cooperation, radicalization and terrorism in the country will increase. For this reason, the US started to establish a dialogue with the Taliban.

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The second reason is related to the Pakistani dimension; again, due to a security-based approach. Because after Shahbaz Sharif became Prime Minister of Pakistan, important developments took place in the relations on the Washington-Islamabad line. The rapprochement between the parties also brings security-based cooperation. The US is conducting air operations against the terrorist organization Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), in line with the expectations of the Islamabad administration, using Pakistani airspace. This situation is considered by the Taliban administration as a violation of Afghanistan's sovereignty. However, Pakistan also has a healthy cooperation approach in the context of Afghanistan. Therefore, the US is in search of a formula that will carry out counter-terrorism operations without confronting the Taliban, and that will not cause tension between the Taliban and Pakistan. This is one of the factors that led to the meeting of the Taliban Defense Minister and the US Special Envoy to Afghanistan in Abu Dhabi.

Thirdly, the US thinks that the Taliban should accept the demands of the international community. These demands mainly include issues such as establishing an inclusive government, respecting human rights, especially women's rights, and the fight against terrorism. At this point, the Taliban's acceptance of these demands requires dialogue. In other words, the US seems to have reached the idea that it is necessary to meet with the Taliban to impose the conditions of the international community on the Taliban.

Finally, the Washington administration is pleased with the tension in the Taliban's relations with Moscow. Because the US does not want an actor that develops close relations with its rivals in the global power struggle to rule Afghanistan. This issue also played a decisive role in the cold approach towards the Taliban. But at this point, Russia tends to distance itself from the Taliban. This situation causes the US to see the Taliban as an actor with whom dialogue can be established.

After all, Mullah Yaqoob met with West during his visit to the UAE. This meeting, on the other hand, revealed the search for dialogue on the Taliban-Washington line. Because the parties need communication. In this communication, the efforts of the Taliban to overcome the recognition problem, the economic crisis in Afghanistan, the regional security, and the Russian factor in the context of Central Asia and Pakistan are decisive. However, opening channels of dialogue does not mean that the US will recognize the Taliban. But it could be the first step on the way to that.

[1] "Acting Defense Minister Meets With US Envoy For Afghanistan", Tolonews, https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-181081, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).

[2] Ahmad Khan Dawlatyar, "Afgan Fonu: ABD Neyi Hedefliyor?", ANKASAM, https://www.ankasam.org/afgan-fonu-abd-neyi-hedefliyor/, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).

[3] Ahmad Khan Dawlatyar, "Why is the US Sending Dollars to Afghanistan on Behalf of the International Community?", ANKASAM, https://www.ankasam.org/why-is-the-us-sending-dollars-to-afghanistan-on-behalf-of-the-international-community/?lang=en, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# Does Germany Substitute Britain in The Belt-Road Project?

The Belt-Road Project was developed by China with a global vision, the first phase was concerned with a connection between Britain and China and the line was defined as Iron Silk Road. The goal, which was adopted on the created project, is the arrival of the train that set out from Britain or China to another point through Central Asia, Caucasus, Balkans, and

Europe line. However, the changes in balances and equations in world politics, have caused damage to the tie established between China and Britain.

Britain, especially, has started to exhibit anti-Chinese attitudes in many regions and issues, including the Indo-Pacific. One of the



**Dr. Emrah KAYA**ANKASAM
Central Asia Expert

most significant examples of this is the AUKUS agreement signed between the United States of America (USA), Australia and Britain. With AUKUS, the London administration, at one point, has turned into one of the main actors and supportive powers of containment policy actively used by Washington in the Cold War period.

Britain, which has adopted a harsh attitude against China, obviously confronted Russia with the Russia-Ukraine War. The London administration, which has continuously expanded and deepened the sanctions imposed on Moscow, is among the actors that most support the Ukrainian Army. It is brought to the agenda that this situation led to the decrease of the importance of Britain in the eyes of the states in Asia, its influence being broken and even being seen as an enemy. Accordingly, the center of the Iron Silk Road, which ended in Britain, began to change. Therefore, it can be stated that new actors that provide the connection, trade and transportation between Asia and Europe have emerged, and a new mission has been determined.

Despite the decreasing importance of the UK, especially in the eyes of Russia and China, and the mushrooming tension in relations, relations between Europe and Asia continue through new centers. Because Europe is a significant market and China is a cheap production center. In fact, China continues to sustain its importance in this regard and the center in Europe is shifting to Germany.

There are various reasons for the increasing importance of Germany in the eyes of Asian countries and its transformation into a center. First, the Berlin administration adopted a softer attitude towards Moscow than London, because of being dependent on Russia for energy. One of the most important criticisms during the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War in Europe was that Germany was more reluctant to send military aid to Ukraine. Berlin's failure to take a harsh stance and its approach to sending support brought along discussions that cracked voices were forming within NATO.

On the other hand, Germany takes a more distant approach to the USA's process of "demonizing" Russia and China and its propaganda. Because when Russia is close to Germany; the USA is far from Germany. It is also obvious that the damage suffered by Germany due to the war will not be compensated by the Washington administration. Furthermore, it is known that Germany, one of the most substantial countries in Europe, wants to follow a foreign policy away from the influence of the USA and to convert the European Union (EU) into a more effective actor after Brexit.

On the other hand, Berlin has a Eurasian policy from the past. In this context, Germany tries to overcome the tension between Russia and China with the USA with the least casualties and to realize their interests at the maximum level. At this point, it is understood that Germany is trying to fill the gap in the Eurasian geography because of the policies followed by the UK after leaving the EU. At this point, the question may be asked why Germany did not turn to India. Even though it is an important country in the Non-Aligned Movement, India is a former British colony, the New Delhi administration did not adopt a harsh attitude towards the USA and Britain as much as Beijing, the capital from the USA and Britain shifted to India and the investment to be made in the country in question could not be indirectly affected. However, it can be said that it would mean the continuation of the influence of Britain and the USA.

It can be thought that one of the reasons for Germany to turn to China is related to the changing balances within the EU. Because the Iron Silk Road is UK-based, it can be read as a representation of the UK's influence on the EU. However, the fact that the center is in Germany will both consolidate Berlin's hand and enable it to gain significant gains in competition with Paris. In addition, an EU, freed from the influence of London, will turn into a much more useful tool for Berlin, which wants to influence the wider Eurasian geopolitics.

Especially in the recent period, the increasing activities of the EU, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia, in parallel with Germany, draw attention.

Finally, it should be noted that; Germany has not developed an open reaction against China. Because, although Germany is an important industrial country, it does not want to see China as a competitor in various matters. Because China is one of the countries that come to the fore in terms of resources such as energy, iron steel and lithium. In this sense, it can be argued that Germany, which has suffered a significant loss due to the sanctions imposed on Russia, wants to compensate for the said damage through its relations with China

As it can be understood, the relations and visits that Germany has recently developed with Central Asian countries and China are very significant. These visits will not only affect the relations between the two states. However, it is possible to say that Germany's influence and activities will increase in the wide Eurasian geography covered by the Middle Corridor. As a matter of fact, the line between Europe and China, which is likely to be damaged due to the policy followed by the UK, will continue to develop without losing its importance.

In this sense, the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Beijing during a period of tense relations between the USA and China is remarkable. Also, "How to Avoid a New Cold War in a Multipolar Age," the German leader wrote in Foreign Affairs. In the analysis titled, "How can we remain independent actors in a world that has become multipolar?", refers to Europe. The search for the answer to the question is also a message that cannot be ignored. In the article, Scholz emphasizes that the Germans will be positioned as "guarantors of European security", "bridge actors within the EU" and "defenders of solutions against global problems".[1] Therefore, Scholz has revealed that he wants Europe to become a pole by acting independently under the leadership of Germany in the world order that he argues is evolving towards multipolarity. Because it is argued that a multipolar world should be encouraged by the Berlin administration in Germany.[2]

In a nutshell, Britain's leaving the EU, acting with the USA at the point of encircling China and taking a tough stance against Moscow during the Russia-Ukraine War; seems to have damaged London's prestige in Eurasia and its position in Europe. Britain, which left the EU, positioned Russia and China as rivals with the effect of acting relatively more independently and confirmed this with its policies. However, due to the economic losses experienced by Germany and the need for Russia in terms of energy, it is more cautious, and China is still a relatively cheap production center in a period of augmenting inflation in the world; While forestalling the Berlin administration from adopting a harsh attitude towards the countries in Asia; It also serves to transform Germany into the destination of the Belt-Road Project. In short, Germany, which has turned into a center in Eurasia, aims to make the EU a pole under its control.

[1] Olaf Scholz, "The Global Zeitenwende How to Avoid a New Cold War in a Multipolar Era", Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/germany/olaf-scholz-global-zeitenwende-how-avoid-new-cold-war, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[2] Stefan Mair, "Strategic Ties, Not Blocs: Why Germany Should Promote a Multipolar Order", 49security, https://fourninesecurity.de/en/2022/09/23/why-germany-should-promote-a-multipolar-order, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).



# UK-Hungary Cooperation Shaped by EU Opposition

Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) with the Brexit referendum in 2016 and the strained relations with the bloc led London to seek new partners in Europe. In this context, it can be said that Hungary is one of the most suitable partners for England in the current conjuncture. As a matter of fact, the Budapest administration made statements supporting London during the Brexit process. In this direction, Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban

described then Prime Minister of Britain Boris Johnson as one of the bravest politicians in Europe on January 9, 2020. He also pointed out that after London left the bloc, the EU should aim for strong strategic relations with the United Kingdom (UK).[1]

In addition, Orban was one of the first EU leaders to visit the UK on 28 May 2021, that is, in the post-Brexit period, and Johnson also stated



Cemal Ege ÖZKAN

that rapprochement with Hungary is important for the welfare and security of the UK.[2] The fact that both the UK and Hungary are ruled by conservative governments encourages the two countries to increase their cooperation. Moreover, both countries come to the fore with their harsh attitudes towards irregular migration to Europe. Again, as the statement by London suggests, the relations between the parties also have a security dimension. The situation can be interpreted as the relations between Budapest and London being built on solid foundations.

Although Hungary is a member of the EU, it is excluded by the other countries of the bloc due to the policies it follows. In addition, due to Budapest's policies, it is seen that Brussels is experiencing tests on sanctions against Moscow. Therefore, due to Hungary's attitude, the EU's decision-making mechanism does not work as Brussels wishes.

As it can be understood, the fact that both the UK and Hungary have problematic relations with the EU is another factor that leads the parties to cooperate. In this context, it is seen that the partnership between the two countries has been shaped through anti-Brussels in recent years. It can be argued that the rapprochement between Budapest and London continued after Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister of the UK. In this respect, the visit of Foreign Minister of Hungary Peter Szijjarto to the UK on 28 November 2022 can be interpreted as an important development.

During his visit, Szijjarto had a meeting with his British counterpart, James Cleverly. The Foreign Minister of Hungary pointed out that the decision-makers in Brussels generally reacted to the British proposals reflexively and that some of the EU's decisions made cooperation between Brussels and London difficult. He also stated that good relations are important in the current conjuncture.[3] In this context, the fact that Szijjarto made statements criticizing the EU in the UK cannot be considered a surprising development. Because there are some disagreements in the relations of both London and Budapest with Brussels. This brings London and Budapest even closer in cooperation.

In addition to the statements, Szijjarto stated that in the current conditions, where the EU economy is severely damaged in terms of competitiveness, cooperation with the UK can help the EU become stronger and more competitive. Moreover, the Minister of Hungary emphasized that they share similar views on the fight against irregular migration, which affects Budapest and London equally.[4]

It is understood that Hungary is trying to play a mediating role in the development of relations between the EU and the UK. Because the Budapest administration is trying to both reduce the pressure and develop new relations by drawing attention to London. In addition, the two countries have a common approach to immigration, and they see this as a security problem from various perspectives. Therefore, it can be said that the parties continue to cooperate on this issue.

In addition, Hungary has been experiencing significant difficulties in EU funds lately. Brussels' obstacles to Budapest's use of financial funds led to tense relations between the parties. Moreover, Hungary's opposition to the EU's support package of 18 billion euros for Ukraine for 2023 is another factor that causes the tension between Budapest and Brussels to rise. [5]

On the other hand, one of the prominent agenda items during the Foreign Minister of Hungary's visit to London was the economy. Szijjarto met with leaders of major British companies investing in Hungary in London. The Minister emphasized that British companies are the sixth largest group investing in Hungary and that there are around 800 British companies in the country employing 50,000 people.[6]

On the other hand, there have been problems in the Hungarian economy in recent years. Therefore, the fact that London is one of the prominent financial centres can enable Hungary to attract investments from this country. This is a situation that will accelerate the relations between the two countries. Therefore, it can be stated that economic investments have an important place in Hungary-England relations and will intensify even more.

