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The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the "Oyu Tolgoi Operation"

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Are Tensions Between Romania and Russia Escalating?

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Unifying Energy of Central Asia: Kambar-Ata-1

Although Central Asian states have various underground and surface resources, they may experience energy shortages due to the harsh winter season. For this reason, the countries of the region are focusing on domestic consumption due to the negative impact of winter and are reducing or suspending energy exports. In order to overcome this problem and to reveal

the energy potential through different sectors, three road maps have been determined by the countries of the region. First of all, the actors try to realize projects on a national scale. Secondly, joint projects are carried out with countries outside the region. Finally, Central Asian states are involved in projects based on regional co-operation.[1]



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One of the most important projects that the Central Asian states are trying to realize on a regional basis is the Kambar-Ata-1 Hydroelectric Power Plant, which is planned to be built on the Narin River. The history of Kambar-Ata-1 dates back to 1986. However, upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this project was suspended. In 2008, Russia promised to provide \$1.7 billion in financing support for the implementation of the project.[2] However, while the necessary studies are not carried out; The developments in Ukraine since the 2010s have led Russia to this region. Then, with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 in violation of international law, the Moscow administration began to focus on its western borders. In 2015, reactions began to rise in Bishkek after Moscow did not take the necessary steps. The question that came to mind at this point was who would finance the project. Bishkek also negotiated with a British and a Czech company for the plant.[3] However, these negotiations have been inconclusive.[4]

In this process, Uzbekistan opposed the construction of Kambar-Ata-1 and criticized the project. Because it is thought that the power plant to be built on the river will cut off the water significantly. At this point, the most important source of concern has been the disruption of cotton production. However, both the increase in the energy need in the country, the understanding that various issues can be agreed with the rapprochement between Bishkek and Tashkent, and the formation of interdependence between the parties as a result of the deepening and expansion of relations have softened Uzbekistan's attitude. In this context, Uzbekistan, which needs water for cotton production in summer, has been involved in this project in order to solve the problems of energy in winter.

Upon Russia's withdrawal from the project, Kyrgyzstan started to hold various negotiations on the project. At this stage, a contact was also established with Uzbekistan. Since 2016, the relations between Bishkek and Tashkent have deepened to include Kambar-Ata-1. As a result of the negotiations, it was announced that Uzbekistan would participate in the construction process of Kambar-Ata-1 in October 2017. In this period, it was seen that the agreement on the joint use of the Orto-Tokoy (Kasansay) Water Reservoir in Jalalabad played a decisive role in convincing Uzbekistan. Thus, Kyrgyzstan has demonstrated that it acts within the framework of the win-win principle and will not use water as a tool as a result of the construction of Kambar-Ata-1.

On April 14, 2022, it was announced that Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan would begin the construction process of Kambar-Ata-1. The dam, which is planned to be 256 meters high, is thought to hold 5.4 billion m³ of water. In addition, the construction of the plant, which will produce an average of 5.6 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, is expected to take eight to ten years. For this purpose, a feasibility study has been initiated for the project.[5]

It is thought that it will take five years to prepare the site and make other preparations, which is the first stage for the construction of the power plant, which started on June 8, 2022. Then the construction of the power plant will begin. It has been announced that this whole process requires an investment of 2 to 5 billion dollars. However, Kyrgyzstan has started construction without any investors to show its determination in the project.[6] In November 2022, a meeting was held with the French energy company EDF. In the statement made on March 4, 2023, it is understood that a new negotiation was held, and the main topic of the talks was further discussion of the financial aspects of the implementation of the project and the terms of cooperation.[7] However, there is no clear data that the company will carry out this construction.

A development on January 6, 2023 has led to renewed attention to Central Asia and Kambar-Ata-1. A meeting was held at the Ministry of Energy of the Kyrgyz Republic between the Energy Ministers of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. During the meeting, the parties agreed on a road map for the construction of Kambar-Ata-1. Minister of Energy of the Kyrgyz Republic Taalalibek Ibraev, who made a statement about the meeting, stated that Kyrgyzstan will become an energy exporting country with the project.

This situation will also have a positive impact on Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in terms of energy. In addition, the construction of the power plant will bring with it the construction of roads, bridges and power lines. It is clear that this situation will make a significant

contribution to the economies of the countries of the region and the states involved in the project. During the meeting between the ministers, it was announced that full support was given to the creation of a joint venture.[8]

On March 16, 2023, another meeting was held between the Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Kazakh delegations. At the meeting, the parties discussed the implementation of the roadmap determined by the energy ministers and evaluated the draft texts on the main principles. It was announced that the parties that agreed on the steps necessary for the implementation of the project will continue the negotiations.[9]

As a result, it is understood that Kyrgyzstan is determined to build Kambar-Ata-1. However, instead of building the project alone, Bishkek first tried to find support in the international context. However, the inconclusive negotiations with non-regional actors and companies have led the Bishkek administration to other actors in Central Asia. The increasing need for energy in Central Asia, the developing relations on the Bishkek-Tashkent line and the desire of Kazakhstan to be involved in such a project have increased the possibility of the project being implemented. At this point, Kambar-Ata-1, which stands out as an important project in terms of meeting the energy needs of Central Asia, is a project that unites the states of the region.

[1] Emrah Kaya, "Orta Asya'nın Artan Enerji İhtiyacı ve Alternatif Yöntemler", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/orta-asyanin-artan-enerji-ihciyasi-ve-alternatif-yontemler/>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[2] "Dam Conflict Between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan", Climate Diplomacy, <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/dam-conflict-between-kyrgyzstan-and-uzbekistan/>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[3] Catherine Putz, "Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Kazakh Energy Ministers Sign Kambar-Ata-1 Roadmap", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/kyrgyz-uzbek-kazakh-energy-ministers-sign-kambar-ata-1-roadmap/>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[4] Bruce Pannier, "Central Asia in Focus", Caspian Policy Center, <https://www.caspianpolicy.org/research/security-and-politics-program-spp/central-asia-in-focus-13526/>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[5] "Kambarata HPP-1: About 1.5 Billion Soms Allocated for Preparatory Work", 24 KG, https://24.kg/english/236257_Kambarata_HPP-1_About_15_billion_soms_allocated_for_preparatory_work/#:~:text=Kambarata%20HPP%2D1%20will%20be,installed%20capacity%20of%201%2C860%20megawatts, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[6] "Kyrgyzstan Starts Construction of the Kambar-Ata—1 Hydroelectric Power Plant", Big Asia, <https://bigasia.ru/en/content/news/business/kirgiziya-pristu-paet-k-stroitelstvu-ges-kambar-ata-1/>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[7] "Состоялись переговоры французской энергетической компании «EDF Energy» по вопросу строительства Камбаратинской ГЭС-1", <https://www.gov.kg/ru/post/s/22703-kambar-ata-1-gesin-kuruu-boyuncha-frantsiyalyk-edf-energy-kompaniyasy-menen-sylshlr-zhrqzld>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[8] "Ministers of Energy of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan Sign a "Road Map" for the Construction of Kambar-Ata HPP-1", Uz Daily, <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/78431>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[9] "Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan Discuss the Project of Kambarata HPP-1", Kun.uz, <https://kun.uz/en/news/2023/03/16/uzbekistan-kyrgyzstan-and-kazakhstan-discuss-the-project-of-kambarata-hpp-1>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Energy Crisis in France–Germany Relations

The cooperation between Germany and France, which forms the basis of the European Union (EU), has suffered a significant blow in the aftermath of the Russian-Ukrainian War that started on February 24, 2022. In particular, the two countries have significant disagreements over developments in Europe. Therefore, this situation prevents Brussels from displaying unity in the face of the challenges posed by the war. In other words, the joint action of Germany and France is crucial for shaping the EU's policy. Because these two countries are the largest economies of the EU. Moreover, France is the leading member of the EU in the field of defense, while Germany is the leading member in the economic dimension.

However, in September 2022, the Berlin administration's announcement of 200 billion euros in energy subsidies to the public and companies caused a great reaction from Paris. This is because Germany made this move without informing France in advance. Therefore, France thought that German companies would gain an unfair advantage in the EU market.[1]

In this context, given the war conjuncture in Europe, France in a way accused Germany of betraying it due to its unilateral moves. Therefore, the war in Ukraine is also an important test of the partnership between Germany and France.



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At this point, the EU summit held on March 23, 2023 is important in terms of showing the disagreement between Germany and France on energy. The main starting point of this disagreement stems from the different approaches of Berlin and Paris on energy. In particular, there are serious differences between France and Germany on nuclear energy and combustion engines. Germany's last-minute blocking of an agreement advocated by some of its partners in the EU, especially France, to ban new sales of fossil fuel cars from 2035 onwards, created a crisis between Berlin and Paris. [2]

Indeed, a group of countries, led by Germany, has opposed Brussels' attempt to ban the sale of new cars with internal combustion engines, i.e. gasoline and diesel, by 2035. Germany wants a clear exemption for e-fuels, an alternative to fossil fuels that would benefit the automotive industry. However, this amendment was twice rejected in the European Parliament (EP).

France, on the other hand, opposes Germany's expectation and advocates the inclusion of nuclear energy in EU regulations aimed at producing more green technology in Europe, which has disturbed the Berlin administration.[3] At this point, it can be argued that Germany's stance is more geared towards protecting its own automotive industry. In particular, the war in Ukraine seems to have caused countries in Europe to develop a more protectionist approach in their economic policies.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the origin of the disagreement between France and Germany over nuclear energy actually goes back to the past, but the Russian-Ukrainian War deepened this disagreement. In fact, Paris and Berlin have been at odds with each other over nuclear energy ever since Germany decided to withdraw from nuclear energy after the Fukushima disaster in Japan in 2011.[4]

On the other hand, France is one of the world's leading countries in nuclear energy. Moreover, the Paris administration continues its policy of increasing the number of nuclear power plants in the country. Considering that in 2021, nuclear power plants in France will generate 68% of the country's electricity,[5] it is clear why Paris attaches great importance to nuclear energy. This is a clear indication of the depth of the crisis between Germany and France.

