



# ANKASAM

## bulletin

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Seeking Cooperation in Combating Terrorism on the Pakistan–Iran

Pakistan and Iran, being border neighbors, experience cooperation processes and some conflicts together. Although the two sides have taken various initiatives to develop economic cooperation based on a win-win logic, the activities of separatist terrorist groups in Balochistan geography sometimes bring the

two countries face to face. Pakistan occasionally blames Iran for the attacks carried out by Baloch groups, while Tehran makes similar remarks against Islamabad.

However, the increase in terrorist acts by Baloch groups means that there are security



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problems for both countries. At this point, it should be noted that part of the Balochistan geography lies within the borders of Pakistan, while the other part lies within the territory of Iran. Therefore, Balochistan Province in Pakistan and Sistan-Baluchistan Province in Iran constitute the most backward regions of both countries. Accordingly, the Baloch believe that they are not backward, but rather left behind as a result of the policies of the respective states. This makes it easier for separatist Baloch groups to find social grounds for terrorist acts and to recruit personnel.

First of all, it should be noted that this approach, which assumes that these regions have been deliberately left behind, does not reflect the reality. In fact, Pakistan and Iran are trying to ensure the development of the region by establishing joint trade zones in the said geography and cooperating with various initiatives to eliminate the conditions that lead to terrorism. Nevertheless, the economic and sociological problems of the region are being exploited and used by separatist Baloch terrorist organizations, making the region insecure.

The latest example of this situation is the terrorist attack that took place in Iran on May 21, 2023, which resulted in the deaths of six security personnel. The attack, which took place in the Savaran District of Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan Province, involved a clash with terrorists trying to infiltrate across the border. In the aftermath of this incident, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kenani asked the Government of Pakistan to increase border security in line with bilateral agreements.<sup>[1]</sup>

Even though Kenani's remarks were criticizing the Islamabad administration for its security weaknesses, Tehran emphasized the bilateral agreements signed in the past with the Islamabad administration and thus drew attention to the importance of cooperation between the two countries in the fight against terrorism.

Indeed, Pakistan, as a country suffering from terrorism, attaches importance to cooperation processes in its security policies and takes a decisive stance in the fight against terrorism. That is why, in a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, on behalf of the Pakistani people and the government of Pakistan, a message of condolences was conveyed to the families of the victims and the Government of Iran for the terrorist attack in Iran and the attack was strongly condemned.<sup>[2]</sup>

The Islamabad administration has been very prudent in avoiding an approach in which each side blames the other for terrorist attacks, as in the past, and in developing a stance that centers on cooperation on common security.

It is understandable that the parties seek cooperation on common security concerns. This is because the strengthening of separatist Baloch movements on one side of the border will inevitably have an encouraging effect on the Baloch on the other side of the border. This poses a threat of partition for both countries. In this sense, it would not be a surprising development if the parties come together and strengthen their cooperation within the framework of the sensitivity of protecting their territorial integrity. The main priority of both Islamabad and Tehran is the preservation of the status quo.

It is known that the power vacuum in the region, especially after the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan, has created a space for terrorist organizations in terms of access to weapons and recruitment. Indeed, terrorist attacks by separatist Baluch groups have been on an upward trend since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan on August 31, 2021.

In fact, there is an opinion that the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in a way to open space for terrorist organizations in order to destabilize the Belt and Road Initiative, which was developed under the leadership of China, its most important rival in the global power struggle. As it is known, both Pakistan and Iran are states that have signed a participation agreement to join the Belt and Road Initiative. Therefore, it can be said that the attacks targeting these two countries serve the same purpose and the perceived threat increases the importance of cooperation between Islamabad and Tehran. Therefore, it is foreseeable that cooperation between the two sides on border security, enhanced counterterrorism cooperation and development of the Balochistan regions will increase.

In conclusion, the terrorist attack in Iran on May 21, 2023 has once again brought Islamabad-Tehran relations to the agenda in the context of border security. Although there are some trust issues between the parties, it is possible to argue that the common threat will lead to improved cooperation between the parties in the fight against terrorism.