As a result, both London and Budapest have had tense relations with Brussels in recent years, encouraging the two countries to cooperate. Therefore, there is a partnership shaped by anti-Brussels. In addition to these, cooperation in the field of irregular migration and

economy also contributes to the development of relations between parties. This will cause the crackling voices voiced against the EU for a long time to increase and the discussions about the ineffectiveness of the union to intensify. In short, Hungary will try to overcome its loneliness on the continent at some point through England, while London will try to continue to influence the EU through Budapest.

[1] "Boris Johnson 'One of Europe's Bravest Politicians': Hungarian PM Orban", Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-orban-brexit-idUSKBNIZ81JQ, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[2] Jon Stone, "Boris Johnson Defends 'Rolling out the Red Carpet' for Right-Wing Hungarian Autocrat Viktor Orbán", The Independent, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-viktor-orban-b1855137.html, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[3] "Hungarian Foreign Minister Criticises the EU in London", Daily News Hungary, https://dailynewshungary.com/hungarian-foreign-minister-criticises-the-eu-in-london/, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Cemal Ege Özkan, "AB'nin Ukrayna'ya Yönelik Yardım Paketi ve Macaristan'ın Tutumu", ANKASAM, https://www.ankasam.org/ab-nin-ukraynaya-yonelik-yardım-paketi-ve-macaristanin-tutumu/, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[6] "FM: Brussels Decisions Hindering EU-UK Cooperation", About Hungary, https://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/fm-brussels-decisions-hindering-eu-uk-cooperation, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

## Tension in Trans-Atlantic Relations:

### **US Inflation Reduction Act**

The Ukraine war triggered an energy crisis in Europe and had an impact on the global economy. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has surely rekindled relationships between the United States of America (USA) and Europe, as well as reinforced the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As it is known, the USA is the number one trading partner of the European Union (EU). However, certain US initiatives have made Europe uneasy. The US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), which has been on the agenda for weeks, has alarmed European leaders. In this context, French President Emmanuel Macron paid a visit to the USA on 29 November 2022.

With its \$369 billion package, the IRA drew the criticism of Europe. This law aims to strengthen domestic production in clean energy technologies and increase employment in the industry. Europe believes that such a package would harm its industries. The bill's tax incentives for renewable energy pose a significant risk to European leaders, who are concerned about their economic sector relocating their operations to the United States. Europe is currently grappling with inflation. In addition, the continent is geographically close to the conflict. As a result, there is also the risk of a European recession. In short, Europe regards the IRA as a hostile attempt to exploit Europe's vulnerability.



Özlem Deniz KAHRAMAN

the IRA

As mentioned above, the USA is the EU's number one trading partmary gas supplier

Europe. So, the USA began to export liquefied natural gas (LNG) to which is dealing with inflation and rising energy prices. the EU to fill the gap created by Russia. However, Bruno Le Maire, tensions between the EU and the USA.

Since the introduction of the IRA, France has advocated for European allies to embrace counter-subsidy packages, such as the [1] "Biden Enters A New Type of Tango with Paris", Politico, "Buy European Act." Indeed, the EU nations most affected by the https://www.politico.com/news/2022/12/01/biden-macron-alli-IRA's electric vehicle subsidies are France and Germany, which are ance-ukraine-00071539, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022). home to the automobile industry's behemoths.

This issue has been brought up in the EU-US Trade and Technol- Tech Summit", Euro News, https://www.euronews.com/my-euogy Council as well (TTC). This format was established last year rope/2022/12/05/trade-war-over-green-subsidies-looms-largeto enhance relations between the US and the EU.[2] The IRA in-over-eu-us-tech-summit, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022). cludes provisions for electric vehicle tax credits, which will apply if the product is assembled in the US and the bulk of parts are [3] Ibid. acquired domestically or from a free trade partner.[3] Mexico and Canada, which have free trade agreements with the US, can ben- [4] "Trade War Averted? Macron Gets Biden to 'Tweak' His Industrial be implemented for them as well. As a matter of fact, during his cron-joe-biden-us-france-lands-unexpected-concession-on-invisit to Washington, Macron did hear encouraging remarks from flation-reduction-act/, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022). President Joe Biden. Because Biden stated that the IRA could be tweaked and that its goal wasn't to "exclude Europe." [4]

barely passed through Congress. Aware of the issue, Europe- (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022). an Commission President Ursula von der Leyen advocated for a modification of EU state aid regulations as well as the establish- [6] "Germany Rebuffs EU Joint Borrowing to Match US", Euractiv, technologies.[5] Following that, German Finance Minister Christian joint-borrowing-to-match-us/, (Date of Accession: 07.10.2022). Lindner stated that if von der Leyen's suggestion entailed restructuring current instruments, Berlin was willing to discuss it.[6] Howev- [7] Ibid. er, Lindner expressed his opposition to establishing an instrument based on joint European debt with these words: [7]

Furthermore, similar critiques were levelled beyond the context of "A revamp of the EU's subsidy rules could thus skew the single market, as countries with more fiscal firepower and lower debt ratios can outperform their European peers by spending more money."

ner. After Russia invaded Ukraine, this partnership increased be- As can be seen, if a shared debt mechanism is to be developed cause, before the start of the Ukraine War, Russia was the EU's pri- inside the EU, Germany's veto may be invoked. Another option is to file a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO). But this may not yield any results. Furthermore, the procedure might take a As you know, Europe entered an energy crisis following the Ukraine lengthy period, upsetting the US. However, this is not ideal because War. In addition to rising energy prices, inflation has surged across entering a trade war may have a detrimental impact on the EU,

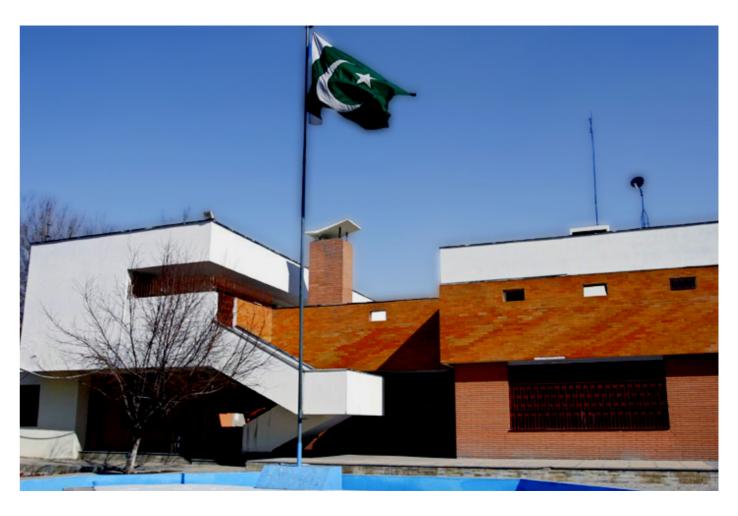
France's Economy Minister, criticized the USA for raising the price In conclusion, with IRA, Washington is seeking to combat inflation of gas exported to Europe, warning against "American economic" while also keeping Europe out of competition. Thus, it could be domination."[1] Later, the IRA was added to the agenda, causing stated that the US is attempting to make the EU, one of its most important market competitors, reliant on itself by taking advantage of the Ukraine War and the IRA.

[2] "Trade War over Green Subsidies Looms Large over EU-US

efit from these subsidies. The EU wants that a similar framework to Subsidies", Politico, https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-ma-

[5] "Von der Leyen Calls for EU to 'Adapt' State-Aid Rules in Answer to US Green Subsidy Scheme", Politico, https://www.politico.eu/ On the other hand, changing the bill is difficult since the bill had article/von-der-leyen-eu-state-aid-us-inflation-reduction-act/,

ment of a sovereign fund to boost local investment in sustainable https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/news/germany-rebuffs-eu-



#### ANKASAM **ANALYSIS**

# What ISIS' Attack on Pakistan's Embassy in Kabul Means?

On December 2, 2022, there was an attack targeting the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul in which a guard police officer was injured. The terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, DAESH) claimed responsibility for the attack[1] At this point, it should be reminded that the terrorist organization DAESH also attacked the Russian Embassy in Kabul on September 6, 2022.[2] Because attacks open up the question of what DEASH is trying to do by targeting dip-Iomatic missions.

It is known that DAESH operates in Afghanistan under the name of the so-called Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP). It can be said that the organization mainly targets the Taliban ad-



Dr. Doğacan **BAŞARAN** ANKASAM AF-PAK Expert

ministration and the Afghan Shiites, especially the Hazaras. This indicates that ISKP has two main objectives. The first is the overthrow of the Taliban. The second is that Afghanistan is dragged into a Shiite-Sunni-based sectarian war, and this sectarian war gradually turns into a proxy war and then a regional war. In other words, the ISKP serves a process that will destabilize not only Afghanistan but also the Central Asia-South Asia line, including Russia and China. Because ISKP's attacks in Afghanistan aim to mobilize ethnic and sectarian dynamics.

Aware of DAESH's regional chaos plan, the Taliban carries out counter-terrorism operations within the framework of its commitments in the Doha Agreement signed on February 29, 2020, and clashes are taking place between the Taliban and DAESH in various regions. In order to prevent radicalization in Afghanistan, the regional states are developing de facto relations with the Taliban instead of isolating the country and trying to draw Afghanistan to ground of international cooperation.

In such an environment, it can be said that the terrorist organization DEASH targets actors who want to include Afghanistan in various projects and make concrete efforts to establish regional cooperation, stability, development, security and peace. ISKP's purpose here is to make the aforementioned states feel that Afghanistan is an unsafe country. The attacks send the message that terrorist organizations continue to operate in this country.

At the same time, message includes an effort to show that Taliban has not or cannot fulfill their commitments in the Doha Agreement. Because in this agreement, Taliban declared that they would not allow the targeting of third states by using Afghan territory.[3] However, according to international law, embassies are considered the territory of the respective states. In this sense, the ISKP theoretically targets foreign states through the territory of Afghanistan.

Moreover, it is remembered that DAESH launched missile attacks on Tajikistan for the same purpose and these attacks were confirmed by the Dushanbe administration.[4] Similarly, in October 2022, a terrorist attack took place in the Iranian city of Shiraz, in which 15 people lost their lives, and it was announced that this attack was carried out by the elements of DAESH in Afghanistan, namely ISKP.[5]

Finally, DAESH targeted Pakistan's Embassy in Kabul. Considering that the Islamabad administration has historically had positive relations with the Taliban, it can be stated that ISKP is trying to show that it tends to destabilize all actors that have good relations with the Taliban through Pakistan. Indeed, the fact that such an attack took place right after the visit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan to Kabul[6] indicates a situation that cannot be considered as a coincidence. To summarize briefly, the ISKP sends a message to actors that have good relations with the Taliban that they are not safe, and thus tries to ensure that these states distance themselves from the Taliban.

However, the failure of the Taliban to overcome the recognition problem causes disruption in investments and aid, and accordingly, poverty in country increases, and such an environment opens up space for the activities of radical organizations such as DAESH. Because of this risk, the targeting of the regional states, which try to develop a collective attitude and advocate the solution of the

Afghan Problem with a perspective that focuses on dialogue, by the DEASH terrorist organization aims to create the perception that the Taliban cannot ensure the security of Afghanistan.

As a result, Afghanistan is witnessing the activities of the terrorist organization DEASH and these attacks mainly target the Taliban with aim of overthrowing the Taliban administration and the Hazaras in order to mobilize sectarian fault lines. Recently, however, DAESH has been committing terrorist acts in diplomatic missions of foreign states and even directly on their territory, as seen in the cases of Tajikistan and Iran. It can be argued that DAESH's aim is to send a message to the actors who have established relations with the Taliban that there is a price for this orientation. Most importantly, DEASH is trying to increase the pressure of the international community on the Taliban through actions that can be interpreted as violating the Doha Agreement. Perhaps this is the role assigned to the terrorist organization ISKP by global actors who want to destabilize Afghanistan in particular and the region in general.