On the other hand, on March 25, 2023, Germany and the EU agreed on a plan to phase out fossil fuel cars. This is in line with the EU's goal of becoming a "climate neutral" economy by 2050 with net zero greenhouse gas emissions. Volker Wissing, Germany's Minister of Transport, has stated that vehicles with internal combustion engines can continue to be registered after 2035 only if they use

fuels that are CO2 neutral.[6] After the dispute was resolved, Berlin argued that it had gained important assurances that EU rules would be technology-neutral, leaving room for e-fuels to be used in a zero-emission framework.[7]

As a result, the relations between Germany and France have been deeply wounded as a result of the aforementioned war, mainly due to the energy dispute. Especially considering that energy geopolitics has become a much more important issue for European countries with the war in Ukraine, it can be predicted that this factor will continue to create tension in the Berlin-Paris line.

[1] "French-German Friendship 'Still Alive' As Macron Meets Scholz Amid Tensions", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/26/french-german-friendship-still-alive-as-macron-meets-scholz-amid-tensions>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[2] "France-Germany Energy Tensions Loom Over EU Summit", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/france-germany-energy-tensions-loom-over-eu-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[3] "France-Germany Feud Heats Up Over Cars and Nuclear", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-germany-rift-over-cars-nuclear-deepens-ahead-of-eu-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[4] "France and Germany Square Off in Brussels Over Nuclear Power", Le Monde, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/european-union/article/2023/03/22/france-and-germany-square-off-in-brussels-over-nuclear-power_6020247_156.html, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[5] "Nuclear Power Plants Generated 68% of France's Electricity in 2021", U.S. Energy Information Administration, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=55259>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[6] "EU, Germany Reach Deal on Fossil Fuel Car Phaseout Plan", France 24, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230325-eu-germany-reach-deal-on-fossil-fuel-car-phaseout-plan>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).

[7] "EU, Germany Reach Car Emissions Deal That Makes Room for E-Fuels", Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-25/eu-germany-reach-deal-on-car-emissions-timmermans-says#xj4y7vzkg>, (Date of Accession: 27.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The New Method Used by the Terrorist Organization ISKP in its Attacks: Assassinations

After the so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) of the Daul al-Iraq and Sham (DEAS) terrorist organization brought the global caliphate claim to the agenda during the periods when DEASH gained dominance in Syria and Iraq, radical groups in Afghanistan and its surrounding countries decided to support DEASH. established by notification. After the failure of DAESH in Syria and Iraq, the terrorist organization felt the need to create a "lebensraum" for itself and tried to take advantage of the power vacuum created in the country after the withdrawal

of the United States (USA) from Afghanistan. This means that ISKP member terrorists are predominantly legionnaires.

Legionnaires, on the other hand, facilitate the use of terrorist organizations as proxy actors by various intelligence organizations. Because in the 21st century, the nature of war has changed, and especially after the Arab Spring, it has been seen that imperial actors in various countries from Yemen to Syria have turned terrorist organizations into proxy fighters in order to gain maximum gain at the low-



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est cost.

In this sense, since August 2021, two groups have been targeted in the actions of the ISKP terrorist organization and these attacks have served two purposes. First of all, the terrorist organization ISKP carried out attacks especially on mosques in the regions where Hazaras, also known as Afghan Shiites, live. This indicates that the aim of ISKP is to drag the country into civil war by increasing ethnic and sectarian tensions in Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, there is a possibility that a civil war that will start in this country will cause a regional war in time. This strengthens the possibility that the imperialist powers, who want to destabilize the actors in the center of Eurasia, are using the terrorist organization ISKP as a proxy element.

Secondly, it was seen that the ISKP terrorist organization carried out attacks targeting the diplomatic missions, investments and citizens of the countries that developed a positive dialogue with the Taliban. In this sense, it has been seen that China, Pakistan and Russia have become targets. This can be read as ISKP's message to the countries cooperating with the Taliban that they are not safe, and it also provides an idea about which countries a civil war that will break out in Afghanistan may destabilize.

Moreover, the terrorist organization ISKP increases the pressure of the international community on the Taliban through these attacks. Because the Taliban administration made two important commitments in the Doha Agreement dated February 29, 2020.[1] The first of these; Terrorist organizations will not be allowed to exist in Afghanistan, the country will be prevented from becoming a safe harbor for terrorist organizations, and therefore the fight against terrorism will be fought.[2] However, the terrorist organization DEASH is trying to turn it into a "life zone" through the aforementioned attacks. At the same time, the organization is in an effort to create the perception that "Taliban has failed in the fight against terrorism" and therefore "Afghanistan cannot be governed".

Secondly, the Taliban declared in the aforementioned agreement that no attack can be carried out against any state from the territory of Afghanistan. However, embassies are recognized as the territory of the State in accordance with international law. In other words, in theory, DEASH targets foreign states by using the territory of Afghanistan through the terrorist attacks in question. This means that the Doha Treaty has been violated. As it can be understood from here, the actions of the terrorist organization ISKP deepen the international legitimacy problem of the Taliban and mainly aim to end the administration of Afghanistan by the Taliban.

Recently, it is seen that the ISKP terrorist organization has turned to assassinations as a new attack method and has started to target the Taliban leaders in these attacks. As a matter of fact, on March 8, 2023, ISKP killed the Head of the Water Affairs Department in Herat province. On March 9, 2023, the terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attack that killed the Taliban's Balkh Governor, Mohammed Davud Muzammil, and two people with him. On March 15, 2023, the terrorist organization targeted the Nangarhar Governor of the Taliban; but the unsuccessful took charge of the attack.[3]

The attacks in question mean that the terrorist organization DEASH is now giving the message to the names working for the Taliban that they are not safe. Therefore, it can be said that assassinations may increase in Afghanistan and the Taliban rulers may become clear targets. It can be argued that this situation aims to create a perception that the Taliban cannot provide security.

As a result, the terrorist organization ISKP, which operates to destabilize Afghanistan and its neighbors, increases the ethnic and sectarian violence in the country, while serving the scenario of first civil war and then regional war; On the other hand, it is positioned as a proxy actor serving the strategy to isolate the Taliban by targeting countries that have dialogue with the Taliban. As of this point, assassinations have been included in the attack method of the ISKP terrorist organization and the Taliban leaders have also become targets. This indicates that the organization's actions aimed at destabilizing Afghanistan in particular and the region in general can be talked about more frequently. Therefore, it seems that the fight against DAESH will continue to be the most important issue of regional security on the Central Asia-South Asia line. However, every crisis also contains some opportunities. Because the fight against terrorism can also open the door to a security-based regional cooperation process.

[1] "Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan", State.gov, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02.29.20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "A String of Assassinations in Afghanistan Point to ISIS-K Resurgence – and US Officials Warn of Possible Attacks on American Interests in Next 6 Months", The Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/a-string-of-assassinations-in-afghanistan-point-to-isis-k-resurgence-and-us-officials-warn-of-possible-attacks-on-american-interests-in-next-6-months-201852>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Sunak`s Effect on Britain`s Foreign Policy

After the resignation of Boris Johnson, after Lizz Truss's tenure of about six weeks in the UK, the former Finance Minister Rishi Sunak assumed the responsibility of prime minister. In a period of high instability such as the energy crisis, inflation and political problems, domestic politics has been a very challenging area for Sunak, who became the Prime Minister close to the elections. Contrary to this gloomy atmosphere in domestic politics, it is seen that Sunak's for-

eign policy initiatives, both regionally and globally, tried to implement a positive multilateral policy, unlike the Johnson period.

Contrary to Johnson's distant approach towards the European Union (EU) and European countries after Brexit and after, Sunak adopts a cooperation-oriented approach in relations with the region. In this direction, the agreement of the parties in principle on the Windsor



Gamze BAL

Framework for the Northern Ireland Problem, which is an important area of disagreement between the EU and the UK, has been an important development. The aim of the Windsor Framework is to facilitate the enforcement of customs controls between the UK and Northern Ireland. However, a difficult parliamentary ratification process must be completed before the agreement can be implemented.

Contrary to Johnson's distant approach towards the European Union (EU) and European countries after Brexit and after, Sunak adopts a cooperation-oriented approach in relations with the region. In this direction, the agreement of the parties in principle on the Windsor Framework for the Northern Ireland Problem, which is an important area of disagreement between the EU and the UK, has been an important development. The aim of the Windsor Framework is to facilitate the enforcement of customs controls between the UK and Northern Ireland. However, a difficult parliamentary ratification process must be completed before the agreement can be implemented.

If the text is not approved, it can be predicted that Sunak's political career and UK-EU relations will be adversely affected. If the agreement is approved, UK universities and researchers will be able to regain access to the Horizon Programme; It is likely that the trade problems with the EU will be resolved and the UK will become more reliable in trade relations with international partners. For example, the solution of this problem between the UK and the EU may affect the ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiation process between New Delhi and London. The concerns of Indian businessmen, who see the UK as a wider European market, about Brexit may decrease, and this may give a positive impetus to the agreement process with India.

Although it is unclear whether the Windsor Framework will be ratified or not, Sunak's adoption of the solution-oriented Windsor Framework to the Northern Ireland Protocol, in the period when the solidarity between the European countries that agreed to support Ukraine against the Russian threat, increased, and the British foreign policy sided with the countries of the region, created a positive atmosphere for cooperation.

As a matter of fact, Sunak went to Paris to improve the tense relations with France, one of the leading actors of Europe, after Brexit. Sunak described this meeting, which was the first France-England meeting after Theresa May's term, as "a new beginning, a renewed alliance". Strengthening military ties, continuing support to Ukraine, working for a permanent European naval force deployment in the Indo-Pacific, and the issue of immigration came to the fore at the meeting.[1] Thus, the two countries showed their willingness to assume joint responsibility in ensuring European security.

In addition, the Sunak aimed at immigrants who crossed the English Channel, which is an important problem for England, and went to England illegally with small boats, revealed that they wanted to act in a solution-oriented manner together with France.