[1] "Iran Urges Pakistan to Boost Border Security After Deadly Attack", Voice of America, <https://www.voanews.com/a/iran-urges-pakistan-to-boost-border-security-after-deadly-attack/7102421.html>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[2] "Pakistan Strongly Condemns Terrorist Attack in Iran", Dunya News, <https://dunyanews.tv/en/Pakistan/725608-Pakistan-strongly-condemns-terrorist-attack-in-iran>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The polarized era in the Asia-Pacific: US-Philippines Rapprochement

The political atmosphere in the Asia-Pacific is shaped by the polarization and alliances in the region. Indeed, it can be said that the region has become the main playing field for the rivalry between China and the United States (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Asia-Pacific is at the center of this global struggle for influence. Undoubtedly, this situation pushes the countries of the region to choose sides and cooperate with one of the great powers in foreign policy-making processes.

On the other hand, these alliances create advantages for hegemonic powers such as the

US and China in terms of increasing their influence, not being alone in the international public opinion regarding their actions, and gaining both geopolitical and geostrategic advantage over each other. At the heart of these alliances lies military cooperation in particular.

Indeed, when the political framework of the region is analyzed, it can be said that countries such as Australia, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam have established close contacts with the US and NATO. This is because these countries act on the basis of the West in the region and shape their foreign policies



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based on the “anti-China sentiment” exported by the US. Moreover, it can be argued that the US sees these actors as an opportunity for cooperation in containing China.

In this context, the Philippines has recently come to the forefront among these actors. In this context, first of all, the geopolitical positioning of the Philippines is instructive in terms of the aforementioned rapprochement. Because the Philippines is located in Southeast Asia,[1] For this reason, the country is located to the east of the South China Sea. This is because the proximity of both the South China Sea, which is disputed by the Nine-Dash Line issue, and Taiwan, which is a territorial integrity issue for China, makes Manila an essential regional actor for Washington to cooperate with.

In addition, the borders between the parties in the Asia-Pacific are sharpening and the poles are becoming clearer. This is increasingly blocking the path to reconciliation and forcing regional actors to choose sides. Indeed, in such a conjuncture where the security framework has become quite fragile, it can be said that despite some historical problems, the Philippines prefers to develop a closer and more positive dialogue with the West and the US.

It can be argued that one of the most important examples of this situation is Manila’s frequent expressions of concern over the South China Sea. Indeed, on December 20, 2022, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs stated that Beijing’s activities in the South China Sea have caused “grave concern” in Manila. At the same time, the ministry stated that China’s actions there violate international law and ignore the territorial status.[2]

On the other hand, on February 2, 2023, in a joint statement by Philippine Defense Secretary Carlito Galvez and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Asutin, Manila gave Washington access to four new military bases.[3] Both developments show that the Philippines has distanced itself from China and entered into a military alliance with the US.

Moreover, in addition to these examples, the latest development is quite remarkable. As a matter of fact, Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the President of the Philippines, organized a four-day trip to the United States and held a meeting with US President Joe Biden at the White House on May 1, 2023.[4] Bilateral trade relations between the two sides and increasing US investment in the Philippines were discussed during the meeting.[5]

In addition, the main topic of the meeting was China’s activities in the Asia-Pacific and in particular in the South China Sea. For this reason, both presidents agreed that Manila and Washington

should increase and deepen their military and security-based agreements.

On the other hand, Marcos became the first President of the Philippines to visit the White House in ten years.[6] In particular, the emphasis on China’s regional actions during the meeting, especially the expansion of military ties between Manila and Washington, can be interpreted as the Philippines establishing a close contact with the United States over anti-China sentiments and choosing its side.

In conclusion, the Philippines stands out as a strategically important actor in the Asia-Pacific due to its geopolitical location and proximity to regional crises. Indeed, the conjuncture of the region forces states to choose sides. Given the importance Washington attaches to Manila due to its strategic importance, it can be said that the Philippines has chosen the US, and therefore the West, in terms of anti-China sentiment.