[1] "تفرگ شودب از لباک رد ناتسکاپ ترافس رب هلمح تکلوئسم شعاد هورگ", AFINTL, https://da.azadiradio.com/a/32160848.html, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[2] "Afganistan'daki Rusya Büyükelçiliğine Yönelik Saldırıyı DEAŞ Üstlendi", CNN Türk, https://www.cnnturk.com/dunya/afganistandaki-rusya-buyukelciligine-yonelik-saldıriyi-deas-ustlendi, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[3] "Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Which is not Recognized by the United States as a State and is Known as the Taliban and the United States of America", State, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Agreement-For-Bringing-Peace-to-Afghanistan-02.29.20.pdf, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[4] Nurbek Bekmurzaev, "Islamic State in Khorasan Province's Rocket Attack in Tajikistan", The Jamestown Foundation, https://jamestown.org/program/islamic-state-in-khorasan-provinces-rocket-attack-in-tajikistan/, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[5] "İran: Terör Örgütü DEAŞ'ın Üstlendiği Şiraz'daki Saldırıyla İlgili 26 Kişi Tutuklandı", TRT Haber, https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/iran-teror-orgutu-dea-sin-ustlendigi-sirazdaki-saldırıyla-ilgili-26-kisi-tutuklandi-721942.html, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[6] "دناوخ دىفم ەقطنم مدرم كارب ار ناتسكاپ و ناتسناغفا طباور ،ەجراخ روما ترازو تسربرس", Bakhtarnews, https://l24.im/ST0, (Date of Accession: 30.11.2022).



## The Importance of Mongolia in the **North Korea Issue**

The political situation that emerged during the Korean North Korea has often been separated from the War has caused the Korean Peninsula to be a troubled countries of the world and has not made reliable region for more than seventy years. North Korea is a friends, but it did not suffer from its deficiency. Chivery problematic actor in the region for both the United and recently Russia set an example for these States (US) and the Washington administration's allies. countries and their closeness with North Korea is The fact that Pyongyang is so disturbing for the US and increasing. North Korea's increasing closeness with its allies is due to both its military activities and nucle- China creates a negative impression on the US and ar tests. In addition, incidents such as illegitimate moves its allies; on the other hand, China's importance is against the financial assets of other countries and the increasing to the point of reining in North Korea. abduction of citizens of other countries by intelligence agencies increase the tension between North Korea and Sure, among Western countries, some countries Western states.



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think that the increasing importance of China and all kinds of loyalty to China may cause problems for

them in the future, as in the case of Russia. Finland is an example of this. On this issue, on November 2, 2022, Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin suggested that being dependent on China, like Russia, would have negative consequences.[1] Moreover, during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Bucharest, Romania, on November 29-30, 2022, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said:[2]

"We've seen what dependence on Russia means to all of us in the West. I just hope we've learned our lesson and not repeat the same mistakes a second time with China."

In addition, a news report by the BBC on November 30, 2022, pointed out that British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's relations on the London-Beijing line have come to an end. In this context, while the West is trying to intimidate North Korea militarily; on the other hand, it is seen that it does not want to be reined in by China. However, the possible dangers posed by China in the eyes of the West make it difficult for the West to get help from China regarding North Korea. It is also seen that there is a fear of dependence like in Russia. Moreover, the actions of the Beijing administration led to this. For example, on November 30, 2022, two Chinese and six Russian warplanes entered South Korea's air defence area.[3]

Mongolia, like China, has good relations with North Korea. To better understand Mongolia's relations with North Korea, it is necessary to look at the history of bilateral relations. Founded on September 9, 1948, the first country to recognize North Korea was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Just after the USSR, Mongolia recognized North Korea in the same year and established diplomatic relations.

Although diplomatic relations sometimes progress in a negative direction, they generally have a positive atmosphere. For example, when North Korea was bombed in 1950; the only ambassador who did not leave the country was the Mongolian Ambassador.[4] In addition, at the end of the 1990s, the Ulaanbaatar administration went on the path of democratization and even though it had different ideological views from Mongolia, Mongolia-North Korea relations were not adversely affected by this situation. Ulaanbaatar administration provided food aid to Pyongyang in 1997 despite the economic difficulties.[5]

In this context, the good relations between Mongolia and North Korea increase the importance of Mongolia in the eyes of the West. The calls made by Western countries to North Korea along with Mongolia in the recent period should also be evaluated in this direction. Meeting on October 28, 2022, Takehiro Funakoshi,

Head of the Asian and Oceanic Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mark Lambert, Deputy Undersecretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Nyamdorj Ankhbayar, State Secretary of the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called on North Korea for talks on its nuclear program and missile system.[6]

In addition, on November 30, 2022, the Prime Minister of Japan Fumiyo Kishida and the President of Mongolia Ukhnaa Khurelsukh met in Tokyo and called on North Korea to abandon its ballistic missile tests and nuclear activities. Moreover, the leaders invited the Pyongyang administration to comply with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Northeast Asia in a statement issued to resolve the problem of Japanese citizens abducted in the 1970s and 1980s.[7]

As can be seen, the West, which faced many difficulties during the Russia-Ukraine War, especially the deepening energy crisis, is worried that similar problems will arise by replacing Russia with China. Mongolia has not escaped the attention of the West due to its good relations with North Korea.

As a result, contrary to the positive signals given at the G20 Leaders' Summit held in Bali, Indonesia, and the ASEAN Plus Defence Ministers Meeting, the tension between China and the West continues. Both the political fault lines like Taiwan and the lessons learned from the Russia-Ukraine War, as mentioned before, push Western countries to act cautiously towards China. Also, while the West, willing to work with China on North Korea, considers Beijing's ongoing alliance with Moscow; it will also consider Chinese warplanes entering South Korea's air defence area. Moreover, while China is waiting for concrete steps from the US and the West on Taiwan; The Taiwan visits of deputies from Australia[8] and the UK[9] are also an element of distrust for China. Therefore, there is an ongoing distrust in West-China relations. On the other hand, Mongolia can act as a mediator in the North Korean issue since it is not a threat to the West like China and has close relations with North Korea.

[1] Andrew Tillett, "Finnish Prime Minister Warns About Naive Reliance on Russia, China", Financial Review, www.afr.com/politics/federal/finnish-prime-minister-warns-about-naive-reliance-on-russia-china-20221202-p5c32u, (Date of Accession:

[2] Natalia Drozdiak et al., "NATO Allies Warn on China with Eye on Beijing's Ties to Putin", Bloomberg, www.bloomberg.com/news/ articles/2022-11-30/nato-allies-warn-on-china-with-eye-onbeijing-s-ties-to-putin, (Date of Accession: 30.11.2022).



# Supreme Eurasian Economic Council Summit: A New Page in Integration

On December 9, 2022, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) met in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Kyrgyzstan Sadir Caparov and Chairman of the Board of Eurasian Economic Commission Mihail Myasnikovic attended the summit

At the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, integration issues in the Eurasian region were discussed and the activities of the EEU in 2022 were summarized. Also at this meeting, the leaders of the EEU decided to finance industrial cooperation. Myasnikovic described the decision in question as "a new page in Eurasian integration."[1] According to Myasnikovic, more than 150 projects have been identified in twenty-five high-tech sectors.

EEU Heads of State signed a protocol amending the procedure for collecting VAT in electronic service provision. This agreement contributes to the development of a competitive environment and further economic integration in the field. It also clarifies the business world in the taxation of VAT related to services provided



Aidana BAKTYBEK KYZY

in the electronic environment within the EEU.

During the summit, the leaders discussed the funding sources and mechanisms of industrial cooperation projects in the EEU. In this context, Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov made the following statement emphasizing the importance of the EEU for member states:[2]

"Every state naturally looks after its interests. The Eurasian integration platform also allows member states to satisfy these interests."

In addition, the negotiation process was initiated for the signing of a free trade agreement between the EEA and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The creation of a free trade zone with the UAE foresees the creation of conditions for the supply of more than 1,300 commodity products in industry and agriculture.

The importance of this multifaceted interaction is closely related to the high interest of many companies from the EEA in the UAE and its role as the international trade, transport, and logistics hub of this country. In addition, the agreement with the UAE is noteworthy in that it strengthens the position of EEU exporters in the countries of the Persian Gulf in the context of the Greater Eurasian Partnership and the North-South Corridor.

In addition, EEU countries; The Shangai Cooperation Organization (SCO) also aims to develop cooperation with other regional unions such as BRICS and ASEAN. Belarusian President Lukashenko, in his speech at the AEB Summit, stated that they respect these organizations and made the following sentences:[3]

"We are systematically expanding our business cooperation with our partners at a time when they are trying to divide and isolate us. Negotiations on free trade zones with Iran and Egypt have reached the final stage. We are about to start negotiations with Indonesia and Mongolia. The signing of such agreements, along with the economic benefits, demonstrates the futility of attempts by the collective West to suffocate us with sanctions."

According to the President of Kazakhstan, Tokayev, who defines his foreign policy priorities as cooperation with Moscow, Beijing, and Central Asian capitals, should focus on issues like the EEU countries have priorities such as minimizing the impact of global inflation, strengthening international relations, ensuring the free passage of goods in the internal market of the union, and fully implementing the Eurasian integration strategy. In addition, Tokayev who is stated that Kazakhstan is very interested in deepening the integration within the EEU and intends to make every effort

for this saying:[4]

"There is no slowdown in the integration processes of Kazakhstan. On the contrary, Kazakhstan makes every effort to improve and optimize the economic integration process, in line with the interests of all member states of the union, by the EEU Treaty, and of course, considering the national interests of our country.

In addition, after the meeting of the heads of state of the five countries, it was decided to establish a council consisting of the heads of the authorized bodies of the EEU countries in the energy sector. According to Russian President Putin, the Moscow administration supports the long-term supply of basic energy resources to national economies and the creation of a coordination structure that will deal with issues related to the establishment of the union's common energy market. Reminding that Russia will preside over the EEU for the second time in 2023, Putin stated that Moscow would be interested in updating the strategic development guidelines during its term presidency.[5]

As a result, the issue of economic integration for the landlocked Central Asian states is important in terms of increasing their role in international trade. Steps such as improving the investment cooperation of the member states, creating favorable conditions for mutual investment, simplifying administrative procedures, and securing the rights of investors are expected from the EEU, the successor of the Customs Union and the international economic integration association. Central Asian states, as members of the economic bloc, also aim to increase their competitive advantage with third countries in the world market. Particularly, Central Asian states, which seek multilateral cooperation in an equal way and the interests of all parties, suggest that the union expand its foreign trade area every year and focus on third parties and partners with which preferential agreements are signed. Russia, on the other hand, seeks long-term cooperation.

[1] ""Новая страница в евразийской интеграции". Лидеры EAЭC определились с промышленной кооперацией", Belta, https://www.belta.by/economics/view/novaja-stranitsa-v-evrazijskoj-integratsii-lidery-eaes-opredelilis-s-promyshlennoj-kooperatsiej-539247-2022, (Date of Accession:

[2] "Эффективность ЕАЭС, торговля и промышленная кооперация. О чём говорили на заседании Евразийского экономического совета?", CTV, https://ctv.by/effektivnost-eaes-torgovlya-i-promysh-lennaya-kooperaciya-o-chyom-govorili-na-zasedanii-evraziyskogo, (Date of Accession: 10.12.2022).

[3] "Лукашенко призвал организовать совместный саммит EAЭC, ШОС и БРИКС", Evraziya Expert, https://eurasia.expert/lukashenko-prizval-organizovat-sovmestnyy-sammit-eaes-shos-i-briks/, (Date of Accession: 10.12.2022)

[4] "Токаев заявил, что о приостановке интеграции с EAЭC Казахстаном «не может быть и речи»", Evraziya Expert, https://eurasia.expert/tokaev-zayavil-chto-o-priostanovke-integratsii-s-eaes-kazakhstanom-ne-mozhet-bvt-i-rechi-/. (Date of Accession: 10.12.2022).

[5] "Путин подвел итоги 2022 года для EAЭС", Vedomosti, https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2022/12/09/954627-putin-podvel-itogi, (Date of Accession: 10.12.2022).

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## The Implications of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Albania

Tirana, the capital of Albania, hosted the European Union (EU)-Western Balkans Summit on 6 December 2022. The summit, where the leaders of the EU and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia came together, is of particular importance in that it is the first to take place outside the borders of the EU and therefore it is the first summit held in the region. It is known that

such meetings are held in Brussels. The summit therefore provided an important basis for reaffirming the key importance of the strategic partnership between the EU and the Western Balkans, a region with an EU perspective.

The meeting held in Albania was a "morale meeting" for the Western Balkan countries aiming for EU membership. As a matter of fact, the



**Sibel MAZREK**ANKASAM
Media Coordinator

countries of the region feel disappointment towards Brussels due to the slow EU integration process. So that; Western Balkan countries, which have been stuck in the EU waiting room for years, have started to express their disappointment with the long and painstaking integration process, especially after Brussels quickly granted Ukraine and Moldova "candidate status". For this reason, it is observed that the EU has started to give more weight to the Western Balkan countries by accelerating the enlargement policy of the EU during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. The EU has rolled up its sleeves at the point of solving the conflicting issues between the countries of the region, especially the energy crisis. There is no doubt that the allegations that Russia aims to open a new front in the Balkans have an important role. The war in Ukraine has acted as a catalyst for the EU to take action to stabilize the Western Balkan countries and counter the influence of China in the region, as well as Russia, which has invested heavily in the countries' infrastructure.