A few days after the meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, Sunak went to California to discuss the details of AUKUS, which they called an important partnership that will increase deterrence in the stability and security of the Indo-Pacific. As it is known, AUKUS was launched on 15 September 2021, aiming to manufacture a nuclear powered submarine for the Royal Australian Navy as a result of the exchange of information on cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and additional submarine capabilities between Australia, the UK and the USA, and China's mission in the Indo-Pacific, announced as a security partnership seeking to limit its growing influence.[2]

A three-stage plan was created in the tripartite meeting held on March 13, 2022 for the implementation of AUKUS.[3] The first phase is to increase deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, with UK and US submarines conducting training exercises in Australia, Australian sailors training in the UK and the US, and the deployment of a Western Submarine Rotation Force made up of US and UK submarines in 2027. The second stage is the purchase of Virginia class submarines by Australia from the USA. The third stage is the production of the SSN-AUKUS submarine, whose design and development studies continue, in England in 2030, and the addition of the SSN-AUKUS submarine, which was built in Austria in 2040, to the inventory of the Austrian Royal Navy.

Both the announcement of a partnership with France in the Indo-Pacific and the continued commitment to AUKUS show that the London administration is willing to position itself as an active actor in the Indo-Pacific region, together with its regional and global partners. This means that the Indo-Pacific trend, often expressed by Johnson in his "Global Britain" ideal, continued in the Altar period.

At the same time, the gathering of leaders for AUKUS shows that a strategic rapprochement has been achieved and strengthens the bond in Transatlantic relations today, where the Russia-Ukraine War continues, China is defined as a threat, and the Indo-Pacific has turned into a stage of inter-power rivalry. On the other hand, acting with partners in the Indo-Pacific policy of the UK not only ensures the development of the defense industry, but also strengthens London's position in NATO.

In this context, another important initiative of Sunak is to increase defense expenditures. As a matter of fact, the Sunak administration stated that "As the world becomes more volatile and the competition between states becomes more intense, England should be ready to protect itself", and that they will increase their defense expenditures by 5 billion pounds and continue their efforts to increase defense expenditures to 2.5% of its gross domestic product. It was announced in the 2023 Integrated Review Report published in March 2022.[4]

In fact, this report, which states the goals that the UK is trying to achieve until 2025 in security, defense and foreign policy against the developments in the world, was published in 2021; Due to global developments, the government felt the need for renewal in 2023.

In the 2023 review report, Russia and China came to the fore in terms of protecting the national interests and security of the UK. In the report, it was stated that the first priority of the UK was to combat Russia's threat to European security and to prevent the Moscow administration from gaining any benefit from the invasion of Ukraine.

It was also stated that China poses an increasing challenge for the UK with its military, financial and diplomatic activities, and therefore, the second priority for London is to develop a coherent approach to China based on national interests and in line with its allies.[5]

In fact, on the occasion of the simultaneous occurrence of the AUKUS meeting and the report, the UK emphasized its commitment to the Euro-Atlantic alliance, the importance it attaches to the protection of European security and the UK's determination to increase its resilience against China. But by 2022, China has become the UK's fourth largest trading partner.[6] Considering the mutual economic dependence of Britain and China, it can be argued that London will not want to harm economic relations with China in the short term by adopting a pragmatic policy based on interests, and that economic relations will also affect political relations.

As a result, Sunak makes cost-benefit calculations in foreign policy with a pragmatic approach; It tries to increase the prestige of England in today's world where geopolitical transformations are experienced by narrowing the areas of conflict in regional and global relations and increasing the areas of cooperation. In this context, Sunak has prepared an agreement with the EU that will solve the problems, planned a summit with France that will melt the ice, and has developed a strategy to achieve the goal of AUKUS, an important partnership in the Indo-Pacific. It is understood that Sunak, who has supported the cooperation in the European side with these policies he has implemented since the day he took his seat as the Prime Minister, and the current policies in the Indo-Pacific dimension, tried to design the British foreign policy in a way that would maintain a relationship based on mutual trust, away from conflict with the allies. It can be said that this effort will give Sunak political and diplomatic success, and will strengthen England's position in the international arena.

[1] "Macron And Sunak Mend Ties, As Leaders Agree to Tackle Channel Boats", Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2023/03/10/macron-and-sunak-try-to-put-relationship-back-on-track-at-paris-summit>, (Date of Accession: 22.03.2022).

[2] "Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS", The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>, (Date of Accession: 22.03.2022).



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The Cold War of the Pacific: AUKUS and China

The AUKUS Pact is a security alliance created in the Asia-Pacific Region with the cooperation of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA). The alliance commits to the supply of nuclear submarines to Canberra by Washington and London. [1] As a matter of fact, in today's conjuncture, when the global security equations are starting to be read through the Asia-Pacific, it can be said that this association is mainly aimed at surrounding China and restricting the activities of the Beijing administration in the South China Sea. Considering that North Korea is also an important military threat in the region in question, it can be argued that this cooperation creates an area of operation and influence for the West and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Considering that Australia is also an actor with a Western perspective in the geopolitical and geostrategic sense, even though it is located in the east, it is usual for AUKUS to make Beijing feel significant security concerns. The increase in the tension between the West and China over Taiwan, in particular, is a factor that increases the size of the rivalry between AUKUS and China. For this reason, it can be suggested that there is a "Cold War" deconflicting between these two actors in the Asia-Pacific Region.

In this context, it is very important that the US, UK and Australia conduct joint air exercises in the Nevada Desert and beyond to simulate high-level combat operations against Chinese warplanes.[2] Because the joint military exerci-



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ses of the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia can be said to create a regionally strong Western conjuncture due to both the creation of the AUKUS Pact and the direct targeting of China by these countries.

It is known that the pact in question not only increased the Western influence in the region, but also included the aim of encircling China. For this reason, it can be stated that the current tension in the region has increased and this has made the region increasingly a playground for the rivalry between the West and China.

It can be said that the alliance of the said actors over the opposition to Beijing has been making Beijing more uncomfortable day by day and has led to a more proactive policy. Because the increase in pressure being tried to be established through Taiwan and the development of Western relations, especially Washington's relations with Taipei, will be a violation of China's "red line", as Beijing calls itself. As a matter of fact, it is known that China aims to unite with Taiwan by 2049, the centenary of its foundation, at the latest.[3]

At this point, it can be stated that the USA is trying to accelerate the process through both its relations with Taiwan and AUKUS, and that Beijing aims to increase the probability of failure by forcing China to take a military action before it is fully prepared.

Besides all this, the presence of countries with a Western perspective, such as Japan and South Korea, also increases the pressure on China. Because NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Japan and South Korea on January 29, 2023, and during these visits, "threats from China and North Korea" were discussed.[4]

The development in question is extremely remarkable when read together with Japan's claims to join AUKUS. As a matter of fact, taking into account Japan's rising military expenditures, its policies to expand and enlarge its defense capacity, its relations with Western states and the military agreements it has implemented, and its hardened rhetoric towards states such as China, Russia and North Korea, Japan is also a part of AUKUS. It has been claimed that the name of the Pact will be expanded as JAUUKUS.[5] It is predictable that the fact that such a situation is real will increase the pressure on China and Beijing's discomfort with the pact in question.

In this context, the increasing influence of the West in the region is not only China; it can be predicted that it will disturb North Korea as well. This is also likely to strengthen the possibility of a hot conflict in the region in the coming period.

As a result, the AUKUS members and China are geopolitically regional, but in terms of their effects and causes, they are in a global Cold War. It can be argued that both sides will continue to increase the level of competition and a hot conflict may occur in the region over both Taiwan and the South China Sea in the future. Despite all this, it is unclear whether Washington and NATO would want such a conflict in the region.

[1] "What is the Aukus alliance and what are its implications?", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/sep/16/what-is-the-aukus-alliance-and-what-are-its-implications>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[2] "U.S, Uk and Australia Carry Out China-Focused Air Drills", The Business Standard, <https://www.tbsnews.net/world/us-uk-and-australia-carry-out-china-focused-air-drills-582390>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[3] "China's Plans to Annex Taiwan Moving 'Much Faster' Under Xi, Says Blinken", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/18/chinas-plans-to-annex-taiwan-moving-much-faster-under-xi-says-blinken>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[4] "As Nato Chief Visits South Korea and Japan, China Will Be High on Agenda", The South China Morning Post, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3208258/nato-chief-visits-south-korea-and-japan-china-will-be-high-agenda>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).

[5] "Japan Joining Aukus: the 'Logical Choice', but Would It Be a Full Partner In the Alliance?", The South China Morning Post, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3200963/japan-joining-aukus-logical-choice-would-it-be-full-partner-alliance>, (Date of Accession: 23.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Search for Lasting Peace on the Baku-Yerevan Line

On the occasion of the Second Karabakh War, which lasted for 44 days, Azerbaijan freed its occupied territories and a ceasefire agreement was signed between the parties through the Moscow Declaration signed on November 9, 2020. Although a ceasefire agreement has been signed between the parties, a lasting peace agreement has not been signed yet, although it has been about 2.5 years.

The situation in question, on the other hand, makes the peace process fragile despite the negotiations and mutual goodwill of the parties. It is known that the Karabakh Clan, which is in the opposition in Armenian politics and is known for its pro-occupation attitude, and the nationalist sections in the Armenian Army, from time to time, make some provocations. For this reason, it is seen that there are border conflicts from time to time. As a matter of fact, in the first



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days of March 2023, it was seen that there was military activity in the border regions of the parties. This led to some concerns that the parties would fight again.

At this point, it should be noted that; despite all the difficulties, the parties do not want a new war. Looking at the issue from Yerevan's perspective, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is aware that the occupation in Karabakh, which has been going on for many years, has caused Yerevan to be isolated from the international community. Pashinyan, who comes to the fore with his pro-Western views, wants lasting peace in the region for this reason and thinks that normalization processes in the region will facilitate Armenia's establishing healthy relations with the world.