[1] “The Philippines at A Glance”, Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations, <https://www.un.int/philippines/philippines/philippines-glance#>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[2] “Philippines ‘Concerned’ over China Land Reclamation in Disputed Sea”, Thai PBS World, <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/philippines-concerned-over-china-land-reclamation-in-disputed-sea/>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[3] “Philippines Agrees to Allow US Wider Access to Military Bases”, Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/2/philippines-set-to-allow-wider-us-access-to-military-bases>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[4] “Biden Looks to Strengthen Ties with Philippines as Marcos Visits White House”, Cable News Network, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/05/01/politics/philippines-president-marcos-biden-defense/index.html>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[5] “President Marcos Jr. Meets with President Biden – But the United States Position in Southeast Asia is Increasingly Shaky”, Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/president-marcos-jr-meets-president-biden-us-position-south-east-asia-increasingly-shaky>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[6] “Ironclad: Biden, Marcos Jr Affirm United States-Philippines Security Ties”, Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/1/military-ties-top-agenda-as-biden-meets-philippines-marcos-jr>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Key Factor in Uzbekistan-Israel Relations: Water

Globalization and strategies for developing bilateral relations between countries reveal new areas of cooperation today. There is also an increasing rapprochement between Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries. In addition to the increasing interest of the capital-bearing Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia in Central Asia, Israel also tends to develop cooperation with the countries of the region. There is an increasing interest in Israel among the countries of the region.

An Israeli delegation headed by the Minister of Water of Uzbekistan Shavkat Khamraev visited Uzbekistan on 21-23 May 2023. The said visit is a first in the history of diplomatic relations between the two countries. During the meetings, views were exchanged on the development of the modern water sector, promising areas of cooperation, and examining Israel's best practices. During the visit, Minister Khamraev met with Israel Katz, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and Avi Dichter, Minister of Agriculture and Local Development. In addition,



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the intention of the International Development Cooperation Agency Mashav to open an expert office on agriculture and water management in Uzbekistan has been announced.[1]

It is seen that the ties and cooperation between the parties are mostly realized through Mashav. Mashav has a great role and contribution in the current dialogue and partnerships. Various projects are being implemented between this development cooperation institution and Israel and Uzbekistan.

In 2023, when the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations is celebrated, the governments of Uzbekistan and Israel focus on evaluating new cooperation opportunities. In addition, the two countries accelerated the talks on bilateral cooperation in the fields of politics, diplomacy, economy and culture. In addition, it is known that intergovernmental coalition studies are also carried out. In May 2023, the establishment of the Uzbekistan-Israel Chamber of Commerce was also on the agenda. Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Israel, Ms. Feruza Makhmudova, stated that the aforementioned formation would be "an important and special step in bringing the business circles of the countries closer together".[2]

Uzbekistan, one of the Central Asian countries acting with the strategy of attracting foreign investment, also attaches importance to the position of Israeli investors in the business world of Uzbekistan. It is known that Tel Aviv attaches importance to investments in Uzbekistan. Tashkent International Investment Forum held on 24-26 March 2023 had an effect that strengthened the commercial ties between the two actors in this sense. However, cooperation opportunities between the parties cover various fields from education to the health sector. Israel also transfers to Uzbekistan on the development of agricultural infrastructure. The visit within the scope of the modern water sector cooperation is also important in this sense.

On the other hand, it is possible to state that cooperation in the field of water and irrigation is the basic dynamic of bilateral relations. Throughout Uzbekistan, Israeli influence can be seen in drip irrigation system, water storage methods and technologies. This effect is also reflected in bilateral trade. In 2022, the trade volume between the two countries, including the agricultural technologies sector, reached 40 billion dollars.[3]

Israel also brings technology transfer to the agenda in bilateral cooperation to a large extent. In the relations it has developed with Uzbekistan, it focuses on deepening partnerships by sharing its experience and capacity in the field of agriculture and irrigation and technological developments in other cooperation sectors. Especially after the Abraham Agreements signed in 2020, Israel's ties with Uzbekistan, which revised its relations with Muslim-majority countries, date back to the past. However, factors such as the developments that will change both the agreement and the regional balances and the effects of the energy crisis have also increased the intention to strengthen bilateral relations.

As a visa-free country, it is possible to predict that the value of Uzbekistan will increase even more for Israeli officials and investors. Tashkent has increased its international prestige and improved its bilateral relations. It also takes an active stance on regional issues and aims to be a leader in Central Asia. It can be said that Tel Aviv sees Tashkent as a leader. Comprehensive dialogue initiatives and cooperation steps confirm this. In May 2022, the seventh round of bilateral diplomatic consultations was held between the parties. In this meeting, mutual intentions to strengthen existing ties were declared. It is possible to see the steps taken today as the product of this cooperation idea.