At the summit held at the Congress Palace in Tirana, the leaders first attended the signing ceremony of the "Roaming Agreement". In this context, the leaders of the EU and the Western Balkan states signed the agreement that paved the way for the start of the process for the abolition of the roaming fee between the countries. The agreement in question gives a positive impetus to the development of relations between the countries of the region and their cooperation with the EU.

The most important agenda topic of the summit was the EU integration process of the countries in the region and the membership processes of the countries were discussed one by one. So that; At the meeting, the progress of the membership process of Albania and North Macedonia, which started negotiations in July 2022, was discussed. Currently, Albania's EU membership process is being evaluated according to the reforms to be made, especially in the fight against corruption. The solution of the identity problem of North Macedonia with Bulgaria is very important in terms of accelerating the EU membership process.

On the other hand, at the summit, Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU "candidate country" status was another hot topic. There is a strong expectation that Bosnia and Herzegovina will gain "candidate country status" at the EU Leaders' Summit to be held on 15-16 December 2022. As a matter of fact, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, reiterated their support for Bosnia and Herzegovina to receive "candidate status" at the summit to be held on the date.[1]

At the meeting, where security issues were especially discussed, the recently rising tensions between Kosovo and Serbia were also discussed. In this context, it was reported at the summit that the EU has prepared a new draft to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia with a clear roadmap.[2]

In addition, the issue of visa exemption for Kosovo was one of the agenda topics of the meeting. In this context, Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani stated that the EU should take "from word to action" for visa liberalization for Kosovo citizens and said, "As you know, today I will announce in front of all EU leaders that Kosovo will apply for EU membership by the end of the year, and of course we expect the full support of EU members." has stated.[3]

On the other hand, consultations on the harmonization of Serbia's foreign policy with the EU also occupied an important place at the meeting. This summit played a critical role in strengthening the solidarity of the Belgrade administration with the EU, which was especially criticized by Brussels for not imposing sanctions on Moscow. As a matter of fact, although Serbia insistently states that it will not impose sanctions on Russia, the EU is making an intense effort to make this happen. In fact, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who hosted the summit, pointed out that Serbia was subjected to intense criticism for not imposing sanctions against Russia and said, "We must realize the danger. We should not contribute in any way to the withdrawal of Serbia from the EU. On the contrary, we must ensure that there is more engagement." has declared.[4] However, despite all the pressures in the current process, it can be said that Serbia is not expected to give up its determination in its foreign policy.

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In addition to these, the energy crisis was one of the critical issues discussed at the summit. So that; Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama announced that they have received 85 million Euros of energy support from the EU. "This region will be involved in this journey to build more energy sources and to distance itself more and more from Russian influence. I want to believe that the time has come to convey the message that the EU is here for us to all people in the region, especially the Albanian people." he said. This solidarity of the EU with the Western Balkan countries on the energy crisis is very effective in restoring the lost confidence of the regional states. In the Tirana Declaration adopted after the summit, the following topics were emphasized:

Reaffirms the EU's unequivocal support for the EU perspective on the Western Balkans
Intensifying cooperation in the face of common problems arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine
Ensuring a common solidarity in which the EU will help strengthen the region's economy and resilience
Overcoming the challenges posed by the fight against migration, terrorism, and organized crime

As a result, the historic summit in Albania is very critical in that it takes place at a time when the loss of confidence regarding the EU in the region is beginning to occur. Therefore, the summit is important for the revitalization of EU-Western Balkans relations. Because, it can be said that the EU will start to deal more with the problems in the region in line with its strategic goals and aim to counter the influence of Russia and China in the region. For this reason, it can be expected that the EU will increase financial aid, especially energy, and expand its cooperation to the Western Balkan countries in the future. In addition, it is thought that the EU will accelerate the negotiation process to give "morale" to the countries of the region, or in other words, to eliminate the loss of confidence. So that; It can be argued that the EU will be more involved in the resolution of the conflicting problems between the countries of the region.

[1] "EU and the Western Balkans Look to Strengthen Ties", RFI, https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20221206-eu-and-the-western-balkans-look-to-strengthen-ties, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[2] "AB, Kosova ve Sırbistan İlişkilerini Normalleştirmek İçin Yeni Bir Taslak ve Yol Haritası Hazırladı", Euronews, https://tr.euronews. com/2022/12/06/ab-kosova-ve-sirbistan-iliskilerini-normallestirmek-icin-yeni-bir-taslak-ve-yol-haritasi-h?utm\_medium=Social&utm\_source=Twitter#Echobox=1670389177, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[3] "Kosova, Yıl Sonuna Kadar AB'ye Üyelik Başvurusunda Bulunacak", Balkan News, https://www.balkannews.com.tr/kosova/kosova-yil-sonuna-kadar-ab-ye-uyelik-basvurusunda-bulunacak-h5173.html, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[4] "Rama: "Sırbistan'ın AB'den Uzaklaşmasına Hiçbir Şekilde Katkıda Bulunmamalıyız", Balkan News, https://www.balkannews.com.tr/bal-kanlar/rama-sirbistan-in-ab-den-uzaklasmasına-hicbir-h5186.html, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).



ANKASAM **ANALYSIS** 

# Azerbaijan's Increasing Strategic Importance in the Rapprochement of Central Asia and Europe

During the early stages of the Russia-Ukraine war, European governments severed ties with Moscow by adhering to sanctions decisions made within the framework of the European Union (EU). As a result of the increasing tension between the parties, Europe has turned to alternative sources of energy supply and security. One of the most remarkable developments in this process is the increasing energy-based cooperation between Europe and Central Asia.

The routes that Europe can use to reach Central Asia are quite limited. In particular, the Mid-

alle Corridor offers the shortest and least costly route to Europe at this point. Because, over the past thirty years, agreements and studies have resulted in a ready infrastructure along the route. For European states developing strategies for Central Asia, one of the most critical countries on the route is Azerbaijan. Because Azerbaijan is of vital importance both in terms of energy resources and geopolitical location.

In this context, Azerbaijani oil is primarily sent to Europe via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline. Furthermore, Azerbaijan and the EU



**Dr. Emrah KAYA**ANKASAM
Central Asia Expert

reached certain agreements in 2011 regarding the Southern Gas Corridor. In this context, Azerbaijani natural gas is planned to be transported to Europe through the Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP).[1]

On the other hand, Azerbaijan, as a country located in the west of the Caspian, has important relations with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in the east of the Caspian. First of all, a significant amount of transit transportation activities are carried out through ports such as Alat (Azerbaijan), Aktau and Kurik (Kazakhstan) and Turkmenbashi (Turkmenistan). In addition, the parties are increasing the capacity of these ports within the scope of their developing cooperation and increasing economic relations.

Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have important underground resources. For example, Turkmenistan is the fourth richest country in the world in terms of gas reserves. It is known that Kazakhstan has important oil resources. A significant part of Turkmenistan's natural gas and Kazakhstan's oil resources are in the Caspian basin. So, the cost of transferring Central Asian underground resources to Europe is reduced. It may be claimed that the energy resources of Central Asia, which can be provided at low cost, have grown in importance for Europe at a time when global market instability is rising.

At this point, Azerbaijan's geopolitical, geostrategic, and geoeconomic importance is growing for Europe to have access to these resources. There is also a dramatic shift in European states' attitudes toward the Caucasus, as they turn to Azerbaijan within the framework of their interests.

For many years, Europe followed a pro-Armenian policy in the Caucasus. In particular, in Europe, it is difficult to say that there is a significant voice against the occupation of Karabakh by Armenia in violation of international law. Countries such as France have adopted an attitude that allows the deepening of conflicts and crises in the region. Because the Karabakh conflict, which the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group had failed to resolve or refused to resolve for over 30 years, had turned into a frozen conflict. France, on the other side, backed the deadlock as a member of the Minsk Group.

The transformation in world politics and the dynamics in Eurasia has led countries to change their policies. In particular, the new balances have shown that all conflict zones have become unsustainable for states. Due to the Russia-Ukraine War, Europe's eastern connection with Asia was severed. The conflict in question has shifted Europe's priorities.

In the period before the Russia-Ukraine War, the Second Karabakh War, which began due to Armenia's aggressive attitude and was concluded in compliance with international law by Azerbaijan, shifted the balance in the Caucasus from a European perspective. Azerbaijan used military force due to Armenia's refusal to agree for 30 years and provided the necessary environment for the establishment of peace, stability and cooperation in the Caucasus. Europe, which did not oppose the violation of international law in the Caucasus for a while, entered the process of rapprochement with Baku after the victory of Azerbaijan. During the war in the east, stability on the line stretching from the Balkans to the Caucasus gained critical importance for Europe. At this point, Europe started to follow a policy of opening up to Asia from the southeast, that is, through the Balkans.

While there is a significant change towards Azerbaijan in the whole of Europe and the EU, France continues to make decisions that will harm international politics and the Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization process. The tension in the relations between the two countries is increasing day by day.[2] On the other hand, the Paris administration has significant investments in Central Asia. France has a 17 billion dollar investment in Kazakhstan alone, and several companies operate in the region. France's peace-destroying tactics in the Caucasus, as well as moves that jeopardize the normalization process, would undermine both its interests and those of Europe.

In conclusion, the normalization process that started with the victory of Azerbaijan in the Caucasus has created a suitable ground for Europe to develop a policy towards the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Caspian, and Central Asia. In addition, with the Russia–Ukraine War, the disconnection of Europe from the east with Asia led the USA to the Caucasus. In this process, especially Azerbaijan has increased its importance in the eyes of the EU thanks to its presence in the Caucasus, its energy resources and the connection it has established with Central Asia via the Caspian Sea. For this reason, there are changes in the EU's policy towards Azerbaijan and Baku is becoming an epicenter for the EU's opening to Central Asia.

[1] "TANAP", TANAP, https://www.tanap.com/tanap-projesi, (Date of Accession: 08.12.2022).

[2] Ismi Aghayev, "French Parliament Calls for Government to Consider Sanctions Against Azerbaijan", OC Media, https://oc-media.org/french-parliament-calls-for-government-to-consider-sanctions-against-azerbaijan/, (Date of Accession: 08.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# A New Actor in Space Competition: South Korea

Today, most of the tools and equipment in people's lives gain functionality thanks to space-based applications. Navigation systems, weather reports, banking activities, communications, data services and most conceivable applications depend on orbiting satellites. In addition to their functions in daily life, states collect intelligence, determine coordinates, obtain information about the defence capabilities of their opponents, and strengthen their hands with similar studies thanks to satellites.

Everett Dolman, who has academic studies on space, argues that the one who rules the orbits and regions in space can rule the world, the calculations based on gravity wells can benefit the state economically, and dominating the critical points can achieve dominance in

world trade. Space studies occupy an important place in human life and in the strategies of governments and the advantages they provide cause states to want to be more active in space.[1]

The space orientation accelerated because of the competition between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). These two states, who wanted to show their superiority against each other during the Cold War, turned their eyes to space. As a result of the competition between the USA and the USSR, space has gained accessibility with the developing technology. With the advancing technology and information age, space studies did not remain only in space; it has become related to the economic,



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commercial, military, and social areas in the world. For this reason, many states began to be interested in space studies, which started with the USA and the USSR and took action to prepare space policies. One of these states is South Korea.