As a matter of fact, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in his statement on his official account on the social media site Twitter, stated that a peace agreement will be signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, that the tension in the region will not rise again and that the international community should support this process.[1]

The Baku administration, on the other hand, has achieved its gains in the field basically in accordance with international law. The Baku administration, which wants this success to be reflected on the diplomacy table, is not in search of a new war. That's why the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, made constructive statements even during the escalation of tensions. Speaking at the 10th Global Baku Forum, Mr. Aliyev said, "Now is the time to make peace. We took the initiative in November 2020 to hold peaceful negotiations. There are five main principles and they can form the basis of a peace agreement with Armenia." he said.[2]

It is clear that the normalization of the region as soon as possible is in the interest of Azerbaijan in many issues, especially in energy and logistics routes. However, the conclusion of the normalization processes in the region is not only for Azerbaijan; it will increase the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of Armenia at the point of corridors.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the approaches of the West and Russia are also important in the developments regarding the establishment of a lasting peace between the parties. First of all, to talk about Russia, it can be said that the Moscow administration is pleased with the presence of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in Karabakh and does not want a new conflict. Moreover, while the war in Ukraine continues; it could also be argued that the Kremlin would not want to focus on a new conflict in the post-Soviet space. That's why, on March 23, 2023, the Spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maria Zakharova, announced that she would call on the parties for the resumption of negotiations between Baku and Yerevan.[3] Therefore, it would not be a realistic approach to claim that there is an obstacle in front of the peace processes due to the Russian factor.

In fact, there is a similar situation in the Western dimension. In particular, the energy crisis after the Russia-Ukraine War increased the expectations for normalization in the Caucasus. Especially after the blockage of the Northern Corridor, the importance of the Central Corridor became evident and the Central Asia-Caspian Sea-Caucasus-Balkans-Europe route became one of the lowest cost, shortest and safest routes in terms of energy and logistics.

As might be expected, the sustainability of the security situation in the region is essential for the West. That's why, again on March 23, 2023, United States of America (USA) Foreign Minister Antony Blinken stated that Azerbaijan and Armenia could sign a peace agreement in the near future. In his statement on the subject, the US Secretary of State said, "I think there is an opportunity. I don't want to exaggerate. But I see there is an opportunity for a peace agreement to actually be completed." formed his sentences.[4] This can be interpreted as the USA's support for the achievement of lasting peace.

Undoubtedly, the fact that the statements of Zakharova and Blinken were made on the same day indicates that there is a consensus among the great powers in establishing a lasting peace in Karabakh. When this situation is evaluated together with the constructive attitude of the Baku and Yerevan administrations, it can be thought that a lasting peace agreement can be signed in the near future.

As a result, the fact that a lasting peace agreement has not been signed in the approximately 2.5 year period since the Second Karabakh War has made the ceasefire agreement fragile and although there have been limited conflicts in the region at various times, both Azerbaijan and Armenia are not wars; stands out with its peaceful attitude. Moreover, the messages from Russia and the USA reveal that the international conjuncture is suitable for ending the Karabakh Issue.

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[2] "Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı Aliyev: Şimdi Artık Barış Zamanı", Hürriyet, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/azerbaycan-cumhurbaskani-aliyev-simdi-artik-baris-zamani-42231529>, (Date of Accession: 24.03.2023).

[3] "В МИД России призвали Армению и Азербайджан возобновить переговоры", Report.az, <https://report.az/ru/vneshnyaya-politika/v-mid-rossii-prizvali-armeniyu-i-azerbajdzhan-vozobnovit-peregovory/>, (Date of Accession: 24.03.2023).

[4] Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Rising Star of Information Technologies: Kyrgyzstan

With the advancement of technology worldwide, the IT sector is gaining importance. Forums and events on informatics are organized in various countries. These events provide important opportunities to discuss innovations in the IT sector, exchange ideas and evaluate opportunities in the sector. In this context, the first Central Asia IT Forum was held on 24 March 2023 in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. The event brought together important stakeholders of the IT sector in the region. Various topics were discussed at the summit to contribute to the digital transformation of the region.

The forum held in Bishkek was also attended by the USA and Japan. Leading IT companies from the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. The meeting of world leaders in the IT sector, organized with the support of the Presidential Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic and with the assistance of

the Japan Foreign Trade Organization, can be described as an important event.[1] After the forum, there is a feeling that Kyrgyzstan is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for information technologies. Almaz Isanov, Head of the Department of Political and Economic Studies of the Presidential Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic, said at the event:[2]

"Kyrgyzstan has a demographic advantage. Young people make up more than 45% of the population. Young people are ready to enter a new era where they will need the internet."

Kyrgyzstan has made significant progress in the IT sector in recent years. The country has skilled human resources in IT. Kyrgyzstan stands out in terms of software development, data processing and telecommunication services. As it is known, software development, telecommunication and data pro-



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cessing services are among the most important areas of the information technology sector. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan's transformation is on the way to making the country a modern digital society and a digital ecosystem.

The potential of Kyrgyzstan in the field of information technologies is supported by state measures. The 1999 Law "On Informatization" and the 2002 "National Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies for the Development of the Kyrgyz Republic" regulate the development of information technologies.[3]

In 2019, the Bishkek administration adopted the "Digital Kyrgyzstan 2019-2023" strategy. According to the strategy, the goal was to develop digital infrastructure and internet connectivity. "Digital literacy" was created by supporting economic growth and banking sectors through digital transformation, developing and disseminating internet-based platforms and services, disseminating information technology education and developing opportunities.

The country's modernization and development as a digital society continues. Digitalization and use of technology has increased in areas such as public administration, education, economy and online payment system. In particular, efforts are being made to solve artificial intelligence problems. The establishment of contactless and mobile payment for individuals' shopping, as well as the establishment of a cross-border payment method for money transfer, are among the important issues being addressed.

In early 2023, internet usage in Kyrgyzstan reached 77.9%, with 5.2 million internet users in the country. In January 2023, 2.75 million people were registered as social media users in Kyrgyzstan, which is 41.1% of the total population. [4]

Several initiatives have been undertaken to promote information technology development in Central Asia. One of these initiatives is the Central Asian Research and Education Network, which aims to enhance scientific and educational cooperation among Central Asian countries by providing high-speed internet connectivity and advanced IT services. The project is supported by the European Union and the International Center for Science and Technology.[5] Kyrgyzstan is also part of this project.

As a result, the IT sector in Kyrgyzstan is developing rapidly. The fact that the country has a young and educated population also creates a strong basis for the development of skilled labor in the IT sector.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] "Kyrgyzstan Review", РАЗВИТИЕ СИСТЕМЫ ТЕЛЕКОММУНИКАЦИЙ И ИНФОРМАЦИОННЫХ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ, <https://rus.gateway.kg/strategii-razvitiya/nacionalnaya-strategiya-sokrashheniya-b/razdel-v-obespechenie-ustoychivogo-yekon/razvitie-sistemy-telekommunikacij-i/>, (Date of Accession: 26.03.2023).

[4] "Date Portal Digital 2023 Kyrgyzstan", Datare Portal, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-kyrgyzstan#:~:text=The%20state%20of%20digital%20in%20Kyrgyzstan%20in%202023&text=There%20were%205.21%20million%20internet,percent%20of%20the%20total%20population>, (Date of Accession: 26.03.2023).

[5] "CAREN (Central Asia)", In the Field, <https://www.inthefieldstories.net/network/caren/>, (Date of Accession: 26.03.2023).

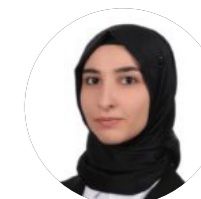


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Is ISKP's Influence Losing Its Effect in Afghanistan?

The Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) by the terrorist organization Devlet'ül Iraq and Sham (DEAS) made its name popular to the world with the Hamid Karzai International Airport attack carried out on August 26, 2021. The organization which has based on the geography of Central and South Asia increased its Afghanistan-centered mobility with the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan

and then the coming of the Taliban to the administration of the country. The organization's actions over the past year have significantly enhanced its strength. Recently, capturing or destroying in the operations of the key ISKP figures has become a major security issue for the Taliban administration. Brought the question to mind: "Is the organization's influence in the country breaking down?".



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On March 27, 2023, the Taliban announced that three key members of DAESH were killed in the operations carried out in the center of Balkh Province, Mazar-i-Sharif. It is known that among those killed were the temporary Balkh President of the terrorist organization DAESH and Head of the Judiciary System Maulvi Ziauddin, DAESH Khorasan Council Member Abu Omar Afridi and Salman Tajikistani, who was responsible for military training and organizing the mine system.[1]

The killing of Ziauddin, known as ISKP's second-in-command, is a terrorist organization's significant loss. Ziauddin is the brother of Sheikh Jamaluddin, a senior ISKP ideologist who was killed during an airstrike in Nangarhar. He served as the Kunar military commander of the group for eight months, from July 2022 to February 2023. It is also alleged that Ziauddin was recently appointed as the group's main media representative and appeared in numerous ISKP voice messages and propaganda videos with Sultan Aziz Ezzam.[2]

Kari Fateh, who was reportedly killed in another operation recently, is also a critical director of ISKP. He is known to have planned recent attacks in Kabul, including attacks on diplomatic missions, mosques, and other targets in Afghanistan.[3] Therefore, the killing of Fateh is a success for the Taliban. On the other hand, it is a significant loss for the organization.

The neutralization of Ahmad Ahangar, or the person known as Abu Usman Al-Kashmiri, was also the worst loss for ISKP. The organization announced that Kashmiri, known to have close relations with Al Qaeda and other radical terrorist organizations, was killed in a clash on February 14, 2023.[4]

In recent years, the Taliban administration's operations and raids against ISKP have become more frequent. It has been announced that important DAESH elements have been captured or killed by carrying out activities in certain key regions. Based on the statements made by the Taliban, it is possible to say that two factors are decisive in the frequency of operations.

The first of these; is to show the international public that the Doha Agreement has not been violated and that terrorist activities are prevented. Contrary to the rhetoric of US officials, who claim that ISKP can harm the interests of the West, the Taliban are trying to show that they can cope with the organization.

Secondly, the country tries to show that it was able to ensure the security of the country through its struggle with ISKP and that it defeated the organization by limiting its range of action. Thus, it could be said that a message was given to the groups acting together with ISKP and DAESH.