However, it can be said that the Jewish community, which is mostly found in Samarkand and Bukhara, has increased the closeness between the two actors. The Jewish diaspora, numbering several hundred, is the main actor of cultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and Israel. It is also recorded that there are 3,000 Jews in Tashkent.[4] It is also stated in the sources that there are a total of 4,200 Jews in these three cities today.[5] Mutual visits also provide benefits in terms of tourism cooperation and cultural ties.



As a result, it is seen that the cooperation and closeness between Israel and Uzbekistan will continue to increase. There are effective factors that will strengthen the bilateral partnership. It is understood that especially the issue of water and agricultural cooperation will play a decisive role in Uzbekistan-Israel relations. As mentioned, Israel is preparing to open an agriculture and water expertise office in Uzbekistan. In addition, it is possible to predict that the closeness of Israel-Uzbekistan will increase in relation to the solution of the drought problem in the regions near the Aral Sea. It is seen that the Tashkent Government trusts Tel Aviv's methods and technology in this regard. Studies are carried out in this direction through the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan.[6] In this context, it is likely that activities will be carried out to attract Israeli experts and investments in the country.

It is expected that the issue of water supply, sharing and supply will be the main and dominant factor in the international relations of the future. At this point, it is understood that the cooperation between Israel and Uzbekistan is very important for Tashkent. Therefore, it can be said that new cooperation mechanisms will also focus on this area.

[1] "Uzbekistan and Israel Discuss Prospects for Mutual Cooperation in the Field of Water Management", Uz Daily, <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/81177>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).

[2] "Uzbekistan and Israel are strengthening their relationship", Jerusalem Post, <https://www.jpost.com/business-and-innovation/article-705377>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).

[3] "Israel tightens ties with Uzbekistan", Al Monitor, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/07/israel-tightens-ties-uzbekistan>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).

[4] "The Jerusalem Post: Uzbekistan: Warm welcomes and Jewish communities on the Silk Road", Uzbekistan Travel, <https://uzbekistan.travel/en/o/jerusalem-post-uzbekistan-warm-welcomes-and-jewish-communities-silk-road/>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).

[5] "Discovering A Timeless Legacy: The Story Behind Jewish Samarkand, Uzbekistan", World Jewish Travel, <https://www.worldjewishtravel.org/listing/discovering-a-timeless-legacy-the-story-behind-jewish-samarkand-uzbekistan/>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).

[6] "Uzbekistan Counts on Israel's Help in Solving Problem of Drought in Regions Near Aral Sea – Ministry", Trend, <https://en.trend.az/casia/uzbekistan/3733802.html>, (Date of Accession: 27.05.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Reflection of the Russian–Western Showdown in the Balkans: The Kosovo Crisis

The Russia-Ukraine War, which started on February 24, 2022, is a result of the Russia-Western rivalry in the background, even though it is a war between Moscow and Kiev on the field and as a result of the disagreements between the two actors. Undoubtedly, the war in question has made the global security equations fragile and crises in various geographies have escalated. In this context, one of the escalating crises as a reflection of the Russia-West struggle is the Kosovo Crisis.

Although the Kosovo Crisis is basically related to the internal dynamics of Kosovo and the orientations of the regional states as a reflection of the demographic heterogeneity in the Balkans, the fact that the Balkans is also South-eastern Europe triggers the escalation of the crisis. In other words, Russia, which had to face the pressure of the West and could not achieve the desired picture in the war in Ukraine, said to the West through the Balkans, "I can destabilize you through the crises in your neighborhood."



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gives the message. In this sense, the Kremlin implies that a war that Russia loses to Ukraine will evolve into a process in which the whole world will lose. At this point, the Balkans draws attention as an area where it is desired to increase the pressure on the West through crises and conflicts. Undoubtedly, the Serbs, whom the Moscow administration can influence in the context of pan-Slavism, have a great role in conveying the message in question.