Unlike the space programs of the USA and the USSR that started in the late 1950s; South Korea's interest in space technology began thirty years later. South Korea, which observed the economic growth of the states carrying out space studies in the 1980s, has the motivation to develop an economy based on science, technology, and innovation.[2]

After years of technological underdevelopment, the Seoul administration took its first step towards space studies by establishing the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI) in 1989. Those who want to make progress in the field of space; however, Seoul, which does not have the necessary technological competence, has cooperated with other states, especially the United Kingdom (UK) and the USA[3]

In the 1990s, KARI began experiments in sounding-rocket technology and satellite technology.[4] In 1992, the country launched its first satellite, KISAT-1, and the satellite successfully reached orbit. This success was followed a year later by the launch of the first sounding rocket, the KSR-1. After these firsts, South Korea decided to expand its work in the field of satellites by developing the KOMPSAT program. In particular, the success of the first multi-purpose satellite, KOMPSAT-1, launched in 1999, has opened a new era of space-based remote sensing by fulfilling national and commercial demands for spatial data infrastructure.[5]

Alongside its space applications, South Korea has enacted some laws to put the space industry on a better footing. The Aerospace Industry Development Promotion Act of 1987, the Space Development Promotion Act of 2005 and the Space Damage Compensation Act of 2007 were enacted. These laws cover important space-related issues such as the use of satellite information, astronaut recovery, launch licensing, registration of space objects, third-party liability insurance, space accident containment and compensation for damage caused by space accidents.[6]

On November 28, 2022, South Korean President Yoon Suk-ye-ol once again revealed the country's priority for space by announcing South Korea's roadmap for space. Yoon Suk-yeol, who dreams of becoming a powerhouse in space, has revealed his will on this subject with his space policies. The goals in the space roadmap are; (1) going to the Moon in 2032, (2) sending a robotic vehicle to Mars in 2045, (3) doubling the government's budget for space in five years, (4) Presidency of the President of the National Space Council, the highest decision-making body on space matters, (5) transfer of space technologies from the public to

the private sector, (6) launching a funding program for space companies, (7) establishing a NASA-like national space agency, Korea Aerospace Administration (KASA), and (8) strengthening space ties with the USA.[7]

As can be seen from South Korea's space roadmap, the country still needs cooperation on technological development. Although space is a hard and costly field, it requires high technology and expertise. For this reason, it is much more advantageous and profitable for a country to carry out space studies in cooperation rather than conducting them alone. Cooperation for South Korea, besides being advantageous, is a factor in the strengthening of soft power diplomacy and the emergence of long-term alliances.[8]

Another point that draws attention in the space roadmap is that South Korea is no longer just in satellite technologies; it wants to show itself in the exploration of space by organizing missions to the Moon and Mars. With this initiative, South Korea is not only within the scope of communication and navigation services from space; reveals that it wants to take advantage of issues such as space mining, space economy and space geopolitics. It is possible to say that South Korea is eager to become an actor in space, considering the importance it attaches to space from the past to the present and its self-development over the years. In addition to space giant states such as the USA, Russia and China, South Korea sets an example for many states of its scale with its work in space.

[1] Neslihan Topcu, "Astropolitik: ABD, Rusya ve Çin'in Uzay Jeopolitiğindeki Yeri", Uluslararası İlişkilerde Güvenlik ve Jeopolitik: Teorik Tartışmalar ve Güncel Gelişmeler, Metin Aksoy, ed., Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2022, p. 337.

[2] Stephanie Wan, "U.S. – South Korean Space Cooperation", Secure World Foundation Report, 2010, p. 2.

[3] James Clay Moltz, "The KSLV I Launch and South Korea's Space Strategy", Council on Foreign Relations, 2012, p. 1.

[4] Ibid

[5] Hyun-Ok Kim et al., "Space-Based Earth Observation Activities in South Korea (Space Agencies)", IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Magazine, 2015, p.34

[6] Doo Hwan Kim, Space Law and Policy in the Republic of Korea, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Vienna, 2012, p.1-2

[7] "South Korean Leader Eyes "Landing on Moon in 2032, Mars in 2045", Space News, https://spacenews.com/134853-2/, (Date of Access: 4.12.2022).

[8] Wan, op.cit., p. 3.



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

## Coup Debates in Germany

Considered one of the leading countries of European democracy and the driving force of the European Union (EU), Germany faced an incident that would not be welcome in any modern democracy on December 7, 2022, and the country witnessed the coup d'etats. Because on the date, 25 people were detained in connection with the terrorist organization that planned to declare Prince Heinrich 13, who was a real estate agent in Frankfurt in 11 different states of the country, as emperor.[1]

On the structuring organized under the name of "Citizens of the Empire (Reichsbürger)", the existence of a segment advocating a break from democracy in Germany has once again come to light, although these attempts were unsuccessful. At this point, it is a detail that

should not be overlooked that one of the directors of the Reichbürger organization is the former deputy of Alternative for Germany (AfD), Birgit Malsack-Winkemann.[2] Because this situation is remarkable in that it reveals that the extreme right, which emulates Germany's imperial period, is preparing to take action.[3] Therefore, the ideological ground of the coup plotters is formed by far-right thoughts.

Moreover, the social response of the structures that want to act with reference to Germany's imperial past through far-right ideas is not to be underestimated. In other words, these intellectually marginalized segments have a social impact that cannot be ignored. As a matter of fact, Germany hosts racist movements such as PEGIDA as well as the AfD. Reichbürger, on the



Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN ANKASAM AF-PAK Expert

other hand, consists of more than 21,000 right-wing extremists, according to the German Intelligence report for 2021, and 2,100 of these people are ready to use violence.[4]

Moreover, the anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic attacks in the country reveal that the far right has a certain social basis. In this sense, the Berlin administration is not only at risk of coup attempt and, in this context, terrorism; It seems that the West will have to face its most current problem, the far right.

Determining that the far-right structures organized through motifs such as the coup attempt, Islamophobia and xenophobia are basically "terror groups"; in other words, if they open the door for the issue to be named, perhaps a difficult threshold for Western democracy can be crossed. Otherwise, the efforts to return to the empire in Germany and the fascist tendencies in the West in general will maintain their existence, increase their influence and even find a wider field of action due to reasons such as the migrant crisis and economic problems.

As a matter of fact, the rise of the right in Germany and the searches for the imperial past in this context are not a new phenomenon. In this sense, the country has witnessed racist acts for many years. Of course, this situation is closely related to the Nazi stain in German political history. Although the German state, which consists of sensible politicians, has sensitive thoughts about democracy by confronting the country's past, there are tendencies among Germans that see themselves above other nations. The reference to the imperial past is mainly due to Germany's rejection of the role assigned to it in international politics and reflects the nostalgia for colonial politics.

To put it more clearly, Germany is one of the key countries in the European pillar of the global hegemony of the United States of America (USA). But the role of Berlin in Continental Europe is limited to the position that the USA has given itself. This limitation, on the other hand, causes the Germans, who have far-right views, to turn to different searches. In other words, certain parts of Germany demand much more in terms of the country's role in the global system.

This demand, on the other hand, may cause Germany and the West in general to be dragged onto a political ground consisting of divided, fragmented, and conflicting actors. Of course, this may trigger instabilities first at the continental level and then at the global level. Therefore, although the coup attempt in Germany is important in terms of revealing structures that

may threaten the regional-global peace, security, and stability environment, it is not only that. It points to a much more advanced situation. This means that if the West does not confront the rising far-right thoughts, or in other words, the ghost of fascism, it may face more radical developments in the future.

There are already examples in many European countries of the rise of the far right, Islamophobic terrorist attacks, racist parties being represented in parliaments and even coming to power. In this sense, although the operation against the Reichbürger organization ensures that this risk is eliminated for Germany at least for a while, it is possible that similar events will occur again if the issue is not moved beyond the collapse of a putschist gang and confronted with far-right ideologies.

Moreover, there is a possibility that far-right groups will suppress the democratic politics of countries, encourage armament policies, and voice modern colonial demands more loudly. Therefore, Reichbürger made the whole world see a serious problem faced by the West in Germany. More importantly, it also opened the rhetoric of Western democracy to debate. Western countries had to face the existence of junta groups and it was seen that the coup option continued to swing like the sword of Damocles on democracies.

As a result, although Germany collapsed a terrorist organization that was preparing to attempt a coup d'etat through the operation against the Reichbürger organization, the developments reminded us of the existence of those who yearn for the country's historical imperial past. This means that the issue is not limited to the Reichbürger. In other words, in Germany and in the West in general, the far right, which rises from anti-immigration, Islamophobia and, most fundamentally, xenophobia, threatens democracies. For this reason, rather than the collapse of the Reichbürger organization; The attitude that the West will adopt in the fight against the extreme right will be decisive for the future of continental democracies.

[1] "13'üncü Heinrich Darbe Yapacaktı", Hürriyet, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/13uncu-heinrich-darbe-yapacakti-42183984, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Ermittler Heben Rechtsextreme Terroroganisation Aus", Spiegel, https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ermittler-heben-rechtsextreme-terroroganisation-aus-a-2233 c457-4caa-4abb-9le0-3660a3dfcf46, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# Air Defense and Energy Cooperation Between Moldova and Ukraine

On December 6, 2022, Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilitsa made an official visit to Kiev. During the visit, Gavrilitsa said, "Moldova will continue to be a friend and partner of Ukraine. Moldova will support Kiev with everything it can."[1] Ukrainian Prime Minister Denis Shmigal, who met with Gavrilitsa, announced that a joint

working group was formed with Moldova to coordinate the European Union (EU) accession process. In his statement on the subject, Shmigal said:[2]

"We are introducing the dialogue format in the Ukraine-Moldova-Romania triangle. To this end,



**Dr. Sabir ASKEROĞLU**ANKASAM
Eurasia Expert

we will hold a meeting with the heads of government of the three countries in 2023. We are establishing a bilateral working group to coordinate the integration of Ukraine and Moldova into the EU. We are ready to provide comprehensive expert support to our Moldovan partners so that Moldova can successfully implement the recommendations of the European Commission."

Also, according to Shmigal, Kyiv and Chisinau agreed to cooperate on air defense, improve border control and continue dialogue on peace and security issues in Moldova's Transnistria region. Other agreements include the preparation of an agreement between Ukraine and Moldova to remove barriers to the movement of people and goods, and to prepare an agreement to build a road bridge across the Dniester at the common border before mid-2023.[3]

As a matter of fact, Moldpress agency noted that the Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed to cooperate on air defense issues, improve border control, and maintain cooperation and dialogue in order to maintain peace and security in the Transnistria region. In addition, the agency announced that Gavrilitsa and Shmigal want to deepen their bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, economy, transport and infrastructure.[4]

On December 5, 2022, Moldovan President Maia Sandu said that the country is facing a "dramatic energy crisis" this winter due to Russia's war against Ukraine.[5] The reason for this was because Russia's Gazprom shut off Moldova's gas supplies. In addition, Moldova's electricity imports from Ukraine are now at risk, following repeated Russian attacks on Ukrainian power plants.

Moldova supplied 30% of its electricity needs through Ukraine and 70% from a thermal power plant in Transnistria, a separatist region in the east of the country. However, it is stated that the Transnistria administration has cut this electrical energy. Therefore, Moldova announced that it would transfer 5.7 million cubic meters of Russian natural gas to Transnistria, and in a sense tried to reach an agreement over natural gas in exchange for electricity.[6] At this point, it can be said that Transnistria puts Moldova's energy security at risk. The fact that this region displays an attitude against the Chisinau administration causes an increase in the views that the Moldovan Government can display a more radical attitude.

In addition, as of December 5, 2022, Romania started to supply natural gas to its neighbor Moldova, which had an energy crisis during the Russian occupation of Ukraine. Romania and Moldova built a pipeline in 2014 to import gas from Bucharest and reduce dependency on supplies from Russia. However, this line was not used for a long time. Moldova connected the pipelines in 2019 to supply natural gas to the capital Chisinau. Compressor stations for natural gas pumping were commissioned in 2021.

The Ukrainian War and the negative impact of this war on the defense security and energy security of Moldova brought Chisinau even closer to Kiev. Problems in the energy sector necessitate the development of new solutions. Since Moldova is a small country, it can be stated that the support Ukraine will provide under these conditions is important for Chisinau. The further development of cooperation on energy security coincides with the concept of Ukraine-Moldova-EU integration.

The same goes for security. With the cooperation made through Romania, a security system is being built between Ukraine-Moldova-Romania (could also be referred to as EU). Moldova is becoming part of the initiative to restructure the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and integrate transport lines into security needs. In other words, Moldova is integrated into the alliance without being a NATO member, just like Ukraine. Cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova in the field of air defense and the

integration of air defense systems will make Moldova one of Ukraine's closest allies in the field of defense. Thus, the influence of Kiev on Moldova will increase even more.

As a result, Moldova is developing collaborations that will further increase its energy security and defense power. Undoubtedly, the security-based relations with Ukraine and Romania will also affect the decisions that Chisinau will take regarding the Transnistria region in the future. Because Moldova, whose dependence on Russia has decreased, will care less about Moscow's sensitivities.