As it is known, in the last few months, a conflict dynamic has emerged in the form of mutual actions. The organization has started targeting high-ranking officials of the Taliban against their own losses. Finally, on March 27, 2023, an attack occurred near the Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ISKP has acted for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before. It can be said that such an attack was organized again in the face of the killing of many important figures, including Kari Fateh, who was among the planners of the attack in question. At least six civilians were killed, and scores injured, including three Taliban security personnel, in the new suicide attack. ISKP claimed responsibility for this attack. [5]

While the organization suffered significant losses on the one hand; On the other hand, high-profile attacks can be read as a part of the terrorist organization's survival strategy. Because high-level attacks also serve the purpose of showing the power of ISKP to the DEASH leadership and raising the image of the terrorist organization.

On the other hand, the death of key members may again lead to discrediting in the eyes of the central leadership, as it demonstrates the failure against the Taliban. In order to prevent this, the organization sought compensation for itself with high-profile attacks. Therefore, the attack on the Taliban Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the assassinations of the top leaders of the Taliban can be interpreted as the output of DAESH's efforts to show that it maintains its power.

Despite the effort of the terrorist organization, the loss of key figures led by ISKP may negatively affect the propaganda activities of the organization to increase its influence. However, the continuation of high-level attacks with casualties reveals that the threat posed by the group in Afghanistan should not be underestimated.

As a result, ISKP poses a significant threat to Afghanistan and the region in general. However, neutralizing the top executives of the terrorist organization may herald the defeat of ISKP.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] "لوبيك ىف «شعاد» دلاق رابك لتقت «نابل اط» تاوق", Albawabh News, <https://www.albawabhnews.com/4762452>, (Date of Access: 27.03.2023).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU Process in the Framework of Security Concerns

Many states in Europe are concerned about both the violation of their sovereignty and the economic problems brought about by the energy supply problem. These countries are trying to develop common policies, especially within the European Union (EU), to address their concerns. Therefore, the EU integration process has accelerated and contacts with the states at the application stage have been increased. In this process, states are trying to get rid of the negative effects of interdependence brought about by globalization; In order to eliminate security concerns, it increased its military expenditures against Russia and turned to various cooperations. Bosnia and Herzegovina

has also been taking steps to strengthen its defense for a while.

Undoubtedly, Bosnia and Herzegovina is trying to become stronger militarily; It does not ignore diplomacy. The country, which tries to strengthen its diplomatic relations with the powerful actors in the region, tries to develop its bilateral relations, especially with Germany. The strengthening of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the region is also in the interests of Germany.

In this context, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken initiatives to strengthen its armed forces. It is



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likely that the support given by Berlin to Sarajevo on this issue will be seen more concretely in the future.[1] However, attempts to strengthen the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not limited to Germany's support. It is possible to talk about a Sarajevo administration that tends to cooperate with the regional and global allies. In addition to this, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took steps in the national sense, approved a draft budget on the subject.[2] At this point, it should be stated that similar tendencies can be developed by other Balkan states.

Being aware of the concerns of the regional states, the EU has accelerated its efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region in order to eliminate these concerns. Therefore, the influence of the EU in the Balkans is increasing day by day. The Sarajevo administration also wishes to turn this effect into an opportunity. As a matter of fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasizes that its priority, especially in the context of its foreign and security policy, is Euro-Atlantic integration.[3]

In fact, the continuation of the Russia-Ukraine War and the intensification of contacts between China and Russia trigger the reservations of the regional capitals at the point of security. Bosnia and Herzegovina is strengthening both its military forces and its contacts with the EU to address these concerns.

In this context, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Borjana Krišto, met with the Commander of the EU Peace Force (EUFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Major General Helmut Habermayer, and discussed the possibilities of cooperation.[4] This meeting is very important for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because while the Sarajevo administration has shown to the international public that it is open to consensus on key issues; He also drew attention to the importance of military partnerships. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina's steps to address its security concerns are not limited to this.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, which pays attention to both democratic and economic integration in the European integration process, has signed the Rule Book on the operation of the National/Joint Contact Point with the European Police Organization (EUROPOL) in terms of security.[5] The return of this step will not only be beneficial in terms of security; it will also accelerate the country's integration with Europe. Because when the integration policies of the EU are considered, the importance of EUROPOL is obvious.

On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina Security Minister Nenad Nešić also visited Brussels on 22 March 2023.[6] It is expected that these contacts of Nešić, who met with the senior officials of the EU, will accelerate the EU integration process. As a

matter of fact, Nešić met with the European Union Neighborhood and Enlargement Commissioner Oliver Varheli and emphasized that it is important for Bosnia and Herzegovina to accelerate the European path for the security and stability of the region.[7]

Based on all this information, it can be stated that both regional and global actors have given various reactions to the changes in the international system. Especially, the increasing security problems recently paved the way for new collaborations. In this context, it is known that the integration process of the EU has accelerated. Bosnia and Herzegovina is trying to turn this process into an advantage in terms of both strengthening its army and accelerating EU membership.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

New Era in Czech Politics as Petr Pavel Takes Office

Petr Pavel, former Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Armed Forces and retired Chairman of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Military Committee, ran as an independent candidate in the 2023 Czech Presidential Election. Pavel, having won by an overwhelming margin of 58.32 percent of the vote to 41.67 percent, defeating former Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, took office as the fourth President of the Czech Republic on March 9, 2023. The commencement of Pavel's term represents the dawning of a new era, not only for him but also

for his country. Indeed, substantial changes are on the horizon for the Czech Republic, primarily, in terms of foreign policy.

In retrospect, prior to Pavel's triumph, the country was led by Miloš Zeman, a former member of the Communist Party, member of the Social Democratic Party and the Party of Civic Rights, respectively. During his 10 years in office, Zeman has developed close relations with both Russia and China. Therefore, during this period, the Czech Republic was regarded with suspicion



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by Western countries.

By 2023, the electoral race pitted Pavel, an advocate of transatlantic relations, against the populist politician Andrej Babiš. Nonetheless, there are also Westerners who are skeptical of Pavel. They particularly emphasize Pavel's brief period as a member of the Communist Party.

On the other hand, after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, which brought an end to the communist regime in the Czech Republic, Pavel joined the Czech Army and eventually rose to the rank of Chief of the General Staff. Subsequently, serving as Chairman of the NATO Military Committee from 2015 to 2018, he became the first officer from the former Eastern Bloc to hold such a position. Moreover, Pavel often cited the rhetoric of Vaclav Havel, the first president of the Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution, who was known to be highly critical of the communist regime. Therefore, the pro-Westerners in the country who support Pavel have confidence in him, taking these factors into account.

As attempts to deconstruct Pavel's political views in Czechia's domestic politics continued, Pavel's electoral victory was hailed by Western countries as it gave the impression that he would deviate from the foreign policy that Zeman had adopted. Western powers interpreted the victory as an affirmation of the Czech Republic's firm attachment to the West.

Pavel, who took office as the 4th President of the Czech Republic on March 9, 2023, formerly identified Russia and China as bigger threats than terrorism. [1] Accordingly, the Czech Republic has begun to emphasize its pro-Atlantic credentials, encouraging to eliminate any obstruction that impedes aid to Kiev, in view of the Russo-Ukrainian war.[2] In this respect, the Czech Republic is expected to strengthen its relations with the European Union (EU) and NATO.[3]

On the other hand, Pavel questioned his country's ties with China in the past, stating that human rights should be prioritized over economic interests in terms of international relations.[4] During the Zeman era, China had been lobbying in the Czech Republic through parliamentarians driven by Euroscepticism and anti-Western sentiments.

In the same vein, China's main strategic objectives in the Czech Republic included campaigning against the sovereignty claims of Taiwan and Tibet and weakening political support for third countries' territorial claims in the South China Sea. Nevertheless, the day after his election victory, Pavel had a telephone conversation with Taiwanese President Tsai-Ing Wen, in which he stated that the Czech Republic and Taiwan share the same values of freedom, democracy and human rights and that he would like to visit Taiwan in the future to meet with Wen in person.[5]

In case the visit takes place, Pavel will be the first president from an EU country to visit Taiwan. Moreover, Pavel's phone call with Wen was preceded by a congratulatory message from Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.[6] As one might expect, such engagements have provoked a reaction from Beijing.

As the Czech Republic's change of policy towards Russia and China was influenced by the election of Pavel, by the same token, the dynamics within the Visegrad Group have also started to change. In the Visegrad Group, which stood out with its conservative and Eurosceptical stance during Zeman's rule, Pavel ushered in a new era of rapprochement with Slovakia. Pavel's ideological overlap with Slovak President Zuzana Čaputová, who, similar to him, is an Atlanticist, pro-European and liberal politician, was a major factor behind the rapprochement. Thus, the Visegrad Group is divided between Poland, Hungary, led by conservative and nationalist governments, and the Czech Republic, Slovakia, led by progressive and pro-European governments.

All in all, with the new era in Czech politics as Pavel takes office, the Czech Republic adopted a new foreign policy oriented towards the West. It remains to be seen how this radical change in the Czech Republic, which has long maintained a balance of power policy between the West and the China-Russia dyad, will affect the country. By all means, the financial difficulties caused by the aid to Ukraine, the migrant crisis and other economic hardships that the country is enduring will pose a serious challenge to Pavel.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Taliban's Struggle with the Terrorist Organization ISKP

The withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan has deeply shaken the regional security dynamics and made the geography of Afghanistan fragile. The so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) of the terrorist organization Devlet al-Iraq and al-Sham (DEAS) has significantly increased its international visibility with its activities in the country. The organization poses a serious security problem for the Taliban administration due to the attacks it

has carried out in the last year. Recently, there has been a process of mutual casualties in the struggle between the Taliban and ISKP. As a matter of fact, statements come from both wings one after the other; Announcements about the damage done to the other party are made.

Finally, in the statement made by the Taliban on March 27, 2023, it was announced that an



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important DAESH leader was killed in a special counter-terrorism raid in Kabul. It was announced that a DAESH member named Asad Laghamani, known as "Qais", was neutralized in a special operation against DEASH shelters in the Butkhaak district of Kabul.[1]

The Taliban, which recently carried out another raid in Kabul, stated that three DAESH members were killed on 22 March 2023. Taliban Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid used the following statements in his statement on the subject:[2]

"Members of the terrorist organization DEASH used the shelter to carry out attacks in the city of Kabul and planned to target religious sites and civilians during Ramadan."