Considering Serbia's ideal of "Greater Serbia", it can be said that the Belgrade administration acts with the aim of being the guard of all Serbs. For this reason, the situation of the Serbs living in the north of Kosovo may lead to a confrontation between Serbia and Kosovo in particular, and even Albania, and Russia and the West in general, since the majority of Kosovo's population is Albanian.

This is why Russia's pressure on the West through the Balkans escalated after the war in Ukraine. As a matter of fact, the election debates in the north of Kosovo since April 2022 and the license plate and uniform identity crisis that broke out in November 2022 brought the Pristina administration and Kosovo Serbs face to face. This led to the ringing of war bells in the region. The point where the tension finally reached is in the north of Kosovo; that is, the protests that took place with the oath of three mayors elected after the elections held in the shadow of the Serb boycott call in the region where Serbs are concentrated.[1] Despite the protests targeting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Kosovo Task Force (KFOR), the Kosovo police stated that the situation is under control[2] but the Serb List, the largest party of Serbs in Kosovo, announced that the protests would continue.[3]

Understandably, the situation in Kosovo is extremely fragile. KFOR is responsible for ensuring the security of this Kosovo. Moreover, as a result of the call made by Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti after the developments in the region, NATO announced that it would send 700 more soldiers to the country in question.[4] This can be interpreted as Russia's attempt to destabilize the region through the Serbs, through pan-Slavist arguments, and the West's tendency to increase its influence in Kosovo.

Another point that should not be ignored is the division within the West itself. The USA is in an attitude that provokes Russia in various geographies and wants to wear it down through conflicts. Washington administration is one of the leading actors who want to prolong the war in Ukraine. On the other hand, the European Union (EU) avoids the heavy costs of crises and is concerned about the possibility of insecurity. Following this, in his statement on 30 May 2023, EU High Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy Josep Borrell stated that he is working to organize a dialogue between the parties.[5] Similarly, in the statement made by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 30, 2023, it was stated that easing the tension in Kosovo is important for the security of Europe.[6] Another name who expressed his concerns about the developments is Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama.[7] This is closely related to the sensitivity of the Tirana administration on Kosovo. However, it can be said that Tirana has the ideal of "Greater Albania" and if things get out of control, the Balkans can be Balkanized once again.

Another point that should be emphasized is that although Russia wants to achieve some of its goals through the Serbs, the Belgrade administration actually wants to implement a multi-dimensional and multidimensional foreign policy, taking into account the balances between power centers like any state that takes into account its own national interests. In other words, while Serbia is a state that wants to maintain its relations with Russia and refrains from imposing sanctions on Moscow in this context; On the other hand, it is an actor with a Western orientation. In this sense, one dimension of Serbia's foreign policy is the goal of EU membership. It can be said that the said target offers an opportunity to prevent the deepening of the crisis. However, despite everything, there is a possibility that the process will force Belgrade to make a choice.

To explain the situation, the independence of Kosovo was basically the event where the limits and limitations of the pan-Slavism policy were shown to Russia. Likewise, this independence showed Belgrade that the ideal of "Greater Serbia" is disconnected from reality. However, both Russia and Serbia do not recognize the independence of Kosovo. In this sense, it is possible that Belgrade, which has to make a choice, will have to break away from the West.

Basically, this possibility stems from the division within Serbia itself. As a matter of fact, on May 29, 2023, Serbian President Alexander Vucic called on Kosovo Serbs not to engage in conflict with NATO elements, noting that the process resulted in NATO increasing the number of soldiers in the region, and stated that the protests served Kurti's purposes. Unlike Vucic, who takes care to stay on rational grounds and develops a prudent discourse due to his EU membership goal, there is a strong political tendency in Serbia that can be described as the far right. This is why protests criticizing the President's stance were held in Belgrade after Vucic's statements.[8]

Ultimately, the aforementioned protests point out that a Belgrade, which has to make a choice, can internalize a policy understanding that coincides with Russia's expectations. This is in contrast to the Serbian leader's approach to pacifying the crisis in the EU context; In the future, Serbia will not only be in Kosovo; it is a harbinger of the possibility of developing strategies that will lead to the rise of Serbian nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, this situation will increase the ethnic tension in the Balkans and thus the region will become more open to the intervention of foreign powers in the context of West-Russian rivalry.