- [1] "Премьер Молдовы прибыла в Киев, посетила Бучу и Ирпень", Evropeyskaya Pravda, https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/12/6/7151962/, (Date of Accession: 9.12.2022).
- [2] "Украина и Молдова договорились сотрудничать в отношении ПВО Шмыгаль", Hromadske, https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/ukraina-i-moldo-va-dogovorilis-sotrudnichat-v-otnoshenii-pvo-shmygal, (Date of Accession: 9.12.2022).
- [3] "Премьеры Украины и Молдавии договорились сотрудничать в сфере ПВО", Gazeta.Ru, https://www.gazeta.ru/army/news/2022/12/07/19208539.shtml, (Date of Accession: 8.12.2022).
- [4] "Премьер Молдовы встретилась с украинским коллегой", Moldpress, https://www.moldpres.md/ru/news/2022/12/06/22009351, (Date of Accession: 8.12.2022).
- [5] "Румыния начала экспорт газа в Молдову, борющуюся с энергетическим кризисом", Hromadske, https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/rumyniya-nachala-ek-sport-gaza-v-moldovu-boryushuyusya-s-energeticheskim-krizisom, (Date of Accession: 9.12.2022).
- [6] "Спыну считает, что Молдавия не должна перекрывать газ Приднестровью, где живут ее граждане", Taas, https://tass.ru/ekonomika/16496343, (Date of Accession: 8.12.2022).



# Is the Albania-Greece Maritime Borders Proble Being Solved?

There has been an ongoing dispute between Greece and Albania over the maritime jurisdiction areas for years. In this regard, although the negotiations between the two countries have been going on for many years, no consensus has been reached until today. As a matter of fact, the issue of maritime jurisdictions, which was neglected during the communist regime in Albania (1944-1991), was raised after the fall of the regime and the process of official negotiations was initiated.

In 2009, the agreement on the "delimitation of the continental shelf and other maritime areas of the relevant areas of the parties in line with international law" was signed between the governments of Albania headed by Sali Berisha and Greece headed by Kostas Karamanlis, in the capital of Albania, Tirana.

The mentioned agreement was objected to by the Socialist Party (PS) which was led by the current Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, who was in the opposition at that time. PS appealed



Sibel MAZREK ANKASAM Media Coordinator

to the Constitutional Court of Albania, arguing that approximately 225 square kilometres of Albanian waters were granted to Greece, and therefore the agreement is unconstitutional. So much so that, following examinations in 2010, the Albanian Constitutional Court pronounced the pact "unconstitutional" and invalidated it. After the negotiations held since 2010 failed to produce any results, Albania decided to move the issue to The Hague in 2021.

Especially with Prime Minister Rama's coming to power in 2013, the negotiation process was blocked, and a tensions were experienced with Greece. Therefore, diplomatic contacts have gained momentum in 2022 in order to resolve this problem, which has caused the formation of a negative atmosphere in bilateral relations. In this context, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Rama, who finally met in Prague, the capital of Czech Republic, on 6 October 2022 within the scope of the European Political Community Summit, held a discussion to resolve the issue. However, there was no positive result from these negotiations and Rama reaffirmed that he would take the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Rama stated that he would defend the rights of his country by using the following words:[1]

"This is a legal process, there are a number of rules, there are a number of procedures, and we will respect the procedures from the beginning to the end because we have to make our position very clear, we have to make it very clear what we intend in this process and that unified attitude required of this court as to what one side intends and what the other side intends, requires its own time. So, we do not have a consensus between the parties."

In 2011, allegations were made in news reports in the United States (USA) that Greece was "blackmailing" Albania into accepting a negative deal by using its veto over EU enlargement. Again, similar claims have been widely discussed in connection with the Chameria Issue, another unresolved problem between Greece and Albania.[2]

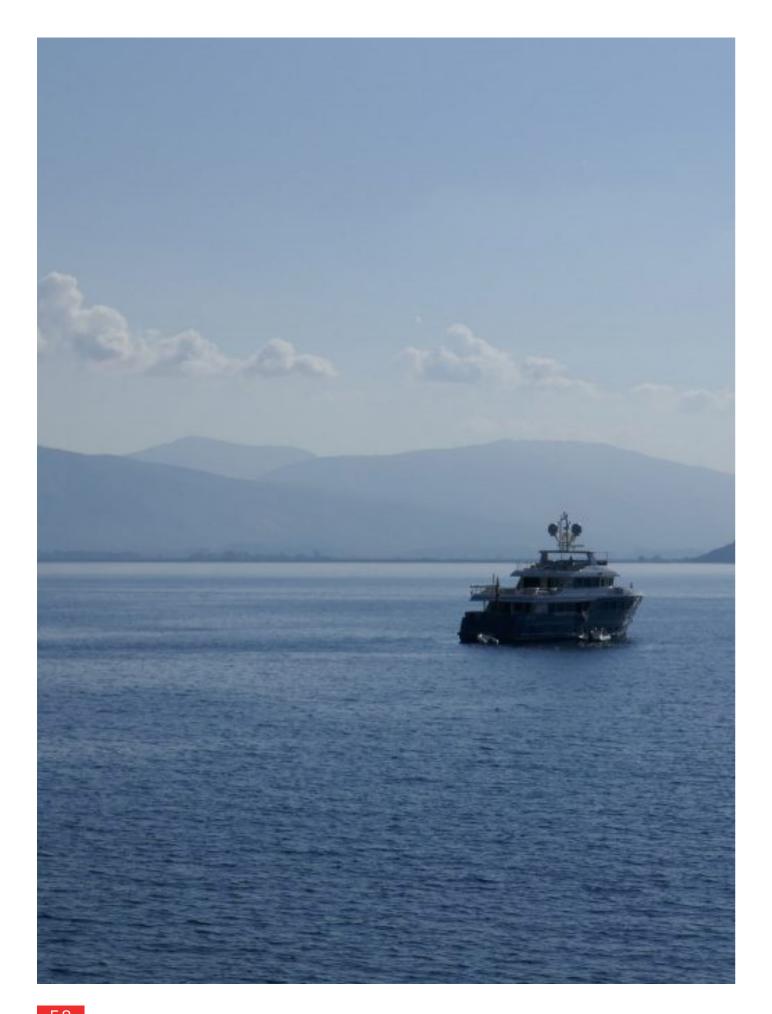
As a matter of fact, although there was no veto decision by the Athens administration on Albania's membership, which started negotiations with the EU in July 2022, it is known that such a situation existed until 2009. Because Greece has vetoed Albania's membership in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU. For this reason, the Tirana Government of the time had to sign the maritime jurisdiction agreement in order to get rid of Greece's veto. However, some initiatives have been taken by Greece in the current process to solve this problem, which has been going on for many years.

In December 2022, when diplomatic contacts increased, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias met with his counterpart Olta Xhacka in Athens. In the said meeting, there was no positive result from the discussions to resolve the issue without going to the Hague. Therefore, one week after the meeting of the two ministers, Mitsotakis went to Albania to consensus on the Exclusive Economic Zone (MEB). Mitsotakis' explanation in the form of "I believe we are close to seeing progress and resolution of the delimitation issue of the maritime zones between us." is considered an important signal for the solution to the problem.[3]

Based on all these developments, it is understood that Greece wants to solve the maritime border problem with Albania without going to the Hague. At a time when there is a possibility of escalation of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, the reason for these initiatives of the Athens administration can also be considered as its aim to conclude strategic agreements in the region. However, there is a possibility that different obstacles may arise again in the process of solving the problem. Because Greece adopts a very strict attitude on the issue of Chameria, which is another problem between the two countries. Therefore, Albania may want to solve this problem by taking advantage of the positive atmosphere in the relations between the two countries. This may lead to the emergence of new obstacles in the solution of the problem of maritime borders. Therefore, it is also possible that the issue will be brought to the Hague.

[1] "Greece, Albania Fail to Agree on Maritime Border Issue in Prague", Euroactiv, https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short\_news/greece-albania-fail-to-agree-on-maritime-border-issue-in-prague/, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022)

[3] "Greek PM Mitsotakis Meets with Albanian PM Rama in Tirana, on Sidelines of Summit", iefimerida, https://www.iefimerida.gr/english/greek-pm-mitsotakis-meets-albanian-pm-rama-tirana-sidelines-summit, (Date of Accession: 09.12.2022).





**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

## "New Great Game" in Central Asia Once More

Referring to the notion of "Great Game" used to characterize the power struggle of the great nations in Central Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century, the power struggle that resumed in the same region after the Cold War was dubbed the "New Great Game" in the literature. The main actors of this game were Russia, China and the United States of America (USA). Western actors tried to fill the power gap left by Russia in the Central Asian countries, which gained their independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia and China, on the other hand, saw limiting Western influence as a common interest.

After the USA invaded Afghanistan in 2001, the influence of the Washington administration in Central Asia increased. The USA, which needed local logistical support to carry out its military operations in Afghanistan, used military bases of countries in the region. Furthermore, the Washington administration sought to access the region's energy resources and reach the European market by bypassing Russia and Iran, indicating that it prioritized its own economic interests. The pro-Western opposition movements that arose in the region during these periods are also worth mentioning.



**Dr. Emre OZAN**ANKASAM Security
and Foreign Policy
Advisor

The growing American presence in Central Asia became the common security concern of Russia and China. As a result, in the New Great Game, Russia and China pursued parallel regional policies. However, after 2013, this harmony began to deteriorate. As a matter of fact, the New Great Game is becoming a competition between Russia and China rather than a competition between Western states and non-Western actors. In this respect, the basic dynamics of the New Great Game are changing.

The first important development after 2013 is that China started to increase its regional influence by announcing the Belt Road Initiative. Beijing's economic interest in Central Asia is increasing. On the one hand, the region's energy resources play an important role for China's increasing energy needs. On the other hand, Central Asia is in a strategic position on China's trade route to Europe. In the economic field, there is a noticeable disparity between Russia and China. Therefore, China becomes the region's economic leader, displacing Russia.

The second important development is the USA's withdrawal from Afghanistan. Although the interests of the USA in Central Asia have not ended, it now has a more limited scope. The need to balance the USA in the new Great Game is diminishing. As common security concerns decrease, disputes between Russia and China come to the fore. Moreover, there is instability and uncertainty in Afghanistan, where the Taliban is in power. This is no longer a concern for the USA, but for Russia and China.

The last significant development is the tense relations between Russia and the West following the Ukraine Crisis in 2014. This crisis, which eventually turned into a war, is important in two aspects. First of all, this crisis causes Russia's foreign policy to shift to relations with the West and negatively affects its influence in Central Asia. In addition, Russia could not find the support it hoped for from China in this crisis. On the contrary, China is increasing its effectiveness in Central Asia by taking advantage of the process. Russia, on the other hand, is turning into a security partner who does not inspire trust in Central Asian countries as a result of its aggressive behavior in Ukraine. Central Asian countries seek an independent foreign policy from Russia. In this pursuit, China emerges as a balancing power, while Western actors provide an additional balancing opportunity.

After 2001, Russia and China's increased collaboration in Central Asia has given way to rivalry. But this increasingly fierce rivalry is not the only possible scenario. The two countries may potentially agree to share regional hegemony. This compromise can only be possible by limiting the regional interests of the two countries. For example, Russia may limit its interests to the security by recognizing China as the region's main economic actor. In return, China can focus its own interests on the economic sphere and stay away from its goal of replacing Russia as the main security provider. In such a compromise, Russia will protect its security interests in Central Asia, which it defines as its immediate environment. China, on the other hand, will expand its influence by focusing on commercial relations and infrastructure investments.

It is difficult to determine which scenario is more likely. An important variable is how Russia and China will interact not just in the context of Central Asia, but also in terms of balances in world politics. Another variable is whether Western countries will play a more decisive role in Central Asia in the future. It is also vital to see how Central Asian countries will establish a course against regional competitiveness and how skilled their diplomacy will be in balancing the great powers. Whatever happens, the New Great Game is now becoming a game between Russia and China, with the USA and other Western actors participating at a lesser level.



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# Schengen Barrier of Bulgaria and Romania

Since its establishment in 1985, the Schengen Area has become one of the symbolic consequences of European integration. So that; Citizens of Schengen countries have the freedom to travel visa-free without the need for border controls. However, of the 27 members of the European Union (EU), Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCA) and Ireland are not included in Schengen. Although not EU members, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein are within Schengen.

Currently, the region covers 26 states, including 22 EU countries, and approximately 420 million

Europeans.[1] However, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia, which joined the EU in 2007, do not yet benefit from the advantages provided by the Schengen Area. Therefore, it is obvious that Sofia and Bucharest, which have been waiting for many years to join the free travel zone, are deeply disappointed. Because the European Parliament (EP) allowed the countries to join the Schengen Area in 2011.[2]

However, there is disagreement as to whether Bulgaria and Romania meet the technical requirements to join Schengen. The European Council has not yet reached a unanimous decision on whether Bulgaria can fully join the



**Sibel MAZREK**ANKASAM
Media Coordinator

Schengen Area. As a matter of fact, in 2011, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium opposed Bulgaria and Romania's accession to the Schengen Area due to concerns about corruption, organized crime and judicial reforms in the two countries.