It is seen that the Taliban have recently increased their raids on the organization. Important operations are carried out in regions such as Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. On January 5, 2023, the Taliban announced that they had killed eight Daesh elements and arrested seven people in counter-operations in Kabul. Mujahid also said in a statement that the raids in Kabul and West Nimroz targeted DAESH members who carried out the latest attacks on the Longan Hotel, Pakistani Embassy and military airport in Kabul.[3] Therefore, it can be said that the raid is seen as a retaliation for the attacks in question. The organization carried out the attack on the Longan Hotel, where Chinese citizens were located, in December 2022, and the military airport attack in January 2023.

On February 27, 2023, it was announced that Ahangar, also known as the terrorist organization leader Abu Usman Al-Kashmiri, and DAESH intelligence and operation chief Kari Fateh were killed. This announcement was made just before the US in a recent report suggested that as many as 3,000 Daesh militants were operating in Afghanistan. The terrorist organization ISKP also recently confirmed Ahangar's death.[4]

The terrorist organization ISKP has described the Taliban as an apostate and an enemy since they came to the administration of Afghanistan. Due to the Doha Agreement signed by the Taliban with the USA on February 29, 2020, the anti-Taliban opposition of the organization increased and the attacks intensified. The organization organizes various attacks in order to create the perception that the Taliban cannot provide security in the country and to increase the pressure on the Taliban administration. While DAESH is listed as the deadliest terrorist organization at the global level in the reports regarding the last year; ISKP has become the organization that carries out the deadliest attacks due to its presence in Afghanistan.

In its strategy in Afghanistan in the first stage, ISCP tended to deepen the sectarian divisions, then targeted the countries that had a dialogue with the Taliban. The attacks carried out by the terrorist organization on the diplomatic missions in Kabul have disturbed many countries. Increasing its mobility against the Taliban, and especially its presence in Kabul, brought along individual attacks against the Taliban officials.

The organization carried out three assassinations in the last two weeks and achieved its purpose in all but one. Mohammad Dawood Muzammil, Head of the Herat Water Supply Department on March 8, 2023 and the Governor of Balkh just one day later, was targeted. On March 15, 2023, a regional governor was attacked in Nangarhar; however, it was seen that the ISKP terrorist organization failed in this attack.[5]

The attacks that have taken place show the new stage that ISKP has reached in its priorities. At the same time, it can be said that these terrorist acts are attacks aimed at avenging the leaders of the killed organization. Therefore, it is possible to talk about a terrorist organization acting to respond to the raids. Of course, the Taliban are also making counter moves. In addition to all these, the perception that terrorism has increased in Afghanistan, the instability of the country has deepened and the Taliban has not been able to provide security has become evident in the international arena.

As a matter of fact, a warning came from the European Union (EU) that Afghanistan should not serve as a "terrorist base" once again, and the concern was expressed about the "presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan".[6] From the US side, attention was drawn to the

influence of DAESH in Afghanistan through ISKP. In fact, it is very important at this point that the Commander of the US Central Forces, General Michael Kurilla, stated that "DEAS is strong in Afghanistan" and that the claim that "the organization could carry out a possible attack against the interests of the USA and allied countries within six months" was brought to the agenda.[7]

International rhetoric may lead the Taliban to come under more pressure for violating the Doha Agreement. In fact, the successive operation statements and the announcement that DAESH elements have been neutralized are also related to this. Thus, the Taliban is trying to show that the organization does not pose as much of a threat as mentioned and that it is determined to fight terrorism. As a matter of fact, in the announcement made on March 26, 2023, the Taliban rejected Washington's claim regarding the strong presence of DAESH in Afghanistan. He stated that the DAESH threat was suppressed.[8] In this context, in his statement dated March 19, 2023, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Taliban, Emir Khan Muttaki, stated that the members of DAESH fighting against the Taliban came from abroad.[9]

As can be seen, the statements and operations of the Taliban are closely related to the statements from the European and US wings. However, considering the ISKP's recent targeting of Taliban officials, it is clear that the risks arising from the terrorist organization in question have not completely disappeared. As in the case of the USA and the EU, it can be claimed that the statements regarding the threat posed by ISKP in Afghanistan encouraged the Taliban in terms of operations against the organization. Therefore, it can be predicted that both the ISKP's terrorist attacks and the Taliban's operations against the organization will continue.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on the "Oyu Tolgoi Operation"

Rio Tinto, one of the world's leading companies in the metal and mining industry, was founded in 1873 on the banks of the Rio Tinto River in Spain. Today it operates in 35 countries. One of the current operations of this plurinational company, which is currently based in England-Australia, is carried out in Mongolia.[1] Mongolia, which has one of the largest copper and gold reserves in the world, has attracted

many significant foreign investors to the region throughout history. The Oyu Tolgoi Mine, located in the Gobi Region of Mongolia, is also an area of operation that is on the agenda of Rio Tinto company. According to the data of Rio Tinto company, in the Oyu Tolgoi Project, the Government of Mongolia 34%; the company owns 66% of the shares.[2]



Göksu ÇANA

The mining activity of the open pit in Oyu Tolgoi started in 2011. In addition, the aforementioned region is of critical importance as it is the largest industrial complex ever built in Mongolia. Oyu Tolgoi will be thought to be the fourth-largest copper mine in the world when fully operational. It is seen as an important development that the Rio Tinto board and the Mongolia Government approved the start of underground works in January 2022 and that the mining began in 2023.[3] So, what effect did the Russia-Ukraine War have on the project in question?

After the war started with the decision of Russian President Vladimir Putin on February 24, 2022, Western states started to impose sanctions on Moscow in a while. Rio Tinto has become the first major mining company to announce that the West has decided to cut off relations with Russian companies on March 10, 2022, after the sanction step.[4] Therefore, the company in question has entered the process of evaluating alternative fuel sources for the Oyu Tolgoi Mine in Mongolia. But while the company is looking for alternative fuel sources; it also stated that the energy supply from Russia could not be completely stopped.[5] Because Mongolia borders only Russia and China. The fact that the country is surrounded by these two states does not leave much choice for foreign investors in supplying the projects.

Hence, Rio Tinto President Bold Baatar, referring to Russia and China, said that Mongolia has two big and powerful neighbors and stated that it is important to maintain peaceful and balanced relations with these countries.[6] For this reason, it has been seen that the decision to cut off connections with Russian companies, which was taken in the first place, was just a word.

Mongolia, which is between two great powers such as Russia and China; acts in line with this reality in foreign policy, economy, and trade. The anxiety about Mongolia's sovereignty and independence being damaged and becoming a satellite of any state can be seen as the main reason for the balance policy it follows. The most concrete example of this comes to light with the "Oyu Tolgoi Operation" of the Rio Tinto company. In other words, the regional and geopolitical reality is not only the Ulan Bator Government's; it can be said that foreign investors also affect their policies. That is to say, the Russia-Ukraine War did not change the balance policy applied by Mongolia for years.

As can be understood, after Russia's war on Ukraine, it was expected that the balance in the energy field would change. The most prominent issue in the sanctions decisions of the West against Russia was energy. The imposition of sanctions on Russia during the process did not apply to the operation of the Rio Tinto company in Mongolia. Being aware of the fact that Mongolia could not close its borders to Russia, Rio Tinto company seemed to react against Moscow by reacting to the Russia-Ukraine War, but this situation was short-lived.

As a result, the company continues its relations with Russian companies by acting in accordance with the policy of the Ulan Bator government under the influence of geopolitical realities and limited opportunities. For this reason, it is seen that the policy adopted by Rio Tinto at the beginning of the war has changed and in this regard, the Russia-Ukraine War doesn't have a negative effect on Rio Tinto's energy supply to the "Oyu Tolgoi Operation" in Mongolia.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Reflections of German-Polish Rivalry on European Geopolitics

It can be argued that one of Germany's biggest rivals in Europe is Poland. Germany is the most powerful country in the European Union (EU). Poland, on the other hand, aims to become a power center in Europe. The geopolitical goals of the two countries inevitably lead to a struggle for influence in Europe.

On the other hand, the most fundamental factor shaping Poland's attitude towards Germany is the country's historical memory. The occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany during the Second World War has an important place in the national memory of the Polish people.

In this context, on September 1, 2022, Poland demanded 1.3 trillion dollars in war reparations from Germany, citing war crimes committed by Nazi Germany during the Second World War. It is noteworthy that Poland did not act alone on the issue of war reparations against Germany. In this regard, Warsaw aims to put pressure on Berlin by acting together with Athens.[1]

As can be understood, there are serious disputes between Germany and Poland stemming from the past. It can be stated that one dimension of the current rivalry between the parties is shaped by this problem.



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On the other hand, Poland was one of the countries that reacted most harshly to Germany's policy towards Russia before the Russo-Ukrainian War. Therefore, Polish leaders made accusatory statements against Berlin after Moscow's intervention in Kiev.

As one might expect, the rivalry between Germany and Poland has come to light especially in the aftermath of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Poland is one of the main countries opposed to the domination of Europe by Germany. In this context, on December 4, 2022, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, President of the ruling Law and Justice Party in Poland, harshly criticized German "dominance" in Europe, saying that his country wanted to use peaceful means to implement plans that it had once tried to implement militarily.[2]

These statements are extremely important in terms of reflecting the attitude of the decision-making mechanism in Poland towards Germany. Therefore, the rulers in power in Poland have a negative attitude towards Germany.

On the other hand, Poland made the most decisive moves in Germany's supply of Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine. In this context, on January 11, 2023, Polish President Andrzej Duda announced that his country would send German-made Leopard-2 tanks to the Kiev administration.[3]

Nevertheless, Warsaw's move put serious pressure on Berlin. Until then, Germany had agreed to send old Marder armored combat vehicles to Ukraine, but refrained from sending Leopard-2 tanks. This was because Germany was afraid of confrontation with Russia and was careful not to send heavy weapons that could affect the course of the war. However, Poland has not hesitated to send weapons that could change the course of the war in Ukraine. Poland's statements that it could send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine if necessary, even without Germany's approval, put great pressure on Berlin. In the end, Germany agreed to send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine.