It should be stated that; The Balkans has a fragile security equation due to its ethnically heterogeneous structure. This situation causes the states of the region to come into conflict with each other easily. Developments in Kosovo also confirm this. Although the process takes place in the triangle of Kosovo, Kosovo Serbs and Serbia, it is seen that Albania also closely follows the developments in the regional dimension.

The fact that the Russia-Ukraine War accelerated the reckoning between Moscow and the West has also accelerated the struggle between Russia and the West in the Balkans, which has fragile geopolitical fault lines. It is possible to see the reflections of this in the Kosovo Crisis. As a result, it can be said that the Balkans are at risk of being Balkanized once again through Kosovo.

[1] "Gradonačelnici tri opštine na sjeveru Kosova položili zakletvu", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/25/gradonaclnici-tri-opstine-na-sjeveru-kosova-polozili-zakletvu>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[2] "Situation in Northern Kosovo under Control Police Says", Albanian Daily News, <https://albaniandailynews.com/news/situation-in-northern-kosovo-under-control-police-says->, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[3] "Kosovo's Largest Serbian Party Vows To Continue Protests Until Demands Met", RFRL, Kosovo's Largest Serbian Party Vows To Continue Protests Until Demands Met, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[4] "NATO raspoređuje dodatnih 700 vojnika na Kosovu", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/5/30/nato-rasporedjuje-dodatne-snage-na-kosovu>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[5] "Borrel radi na organizaciji dijaloga Kosova i Srbije na visokom nivou", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/30/borrel-radi-na-organizaciji-dijaloga-kosova-i-srbije-na-visokom-nivou>, (Date of Accession: 30.05.2023).

[6] "France Says It Vital European Security Calm Kosovo", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/france-says-it-vital-european-security-calm-kosovo-%20tensions-2023-05-30/>, (Date of Accession: 30.05.2023).

[7] "Rama zabrinut zbog dešavanja na sjeveru Kosova: Ovo je opasno i nepotrebno", Oslobodjenje, <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/region/rama-zabrinut-zbog-desavanja-na-sjeveru-kosova-ovo-je-opasno-i-nepotrebno-863701>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[8] "Nekoliko stotina građana na protestu u Beogradu nezadovoljni odnosom države prema krizi na Kosovu", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/5/29/nekoliko-stotina-gradjana-na-protestu-u-beogradu-nezadovoljni-odnosom-drzave-prema-krizi-na-kosovu>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Reflection of Economic Development on Greek Elections

Greece has historically been a key player for the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although they had various economic difficulties, these organizations showed their support to the Athens administration many times. The Greece economy also showed its influence in the elections. As a matter of fact, it is seen that Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has increased his work focused on economic development.

It is possible to say that the reforms made in Greece have worked relatively well. Because the Greek economy experienced a decrease in the current and capital account deficit in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the previous year.[1] The Greece economy is improving to-

day compared to the crisis in 2010. The report published by the Hellenic Association of Insurance Companies can be mentioned as another development showing the growth of the Greece economy.

In the said report, it was stated that the premium production of insurance companies operating in the country grew by 6.8 percent compared to the same period of 2022.[2] Therefore, it is possible to state that the Greece economy has shown a stable development. Because the government has many policies in this regard. One of the remarkable policies is the tourism subsidies planned for 2023 with a total budget of 150 million euros.[3]



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The economic recovery in Greece also attracts the attention of the international community. It is obvious that the relationship between democracy and economy is very important especially for the EU. It is seen that the stable recovery in the country also gives confidence to foreign capital. In a statement given by bank analysts dealing with Greek government debt, they expressed their opinion that Greece has returned to an investment grade credit rating.[4] All these developments in the economy also contribute to the prestige of the Greek government. Because, in the event of the victory of the New Democracy in the elections, there was a great public opinion that reforms that support political stability and economic growth would be implemented, and there were opinions that this would pave the way for credit improvements.[5]