Despite this, at the beginning of 2022, Germany and France changed their approach to the issue and gave the green light for Bulgaria and Romania's accession to Schengen. Therefore, this change of attitude in the two most important EU countries played a critical role in accelerating the process and in changing the attitudes of other countries that did not favour membership. That's why, Finland and Sweden are reported to have softened their stances.[3]

Currently, the Netherlands is particularly opposed to Bulgaria's accession to Schengen. Right after the decision was taken in the EP on 18 October 2022 to include the two countries in Schengen, the Dutch Parliament voted against the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to Schengen on 20 October 2022. In the resolution adopted by the Dutch Parliament, it is stated that the prevalence of problems such as corruption and organized crime in a Schengen country can cause serious problems in the functioning of the border control of the relevant country and pose a risk to the security of the Netherlands and all Schengen Area countries.[4]

On the other hand, on 16 November 2022, the EU Commission expressed its opinion that Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia should join the Schengen Area. The EU Commission made the following assessment:[5]

"Bulgaria and Romania completed the Schengen evaluation process in 2011. In December 2021, the European Council confirmed that Croatia also fulfils the conditions to join the Schengen Area without internal border controls."

Bulgaria's accession to the Schengen Area will be determined together with Romania and Croatia on 8 December 2022. However, it is seen that the Netherlands did not change its approach at the point of enlargement of the EU. Because on 2 December 2022, Dutch Minister of Immigration Eric Van Der Burg stated that Romania and Croatia are ready to join; but he said that Bulgaria has not yet fulfilled the conditions. In addition, Prime Minister Mark Rutte described the decision to accept Romania as a "big step" and stated that this decision was not political.[6] The statements stated that the Netherlands gave the green light to a change in attitude towards Romania; however, it shows that it is determined to maintain its firm stance against Bulgaria. Therefore, while a positive decision is expected for the

accession of Romania and Croatia to Schengen on 8 December 2022; it is thought that the Netherlands will veto Bulgaria again.

While this attitude of the Netherlands was met with a reaction from Bulgaria; the situation in question seems to affect the relations between the two countries. Because after Rutte's allegations that Bulgaria allowed corruption on its borders, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev said that Bulgaria did not support Europe's solidarity; he reacted to the situation by expressing that he was exposed to exclusion.[7]

As a result, Romania and Croatia seem to be close to obtaining the right to join the Schengen Area on 8 December 2022. However, if there is no unanimity for Bulgaria due to the Dutch veto, Sofia will again be disappointed. This situation increases the possibility of strengthening anti-Europeanism in Bulgaria; it also opens the debate on Bulgaria's EU membership. In addition, this deadlock carries the risk of alienating the EU member country from European values. Therefore, all these developments constitute an important basis for the review of the EU's unanimity principle. However, the postponement of Bulgaria's Schengen membership will also hurt the country's economy.

[1] "AB Üyesi Bulgaristan ve Romanya Neden Schengen Bölgesi'ne Kabul Edilmiyor?", Euronews, https://tr.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/10/24/ab-uyesi-bulgaristan-ve-romanya-neden-schengen-bolgesine-kabul-edilmiyor, (Date of Accession: 05122022)

[2] "Bulgaria and the Schengen Area: Will Bulgaria Join Soon?", Etias Info, https://www.etias.info/bulgaria-schengen-area-member/, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[3] Ibid

[4] "Dutch Parliament Votes Against Bulgaria and Romania Joining Schengen", Euractiv, https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/dutch-parliament-votes-against-bulgaria-and-romania-joining-schengen/, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[5] "Making Schengen Stronger: Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia are Ready to Fully Participate in the Schengen Area", European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\_22\_6945, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).

[6] "Netherlands Firmly Against Bulgaria Entering Schengen, but Romania & Croatia Can Join", NL Times, https://nltimes.nl/2022/12/02/netherlands-firmly-bulgaria-entering-schengen-romania-croatia-can-join, (Date of Accession: 05.12.2022).
[7] "Bulgarian President Radev: Instead of European Solidarity, Bulgaria Gets Cynicism", Novite, https://www.novinite.com/articles/217823/Bulgarian+President+Radev%3A+Instead+of+European+Solidarity%2C+Bulgaria+gets+Cynicism, (Date of Accession: 06.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# What Does the Pentagon's China Report Tell Us?

The United States (US) Department of Defense (Pentagon) published a report on November 29, 2022, in which China's military power and equipment were analyzed. The report has a total of 195 pages; it includes information such as China's military strength, equipment information, and nuclear capacity. At the same time, Beijing's military growth rate was also examined

in every aspect and future projections were included in the report.[1] This report is published annually by the Pentagon and aims to support the decision-making mechanisms of the US.

As will be remembered, after the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022, the security environ-



Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN

ment in the region became fragile and it came to the fore that China might intervene in Taiwan. After the visit, China's many exercises around the island and US President Joe Biden's commitment to protecting Taiwan in case of possible intervention increased. This situation has brought to mind the questions of how sustainable the potential conflict is for the parties and how destructive it will be for the global system. The field capacity of the army is not fully known, especially due to the lack of experience in hot conflicts of the Chinese Army. It is also important that the scope of the report is so broad in a year when the relations between the parties were so tense and unpredictable.

It is seen that China has tried to modernize its army in recent years. In the report, it is stated that Beijing plans to complete this modernization by 2027. This can be interpreted as Beijing will not try to connect the island to fore mainland for at least five years. However, in addition to this, Chinese President Xi Jinping's exceptional taking leave of the third term and his desire to spend this term memorably and notably contrasts with this situation.

Considering all these, it can be argued that Xi may attempt an early intervention before the modernization of the army is fully completed to receive the title of "unifying president." If such a scenario occurs, the modernization process of the Chinese Army may be interrupted.

However, if military capacity and army equipment are not deemed sufficient for such an attack, Xi may choose to accelerate army modernization in line with the same goal. In such a case, the modernization process of the army may be completed earlier than anticipated in the Pentagon report.

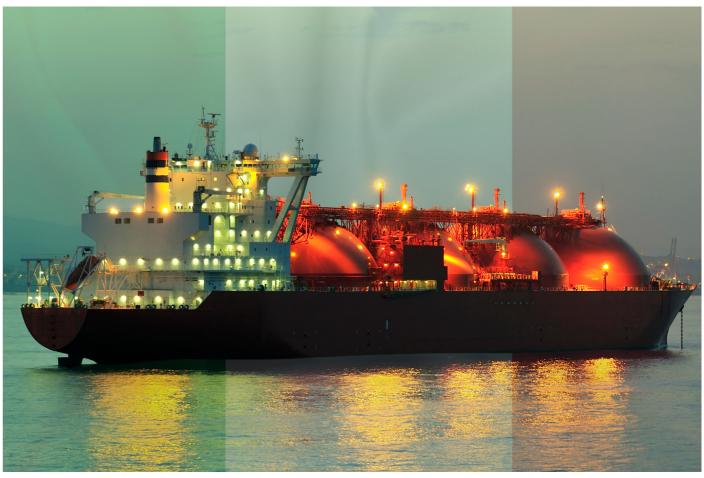
In addition to all these, it is stated in the report that China aims to rebuild the "Greater Chinese Civilization" by 2049. 2049 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of China. For this reason, the year 2049 may be a critical target for China to assume the role of the leading actor of a new and revisionist international system, in which it replaces the Western-based global order with its own rules. However, this date may also be later than expected for Beijing's target in question. Because it is estimated that Xi does not intend to tolerate the current status quo more. For this reason, it can be argued that China will act hastily both at the point of completing the army modernization and building the Greater Chinese Civilization and therefore it will try to achieve its goals faster than the dates envisaged in the report.

However, another point that draws attention in the report is the emphasis on China's nuclear power. The report says Beijing has serious nuclear ambitions within the next ten years. These are the modernization, diversification, and expansion of the country's nuclear power. At this point, it can be said that the next ten years will be the most accelerated development process for China in nuclear terms. Beijing is making significant investments in line with its goal of increasing its nuclear centers focused on both sea, land, and air. In addition, China is accelerating its infrastructure works.

At the same time, the report estimated that China's nuclear warheads exceeded 400. If progress continues at this rate, it is said that China will have around 1500 nuclear warheads by 2035. It can be said that the situation creates a serious security concern for both global security and US hegemony. The world is faced with a serious nuclear threat because Russian President Vladimir Putin frequently voiced the nuclear threat during the Ukraine War and North Korea's dozens of ballistic missile tests in 2022. The rapid increase in Beijing's nuclear power also raises many concerns for global actors.

Last but not least, in the report, it was stated that the only actor capable of competing with the power of the US and challenging the global order is China. In the report, this emphasis on China's growing military power is important in terms of Washington's clear acceptance of competition and the determination that other actors trying to enter the global power struggle are not at the same level. The US-China rivalry, which is called "Cold War 2.0" by many, even though it was rejected by Biden, was accepted by Washington on the report.

[1] "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China", U.S. Department of Defense, https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23321290/2022-military-and-security-developments-involving-the-peoples-republic-of-china. pdf, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).



**ANKASAM ANALYSIS** 

# Possible Policy of Italy in the Context of Energy Resources in the South Caucasus

While energy resources occupy an important place in terms of interests in bilateral and multiple relations between states; states in need of energy are trying to take strategic steps towards certain geographies. In the 21st century, the South Caucasus stands out as one of these geographies.

The South Caucasus has become more regionally important due to the Belt-Road Project, natural gas pipelines, the discovery of Baku oil,

the Russian-Ukrainian war and the energy crisis that emerged with the war. For this reason, there is a change in the attitude of many Western countries towards the region or their current interest in the region increases. The situation in question has brought with it the possibility that the newly established Italian Government, as a development that has the potential to disrupt the balances within the European Union (EU), may attempt to revitalize the old Italy and become an effective regional power.



Ergün MAMEDOV

Elections held in Italy showed that right-wing ideology strengthened with the appointment of Giorgia Meloni as Prime Minister. Claims that the new government will be the most right-wing government established in Italy after the Second World War[1] while being among the new cabinet, established in October 2022, received a vote of confidence from the Italian Parliament without difficulty.[2]

Meloni, in her statements from the first day, revealed that he will work for Italy to become an effective actor again in the EU and in the international system. Despite this, Meloni declared that she did not sympathize with anti-democratic regimes, including fascism, and that Italy would not conflict with the EU during his tenure; On the contrary, she stated that she would be committed to it.[3]

This attitude of Meloni, instead of an Italy that comes to mind with the EU; means that it will adopt the effort to be an actor that plays an active role and has a say in the organization. This, in turn, increases the possibility of the member states participating in a regional conflict, especially regarding the South Caucasus. It is thought that there may be a rivalry on the Rome-Paris line here.

While it is noteworthy that Italy used expressions that would contradict France with its attitude towards the region; the decision taken in the French National Assembly in November 2022 confirms this. Because, in the content of the resolution, a perspective regarding the Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has been put forward and it has been stated that Azerbaijan is an "occupant" country. In this context, it is aimed to take steps such as strengthening the Armenian Army, which was weakened after the Second Karabakh War, and undertaking mediation.[4]

The Armenian diaspora also has an impact on France's South Caucasus policy. This effect causes Paris to be positioned on an anti-Baku line. This may lead to the rupture of relations between Paris and Baku in the future. If Azerbaijan stays between France and Italy, it is possible to bring Italy to the fore. For example, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Antonio Tajani, on November 21, 2022, both the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov[5] and with Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan[6] made phone calls an important development. These meetings revealed Rome's interest in the South Caucasus.

While Tajani emphasized the importance of strategic partnership in his meeting with Bayramov; The parties decided to develop bilateral relations and energy cooperation within the framework of the "Joint Declaration on Strengthening Multidimensional Strategic Partnership Between Azerbaijan and Italy." In addition, relations in the field of education were also discussed in the meeting of the two ministers. In addition, after the meeting, it was announced that Tajani wanted to visit Baku. On the other hand, in his meeting with Mizoyan, Tajani evaluated the development of economic and commercial relations and the negotiation process in the Karabakh conflict. The biggest difference between the two meetings held by the Italian Minister is the emphasis on the importance of the Southern Gas Corridor and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in this context in terms of relations between Azerbaijan and Italy. Therefore, Italy attaches great importance to Azerbaijan in terms of energy policies.