In a sense, Poland killed two birds with one stone when Germany decided to send these tanks to Ukraine. Thus, Poland was instrumental in further increasing the tensions between Russia and Germany, two of its greatest enemies in history. Accordingly, the main strategy of the Warsaw administration is for Moscow and Berlin to drain each other's energy.

Moreover, it should be noted that Poland's biggest ally in Europe is the UK. Considering that Poland aims to become a power center in Europe, its partnership with the UK gains importance. The Lon-

don administration's geopolitical objectives in Europe are based on preventing the Russia-Germany rapprochement. In this context, Poland stands out as a critical partner for the UK to realize this goal. This is because Poland is one of the rare states in Europe that is both anti-German and anti-Russian.

In addition to all these, on March 21, 2023, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki delivered a speech at Heidelberg University in Germany. Morawiecki stated that Europe could fall into the mistakes of the past if nations within the EU try to dominate other nations. Moreover, the Polish Prime Minister pointed out that "pro-Europeanism" could not be achieved through further centralization but through support for EU enlargement. Moreover, Morawiecki reiterated Poland's demand for reparations from Germany for the Second World War.[4]

In short, Warsaw opposes the centralization of the EU. This is because Poland believes that this would increase Germany's influence in the EU countries. It is also clear that Poland will continue to pressure Germany on the issue of war reparations.

On 24 March 2023, Morawiecki emphasized that Germany was not doing enough to support Ukraine. The Polish Prime Minister said that Germany should give more arms, ammunition and money to Ukraine because Berlin is by far the richest and largest country in the EU. In other words, Morawiecki accused Germany of "not being as generous as expected". Moreover, Morawiecki underlined that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members should allocate 3% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defense spending. [5] Indeed, Poland announced in February 2023 that it would allocate 4% of its GDP to defense in 2023.[6]

In sum, Poland is pursuing a policy of putting pressure on Germany while effectively using the NATO factor. Therefore, Morawiecki's statements aim to put Germany, which has long insisted on increasing its defense spending to 2% of its GDP, in a difficult situation. In addition, the Warsaw administration is also trying to put Germany under pressure by continuing its attempts to get Berlin, the most economically powerful member of the EU, to provide more arms and financial aid to Kiev.

As a result, the rivalry between Berlin and Warsaw has become even more pronounced with the war in Ukraine. It is foreseeable that relations between the two sides will remain tense and Poland will continue its policy of seeking opportunities to put pressure on Germany, such as with the Leopard 2 tanks.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Are Tensions Between Romania and Russia Escalating?

After the end of the Cold War, there have been significant transformations in the perception of security in the world. Although there are differences in the security perception of European states, a common approach in foreign policy and security strategies has gained strength with the Russia-Ukraine War, especially with the influence of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

On the other hand, at every opportunity, Russia voices its objection to the unipolar world order and thus to the global leadership of the United States of America (USA). This objection

deepens the Russia-West struggle. The war in Ukraine is a reflection of this. However, the West agrees that Russia's intervention in Ukraine is a violation of the sovereignty and independence of states. Therefore, the actors felt the need to develop various measures against Russia. Romania is one of the leading countries.

In fact, the Kremlin has repeatedly expressed its discontent with NATO's containment strategy against Russia and its eastward expansion. This is one of the reasons for the war in Ukraine. However, the war has brought with it sanctions targeting the Moscow leadership.



Veli Can AKKAŞ

Russia resorted to counter-sanctions and used energy as a trump card. This led to an energy crisis. Therefore, European states have turned to alternative suppliers and sustainable energy sources. In this context, Romania is trying to turn the energy crisis into an opportunity and become one of the most important suppliers in Europe. In this context, the Bucharest administration has signed several agreements with various companies to extract natural gas offshore and transport it to Europe for the years 2026-2042.[1]

In this context, Romania has recently intensified its contacts with the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These contacts can be interpreted as Bucharest turning towards Gulf capital for its energy projects. It seems inevitable that this process will cause discomfort in Moscow.

Despite all the discomfort, Romania takes care to stand by Ukraine. As a matter of fact, a program to supply artillery ammunition to Ukraine has recently been launched and Bucharest has been involved in this program.[2]

It is clear that Romania wants to prevent a possible Russian victory. Of course, Bucharest's approach is also influenced by the Transnistria issue and the tendency of the Moldovan government to unite with Romania. As a matter of fact, Romania has expressed at every opportunity that it will stand by Moldova. For this reason, Moldovan President Maia Sandu thanked the Bucharest administration.[3] It is also possible to interpret this as a struggle for influence between Moscow and Bucharest over Moldova.

Undoubtedly, the issue also has a NATO dimension. In parallel with NATO's activities in the Black Sea, Romania's influence in the region is increasing. This does not escape Russia's attention.

Reflecting these controversies, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova sharply criticized Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu's remarks that the Moldovan language was created by the Soviet Union and that Russia uses it as a propaganda tool.[4] Therefore, it is foreseeable that tensions between the parties will increase. Another dimension of tension between the parties is information technology. As a matter of fact, Romania, which works in the field of technology, has banned Russian software in the country.[5]

As a result, Romania, which stands out as a critical actor in Europe, which has a monolithic attitude towards Russia, is trying to become an important regional power against Russia by us-

ing both military and economic partnerships. As a matter of fact, Bucharest, in addition to its continued support for Kiev, has drawn Russia's reaction due to its efforts to become an energy supplier, its relations with the Moldovan government, NATO's increasing presence in the Black Sea and the steps it has taken in terms of technological developments. Therefore, it is foreseeable that the disagreements on the Bucharest-Moscow line will deepen and tensions between the parties will rise.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Nord Stream Deadlock

Nord Stream consists of two separate pipelines, Nord Stream I and Nord Stream II. While the Nord Stream I Pipeline originates from Viborg, Russia, the Nord Stream II Pipeline originates from Ust-Luga, also in Russia. Both pipelines run under the Baltic Sea in parallel to Lubmin, Germany. The pipelines are financed by Nord Stream AG, a consortium consisting of Russian, German, Dutch and French companies, with Russia holding 51% of the shares and other financiers, i.e. Germany, the Netherlands and France, holding the rest. Nord Stream is the only

Russian project that bypasses Ukraine and delivers Russian gas directly to Western Europe.

Whereas the Nord Stream I Pipeline, which is part of the Nord Stream Project, inaugurated officially in 2011, the Nord Stream II Pipeline has been a controversial topic since its introduction. Therefore, numerous disputes over its construction have arisen. The second pipeline was strongly opposed, in particular by the United States of America (USA).



YİĞİT KIRDÜK

The USA's opposition to the project has been centered around Ukraine. Since the implementation of the Nord Stream I project, Russia has tried to reduce the amount of natural gas exported to Europe through Ukraine. Until 2011, year the pipeline was inaugurated, 80% of the Russian natural gas exported to Europe passed through Ukraine, while by 2019 this share had fallen to 45%. Ukraine's share is projected to fall even further, in case the second pipeline becomes operational.

Furthermore, this decrease in percentage is also thought to lead to a decline in Ukraine's transit revenues from Russia. Then, Ukraine's declining geopolitical importance in the eyes of Russia has also been mentioned by the USA as another significant factor.

On the other hand, the USA was also concerned with Europe's growing energy dependence on Russia, leading to the imposition of sanctions on individuals involved in the construction of the second pipeline, under former US President Donald Trump and incumbent US President Joe Biden. Some of the sanctions were passed by the US Congress and some were decreed by Biden himself.

In 2021, as the construction of the second pipeline was completed, Germany canceled the inauguration of the line following the intervention of the Moscow administration in Ukraine on February 22, 2022, in an atmosphere disturbed by the US opposition to the project. The project was then completely abandoned.

With the commencement of the Russian-Ukrainian War, when European countries were in the process of committing to sanctions against Russia, natural gas exports to Europe through the Nord Stream I Pipeline were interrupted periodically. Russia claimed "maintenance and technical problems" as the reason for the cuts.

Europe, on the other hand, began to search for suppliers and supply routes that could provide an alternative to Russian natural gas. Such European initiatives led to tensions between Russia and the European Union (EU). Moscow blamed the EU for the long interruptions and started to argue that the maintenance costs of the pipelines should be borne by the EU, i.e. the destination of the gas supplies.[1]

During the same period, Russia announced the indefinite suspension of natural gas exports to Europe through the Nord Stream.[2] Resulting in a complete cessation of exports, these interruptions naturally led to a spike in energy prices in Europe and the EU ignored Russia's calls, not wanting to bear more costs with an energy crisis looming on the horizon. Against such a backdrop, Russian

President Vladimir Putin put Europe under further pressure by expressing his readiness to open the Nord Stream II Pipeline.[3]

Shortly afterwards, the news that a Danish F-16 detected a gas leak in the Nord Stream II Pipeline and a depressurization in the Nord Stream I Pipeline was reported by the press. Nord Stream AG, the consortium responsible for the operation of the pipelines, stated that the cause of the malfunctions had not yet been determined and that it was not possible at this time to specify how long it would take to fix them.[4]

At a time when Putin's statements about his readiness to open the Nord Stream II Pipeline had raised suspicions in Europe, the occurrence of such a disruption led to various conspiracy theories being discussed. Denmark announced that it was unlikely that the leak was "accidental", while Poland claimed that there was a "sabotage". Subsequently, Swedish seismologists announced that two explosions had occurred in the pipelines before the gas leak.[5]

Further down the line, in the midst of the turmoil, Ukraine accused Russia of carrying out an attack on the Nord Stream, with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stating that if the allegations were proven, the Union would respond to Russia in the harshest way possible. The USA, on the other hand, promised to protect the infrastructure of its ally, the EU, referring to the "possibility of sabotage". In response, the Kremlin labeled the declarations "stupid" and "absurd", dismissing the accusations.