The economic recovery in Greece shows that Mitsotakis has erased the traces of the economic crisis experienced in the past. It is also stated that close relations with both NATO and the EU contribute to political stability as well as economic stability. In particular, as an indicator of good relations with the United States of America (USA), the US State Department's recognition of Greece as an "indispensable NATO ally and partner" reflected positively on the Greek people's view of the government.[6] In addition, the US International Development Finance Corporation's approval of a 125 million dollars loan for Elefsis Shipyards will be an important step for Greece's prosperity.[7] Based on all these developments, although the continuation of the Mitsotakis administration is considered certain, in the elections that took place on May 21, 2023, Mitsotakis could not achieve an absolute victory despite receiving approximately 41% of the votes.[8]

It is possible to say that the most important obstacle to the definitive victory of the New Democracy Party is the train disaster in the recent past. As a matter of fact, it was obvious that this tragic event would cause the government to pay a political price.[9] Although the government paid the bill of the train tragedy and faced the public's reaction, it is thought that the New Democracy Party will win in the second round on June 25, 2023. In particular, Mitsotakis said, "The people wanted a Greek election led by the majority government and by the New Democracy Party without the help of others." his statement sheds light on the Greek will at the point of the second round.

Although Greece's going to the second round in the elections led the government to self-criticism about various policies, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) was the real question in these elections. Because the main opposition party lost 11% of votes and it was seen that new ways were started to be sought for a more effective opposition. This heavy loss of votes of SYRIZA is more than the success of Mitsotakis; it can be interpreted as the

failure of SYRIZA. It has been understood that the electorate has dispersed to parties such as the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and the European Realistic Disobedience Front (MERA), especially known for their centre-left views. However, it should not be forgotten that the voters who changed their minds mostly turned to Mitsotakis. It is possible to argue that a serious confusion has arisen in the SYRIZA administration, which was shaken by the shock of the said failure.

In the last instance, there is a strong public perception that the New Democracy Party will win, although there is no winner yet in the elections in Greece. It is possible to say that both the government's steps in foreign policy and the reforms towards the Greek economy were effective in spreading this perception to large masses.

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[2] "SYRIZA Turmoil as Senior MP Resigns", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1211312/syriza-turmoil-as-senior-mp-resigns/>, (Date of Accession: 24.05.2023).

[3] "Financial Aid for SMEs in Tourism", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/economy/1211612/financial-aid-for-smes-in-tourism/>, (Date of Accession: 23.05.2023).

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[6] "US State Department Affirms Greece as Indispensable NATO Ally, No Update on F-35 Sale", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1211757/us-state-department-affirms-greece-as-indispensable-nato-ally-no-update-on-f-35-sale/>, (Date of Accession: 24.05.2023).

[7] "US International Development Finance Corp Approves \$125 mln Loan for Elefsis Shipyards", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/economy/1211369/us-international-development-finance-corp-approves-125-mln-loan-for-elefsis-shipyards/>, (Date of Accession: 20.05.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Indonesia: The Tranquil Power of the Indo-Pacific

International relations, which began aftermath of the Cold War, continued until the early 2000s and then entered an era of turbulence, have opened a new chapter in the long-standing quest for global order. The previous paradigm of inter-state conflicts, intra-state rivalries, and non-state actors' political ambitions has given way to a geopolitical rivalry that engenders greater tectonic shifts, often referred to as the "New Great Game".

Consequent to the decline in relative power of the United States of America (USA), the predominant actor within the international order, the global system has witnessed a resurgence of a multipolar structure, which has led to the diminishing influence of center state- its periphery relations, while concur-

rently bolstering the nascent region-hub state system. To clarify, while each geopolitical region possesses its unique strengths, different power centers have long remained in the background owing to the overwhelming dominance of the United States across all regions. However, recent developments unequivocally indicate a reversal of this dynamic, signaling a shift in the prevailing order. Yet, none of the new power centers emerging in the East, West, North, South and the Middle Line has been as prominent and recognized as a game-changer as the rise of the Indo-Pacific region.