Another actor in the South Caucasus is Georgia. At this point, it should be reminded that during the election campaign of Georgian President Salome Zurabishvili as an independent candidate in 2018, it was revealed that she was a French citizen.[7] However, Italy is one of the leading countries supporting Georgia's integration into the European Union (EU). As a matter of fact, Mario Perantoni, Head of Legal Affairs of the Italian House of Representatives at the time, stated in his statement in May 2022 that they support Georgia's membership. Moreover, Perantoni stated that they agreed with Anri Okhanashvili, the President of the Georgian Parliament at the time, on this issue.[8]

The importance of the South Caucasus for Rome comes to the fore mainly with its energy corridor dimension. In this context, it can be said that the Southern Gas Corridor, consisting of the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) and TAP, is of importance. The key actor of the Southern Gas Corridor is Azerbaijan.[9] In particular, the energy crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine War has increased the importance of the Southern Gas Corridor for Western actors. For this reason, Italy has increased its interest in the region.

Moreover, the EU also maintains its interest in the region. For example, in terms of Azerbaijan-EU relations, it should be reminded that Bayramov and the EU High Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy Joseph Borrell met on 1 December 2022. In this meeting, Borrell drew attention to the need to accelerate the negotiations on the Baku-Yerevan line within the framework of the Karabakh conflict, [10] demonstrating the importance it attaches to the security of the energy supply.

As a result, it can be said that the new Italian Government will adopt a different path than the past and will carry its position to higher levels both in the international order and within the EU. This situation will also be reflected in the South Caucasus with the effect of the energy crisis that emerged with the Russia-Ukraine War. The region can witness the rivalry between Italy and France.

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- [2] "Italy's New Cabinet Wins Final Confidence Vote", XinguaNet, https://english.news.cn/20221027/334164b8399e4d8b-99560cb9a02c99a8/c.html, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).
- [3] "Giorgia Meloni Rejects Fascism and Embraces EU in First Speech", Politico, https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-prime-minister-gior-gia-meloni-fascism-eu-first-speech/amp/, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).
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- [5] "Azerbaycan'ın Harici İşler Naziri ile İtaliya'nın Baş nazirinin Müavini Arasında Telefon Danışığı Olub", Azerbaycan: Resmi Dövlet Qazeti, https://www.azerbaijan-news.az/az/posts/detail/azerbaycanin-xarici-isler-naziri-ile-italiyanin-bas-nazirinin-muavini-arasinda-telefon-danisigi-olub-1669050580, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).
- [6] "Armenian, Italian FMs Discuss the Activities of the EU Observation Mission in Armenia", ArmenPress, https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1097814/, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).
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- [8] "Italian Parliament Official: Georgia's EU Integration Deserves "Strong Support" of Italy", Agenda.Ge, https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/1596, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).
- [9] The European Union's relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), Brussels, November 2022, p. 113.
- [10] "Obusdjeni Voprosi Sotrudnichestva Mejdu Azerbaidjanom I ES v Raslichnix Sferax", AzerTac, https://azertag.az/ru/xeber/Obsuzhdeny\_voprosy\_sotrudnichestva\_mezhdu\_Azerbaidzhanom\_i\_ES\_v\_razlichnyh\_sferah-2393891, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).



# Sri Lanka's Strategic Importance for India

Sri Lanka occupies a geo-strategically important position. Because about two-thirds of the world's oil and half of the world's container transportation passes through the south of Sri Lanka. Therefore, Sri Lanka, which is strategically located, stands out in terms of the security of maritime communication and trade lines in the Indian Ocean.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka is home to ports that have the potential to become important maritime hubs in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka's geographical location and strategic ports put it in a good global and regional position. The

crisis in Sri Lanka makes this difficult. Moreover, the crisis that is hampering Sri Lanka's economic and political stability could have serious repercussions on India.

Sri Lanka, which is in an economic crisis, has a lot of difficulties in paying its debts. China is the largest creditor of this country. About one-fifth of Sri Lanka's total debt consists of payments to China. The country is therefore characterized as a country that has fallen into "China's debt trap diplomacy."[1] Indeed, Sri Lanka is cited as the country that sets an example for African countries to hesitate and think over and over



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while taking loans from China. Because Chinese loans they received to carry out large projects are one of the main reasons for the country's economic crisis. Despite allegations of a debt trap, Sri Lanka has continued to obtain loans from China and work with China to continue its projects in the country. In short, Sri Lanka-China relations have reached a good level.

On the other hand, India has a security concern due to Sri Lanka's strategic location and geographical proximity. Because Sri Lanka's economic and therefore political dependence on China has led to an increase in Chinese influence in the country. It is also discussed whether China, which has leased the operations of the Hambantota Port for 99 years in the short term, will establish a base there. These discussions raise New Delhi's

In addition, due to the sight of a Chinese military ship in the said port, it was claimed that the Chinese Navy ships were supplied by tankers from Sri Lanka.[2] This, of course, worries India. This is because these allegations indicate that this situation may continue. Given the rivalry and problems between India and China and India's desire to maintain stability, peace and security in the region, Sri Lanka becomes even more important. Because the country, which is geographically close to India, may create a security vulnerability for New Delhi as it is in the economic grip of China.

Addressing all these issues, India is increasing its humanitarian aid activities and financial support to prevent Sri Lanka from approaching China and to save the country from Beijing. Indeed, since the outbreak of the crisis, India has made a great sacrifice in providing aid and support to Sri Lanka. India's provision of 4 billion dollars in funding, at least to keep the country's economy afloat, is an example of this self-sacrifice.[3] In addition, India supported Sri Lanka in the IMF in terms of its debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the restructuring and supplied medicine by sending ships to this country for humanitarian aid.

New Delhi's commitment to Sri Lanka is evident from the fact that in a short period it has provided more financial and humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka than it has ever done in the past. This reveals the value Sri Lanka carries for India in terms of both regional security and peace and stability. Rivalry with Beijing is also causing New Delhi to focus on the issue.

It can be stated that India not only cares about Sri Lanka due to security concerns but also considers its economic potential.

Because this small island country has a serious economic capacity. With seaports through which two-thirds of the world's

oil and a significant portion of maritime trade passes, Sri Lanka could offer long-term economic potential for India.

The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, wishes to become an important center by using the geostrategic and economic advantages of its ports, especially the Colombo Port. At this point, economic and political cooperation with India may offer new opportunities to Sri Lanka both to develop and expand its ports and to increase its economic and geopolitical importance in regional and global terms.

One of the most important reasons why Colombo Port was written in the first place is that it is one of the busiest and most active ports in the world. The fact that it is one of the rare ports that provide services for large container transportation in the South Asian region increases this importance even more. Due to the features, this port is preferred over others.[4] The Port of Colombo is also seen as a critical transshipment hub for New Delhi as it handles close to half of India's transshipment cargo.

In short, Sri Lanka, located just south of India, is very important for New Delhi in terms of security and stability. Therefore, a country in economic crisis and increasingly dependent on China could become a major problem for New Delhi. For this reason, it is seen that India tends to establish a strategic partnership with Sri Lanka.

On the radar of major powers such as Japan, the US, and the UK, as well as China and India, Sri Lanka has become a hub in the Indian Ocean. For this reason, the financial support that Sri Lanka will receive from India and other countries is considered by many experts as a balance against China. On the other hand, it is also claimed that Sri Lanka could use its relations with China and its strategic position and importance to extract economic support and concessions from India. The adoption of such a strategy for the protection of a small and economically crisis country is considered quite rational.

[1] Sumathi Bala, "Sri Lanka 'Can't Get out of Crisis without China,' Analyst Says", CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/20/china-can-play-critical-role-to-help-sri-lanka-with-its-debt-problems-analysts-say.html, (Date of Accession: 03.12.2022).

[2] "India Upset as Sri Lanka Fuels China's Warships on the Sly", India Narrative, https://www.indianarrative.com/india-news/india-upset-as-sri-lanka-fuels-chinas-warships-on-the-sly-67512.html, (Date of Accession: 03.12.2022).

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ANKASAM **ANALYSIS** 

## The Risk and Impact of **DEASH in the Balkans**

Radicalization and extremism are increasing in the 21st century. In such an environment, the Balkan geography is also influenced by the global trend in question. It is known that especially young people have some extremist tendencies. In this context, the activities of the terrorist organization State of Iraq and the Levant (DEASH) which has established links with local groups in different parts of the world and has formed subunits within its organizational structure in the Balkans draw attention.

As it is known, the DEASH terrorist organization has a presence in many countries around the world. It establishes regional structures through

the structures it has established in different geographies. Today, it is known that the organization, based in Afghanistan, operates in South and Central Asia through the so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP). However, DEASH, whose subordinate branches do not consist of the ISKP, is organized in various geographies with different

Among the extensions of the organization, the so-called Sinai Province which emerged in Egypt in 2014 and the so-called Sana Province which began to exist in Yemen in 2015 can be mentioned. In addition, the terrorist organization DEASH, which established ties with groups



Şeyma KIZILAY

in Kashmir in December 2017, organizes terrorist attacks in the region under the name of the so-called Emirate of Jammu and Kashmir (ISJK). However, there are also groups in countries such as Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines that declare their allegiance to DEASH.

The Balkan geography is not a region to be ignored for DEASH, which aims for a global caliphate. Thus it is possible to say that the organization is interested in the region. For instance, in 2015, a video was published as part of the propaganda work carried out by the organization to gain supporters from the Balkans. The video, titled "Honor is in Jihad, A Message to the Balkan People" revealed that the region is within the organization's area of interest. In the video, it was seen that there was a call for jihad made by Bosnian and Albanian members of the organization to the Balkan peoples.[1]

Although the interest in the terrorist organization DEASH among the Balkan people is not as intense as in other geographies, the region is one of the geographies where the organization wants to expand its sphere of influence. Thus, the fragility of the economies of the regional states and the high youth unemployment rate in these countries accelerate the orientation towards the organization. In addition, the terrorist organization DEASH uses the Balkan geography both in terms of recruiting personnel and as a route for the Middle East-West transition.

In 2015 Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the time, Dragan Mektic stated that there are no camps of armed terrorist groups in their country and foreign investors should not be concerned about potential security risks.[2] This statement is very important in terms of showing that the countries of the region are afraid that the possible activities of the organization will hurt foreign investments.

In making such statements it was decided that the impact of the DEASH terrorist organization on the Balkan geography and the Balkan people came to the agenda during the period in question. Because it is stated that a large number of people from the region have joined the terrorist organization DEASH to participate in the conflicts in the Middle East. For example, it is known that 130 Bosnian citizens went to Svria in 2015 and joined the DEASH terrorist organization. Of these people 43 have died, 50 have returned to the country and 19 of those who have returned have been judged.[3] There are claims that the Western Balkan countries are the source countries of about 900 foreign fighters acting with DEASH in Syria and Iraq.[4]

At this point, another element that poses a risk and danger to the countries of the region is the current activities of DEASH supporters, even if on a small scale. In other words, it can be said that elements who joined DEASH, but then returned, pose a risk to the region and in particular to the country in which they are located. The possibility of prisons turning into radicalization centres due to those who have been judged and imprisoned has also been in existence since 2017. For this reason, great importance is attached to integration programs in Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A development that shows the risk and anxiety posed by returning elements was also seen in the statement of Kosovo Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj in 2019. Thus, Haradinaj stated that the return of DEASH terrorists is one of the biggest threats facing the country.[5]

There are also various indications that there are serious dangers for the region at present. For example, in May 2022, the United States (USA) Ministry of Justice announced that Mirsad Kandic, a 40-year-old Kosovo national, was sentenced to life imprisonment for joining the terrorist organization DEASH and providing weapons, equipment and intelligence to the organization. It has also been suggested that Kandic helped establish a secret supply chain of volunteer fighters for the DEASH terrorist organization.[6] This situation reveals that extremists in the countries of the region are making propaganda on behalf of the organization.

It is known that DEASH conducts publishing activities using local groups and the local language within the scope of propaganda activities aimed at the targeted regions. The organization currently has Uzbek and Tajik publications and Pashto journals. It will not be surprising that the region develops a strategy through local supporters to appeal to ethnic identity groups within the scope of methods for the Balkans. For this reason, examples such as Kandic may multiply.

On the other hand, it can be argued that people returning from Syria and Iraq also pose a security problem for the European Union (EU). For example, on November 3, 2020, a gun attack occurred in Vienna, the capital of Austria. The fact that the perpetrator of the incident is of Balkan origin (Macedonian) has made EU countries nervous about controlling radical groups. Therefore, the issue is not only a matter of internal security of the countries of the region. It is also evaluated within the scope

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#### **12 December 2022**

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's assessment on determination of the border between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was broadcast on O'zbekiston 24 TV.

#### 13 December 2022

ANKASAM International Relations Specialist Dr. Doğacan Başaran evaluated the Kosovo-Serbia tension in A Haber.

#### 14December 2022

ANKASAM President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the current developments in foreign policy in TRT Ankara Radio Gündem program.



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.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CRISIS AND POLITICAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

# JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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