Thereafter, the Kremlin suggested that the possibility of a sabotage be addressed by the United Nations (UN) Security Council. [6] Then, changing the course of the sabotage accusations, Russia stated that the USA would benefit the most from a possible sabotage.[7] Thus, mutual accusations started between the sides. While commenting on the Russian accusations, Biden emphasized that Russia cannot intimidate the West.[8]

The process of investigating the source of the incident was as challenging as the process of theorizing. Russia emphasized that the nature of any Western investigation would be crippled if it did not take part in it, and announced that it would launch its own independent investigations to identify the source of the leaks.

In the same manner, Western countries, such as Germany, adopted Russia's method and started to conduct independent research of their own. As mutual investigations continued, both sides confirmed that they had detected "traces of explosives" in the pipelines. As a result, Moscow pointed to the USA as being

responsible for the “sabotage” calling for an international investigation, and reiterated its call for the UN Security Council to take action. [9] Washington, on the other hand, went on the defensive, stating that Russia continued to spread fake news.

While the current dispute continued with mutual accusations between Russia and the USA, the German press, after investigations, claimed that the attack was carried out from a yacht rented from a Poland-based company owned by two Ukrainians. The claim was corroborated by intelligence information obtained by the US authorities.[10] Kiev, for its part, denied any involvement in the Nord Stream sabotage.[11]

Ultimately, the cause of the sabotage at the Nord Stream has not yet been conclusively identified by international organizations. However, research by both Russian and Western countries indicates that there are signs of an explosion. With that being said, each day, more and more actors are alleged to be involved in the incident, and a new front in the Russia-Ukraine War, which can be described as the “Nord Stream Front”, is opening up as international organizations continue their investigations.

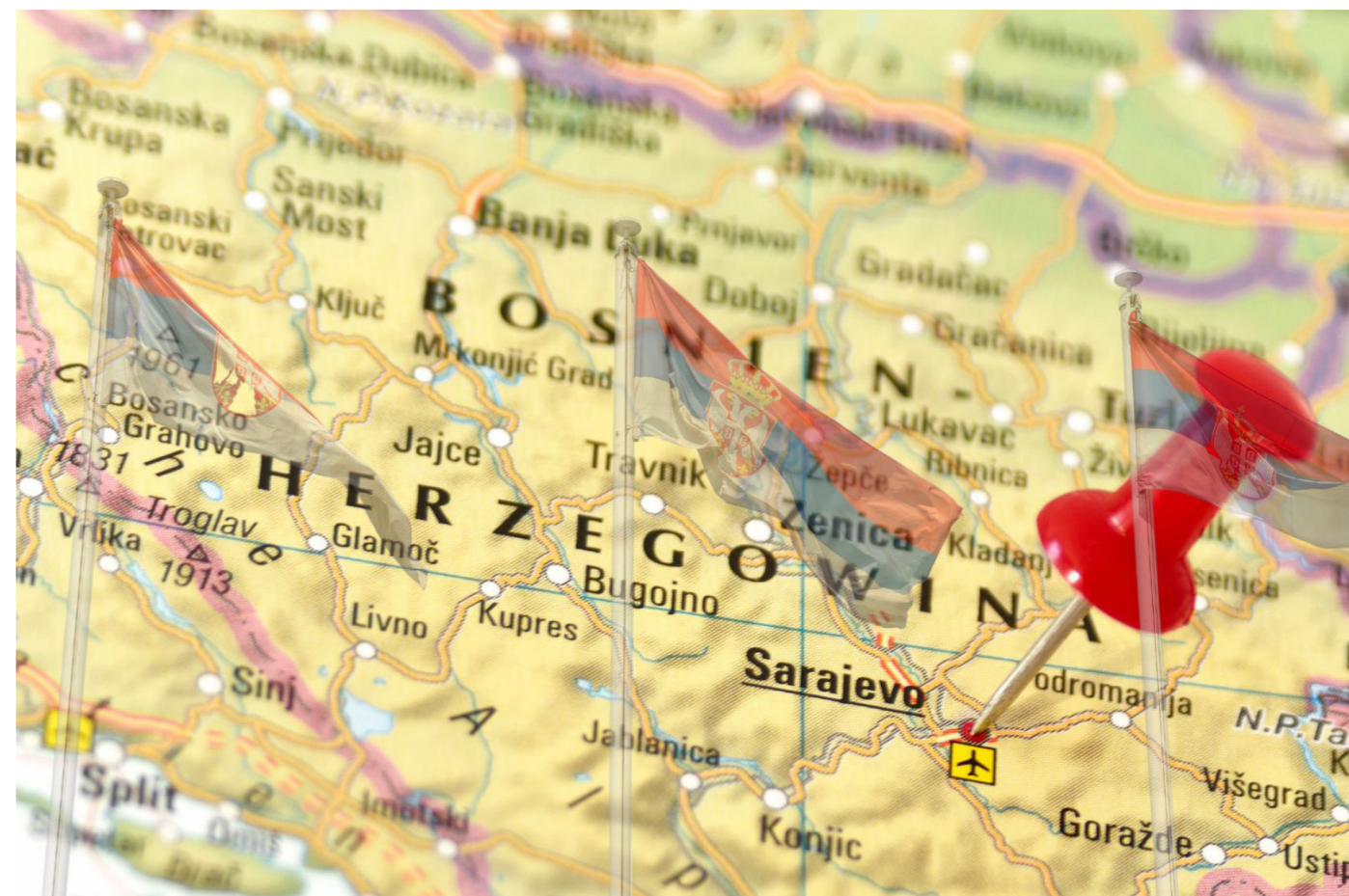
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[2] “Rusia corta el gas a Europa de forma indefinida: el peor escenario para el invierno se hace realidad”, Xataka, <https://www.xataka.com/energia/rusia-corta-gas-a-europa-forma-indefinida-peor-escenario-para-invierno-se-hace-realidad>, (Date of Accession: 05.07.2022).

[3] “Putin asegura que Rusia “está lista” para abrir el Nord Stream 2”, Grupo Multimedia, <https://grupormultimedia.com/putin-asegura-que-rusia-esta-lista-para-abrir-el-nord-stream-2-idi046689/>, (Date of Accession: 08.07.2022).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Context of Republika Srpska’s Policies

Bosnia and Herzegovina had a very complex political structure with the Dayton Agreement, which was signed on 14 December 1995 and ended the Bosnian War. According to the relevant agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina basically consists of two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is administratively divided into 10 cantons.[1] Also, these two entities are excluded from the country; there is also a self-governing special district called Brcko.

In particular, Republika Srpska and its President Milorad Dodik come to the fore with their different policies. For example, memberships of the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which represent the West against Russia, have been determined as important foreign policy targets by the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, Dodik stands out with his closeness to Russian President Vladimir Putin. In this sense, it is possible to say that there is a serious difference between the general state attitude and the views of the Re-



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publika Srpska. The situation in question also shows itself in the recent decisions taken by the Republika Srpska. Moreover, it can be said that the decisions taken are of the kind that will create differences in the functioning of the exceptional structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future.

The Law on Immovable Property, which the Republika Srpska was determined to enact, received a great reaction both from Bosniak parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally. It can be said that this law is at the center of the reactions because it is perceived as a step towards deterioration in the integrity of the state. Because the law allows the transfer of state-owned immovables used in the functioning of public institutions to the Republika Srpska. The general view is to the contrary and argues that the immovables belong to the state.

In addition to all these, Republika Srpska adopted a draft law on 23 March 2023 that requires non-profit organizations financed from abroad and operating in Republika Srpska to register and report their work.[2] It can be said that this step was taken with the suspicion that an obstacle was created in front of the decisions taken by the Republika Srpska. The decision of the Republika Srpska to terminate its cooperation with the United States of America (USA) and British Embassies after a short while, citing various activities,[3] also confirms this situation.

Recent developments indicate that Republika Srpska's good relations with Russia will continue. Because the non-governmental organizations in Republika Srpska are of the opinion that the relevant draft law, which was adopted on March 23, 2023, has similar aspects with the Russian laws.[4] In this context, the decision to terminate the cooperation with the USA and British Embassies also symbolizes a break. The same decision took the tension between Republika Srpska leader Milorad Dodik and Western actors to the next level.

Also, responding to the comparison made by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken between Dodik and Putin, Dodik expressed that he was pleased to be seen as such a wonderful person to be compared to Putin.[5]

All these developments show that Republika Srpska is rapidly moving away from the basic political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is clear that Dodik, who did not hide his close relationship with Putin, took decisions in this direction and followed a policy parallel to Russia. The general attitude of the Republika Srpska, especially the Law on Immovable Property,

also reveals the discontents with the basic order that created Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a matter of fact, this law and similar decisions, suspended twice by the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schmidt, cause an increase in concerns in Sarajevo.

Considering the last step of Republika Srpska towards Western actors, it is obvious that the difficulties in front of Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership goal will continue. Because Serbs, one of the three ethnic groups, have the right to have a say in the main institutions of the country, such as the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidential Council. Moreover, Republika Srpska's ongoing closeness with Russia and its recent decision on the USA and British Embassies run counter to the interests of the West in the Balkans. For the West, which aims to stabilize the Balkans and weaken the Russian influence, the existence of practices similar to Russia's policies is the last thing to be desired.

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[4] "Bosnian Serbs..."

[5] "Dodik replied to Blinken: I am glad that he is talking about me and comparing me to Putin", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/dodik-replied-to-blinken-i-am-glad-that-he-is-talking-about-me-and-comparing-me-to-putin/>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

ANKASAM IN PRESS

3 April 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), shared his assessments on Saudi Arabia's process of joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the Epoch Times.

4 April 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Senior Energy Advisor Dr. Cenk Pala commented on the impact of the decision to reduce oil production of 9 countries, including Russia and Saudi Arabia, on the Western World for Sputnik News.

5 April 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Chief Energy Advisor Dr. Cenk Pala's comments shared on Sputnik News about the impact of the decision of 9 countries, including Russia and Saudi Arabia, to reduce oil production in the Western World, were published in Anatolian News.

6 April 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated Sweden's remaining as the only non-NATO member country in the Scandinavian region for TRT News.



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

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JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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