The Indo-Pacific region, spanning from the western shores of the United States to the eastern coasts of Africa and encompassing the Suez Canal, has



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emerged as a pivotal arena for active engagement among both regional and global powers. It serves as a host to the world's most populous nations, encompasses seven out of the top ten countries with the most formidable military capabilities, includes six nations possessing nuclear weapons, consolidates nine out of the ten busiest ports, facilitates approximately 60% of global maritime trade, and harbors some of the world's most robust economies.[1]

The ascent of the Indo-Pacific has undoubtedly led rival focal points such as China and the United States to emphasize the region as a top priority in their global power projections. On the one hand, this situation creates new chances and opportunities for the region, but on the other hand, it promises instability and the difficulty of choosing sides between the two poles due to the rivalry between China and the United States stemming from the global power struggle.

As international relations steadily veer towards turbulence in the Era of Great Power Rivalry, paradoxically, it concurrently presents states with an avenue to augment their influence within their respective regions. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon is directly linked to the strategic steps undertaken and to be pursued by actors. Through their deliberate pursuit of neutrality, prioritization of national policies, and commitment to fostering peace and prosperity with the motto of win-win approach, regional powers offer a third way and consolidate their regional leadership by maintaining an active neutral stance among the polarizing forces. Although the Indo-Pacific is increasingly being shaped by developments centered on China and the US, Indonesia, a major power in the region, has long advocated in the existence of a third way.

As the largest archipelagic nation globally and the largest country in Southeast Asia, strategically situated at the nexus of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia represents the fulcrum of the regional spirit that rejects the politics of tension and picking sides, thanks to its long tradition of leadership and its unquestionable power among Southeast Asian countries. Indonesia, which will provide great advantages to the side it chooses and perhaps feel the benefits of this in the short term, prefers to pursue a long-term strategy instead and designs a Southeast Asia Jakarta-centered. Particularly since Joko Widodo took office in 2014, Jakarta has tried to build a bloc by effectively using the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which 10 regional states are members, and bolstered its regional leadership and consolidated its position by being active in the decisions taken within ASEAN. Indonesia, the most powerful country among ASEAN members in both demographic and economic terms, has been pioneering centrality policies in order to play a leading role within the organization. In 2019,

ASEAN officially unveiled its Indo-Pacific Strategy, and it would not be wrong to say that the efforts of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry were decisive. Notably, the "Indo-Pacific Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" announced by Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa in 2013 serves as the cornerstone of ASEAN's present Indo-Pacific policies and underscores the pursuit of centrality.

Furthermore, in November 2018, during his address at the East Asia Summit, Indonesian President Jokowi Widodo laid the theoretical-conceptual foundation for the concept of "ASEAN Centrality" by emphasizing openness, inclusiveness, transparency, respect for international law and ASEAN centrality.[2]

Moreover, Indonesia has guided the active functioning of ASEAN institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting, and encouraged both the US and China to join them. Through this approach, it has succeeded in forcing Beijing and Washington to follow ASEAN's path rather than ASEAN being an institution that follows the strategies of China and the United States. By addressing the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy implemented by the US in the context of China containment policy with an ASEAN-centered approach that includes all countries including China, Indonesia has demonstrated its leadership capacity and willingness to play this role.

The substantial advancements made by Indonesia in the economic area, alongside its successful endeavors in geopolitical and leadership matters over the past decade, are clear and noteworthy. In an era marked by the questioning of globalization and Atlantic dominance, Jakarta, as one of the strengthening economies, particularly in Asia and other diverse geographies, is formulating and executing strategies in accordance with this evolving landscape. Indeed, according to the Economist, Indonesia has grown faster than any other economy over \$1 trillion in the last decade, except China and India, and has joined the club of upper middle-income countries.[3]

As one of the substantial destinations of China's Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013, Indonesia, like many other countries around the world, has established close economic ties with China and succeeded in attracting large-scale investments. Since the establishment of the "Strategic Partnership"[4] in 2005 and the subsequent "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership"[5] in 2013, the economic engagement between Beijing and Jakarta has experienced rapid growth, resulting in China emerging as Indonesia's largest trading partner. According to official Chinese data in 2021, bilateral trade grew by 58.6 per cent from the previous year to US\$124.4 billion, with Chinese exports increasing by 48.1 per cent to

US\$60.7 billion and imports jumping by 70.1 per cent to US\$63.8 billion.[6] Recent major Chinese investments include the Jakarta-Bandung High Speed Railway, the Batang Toru hydroenergy project, an electric vehicle and lithium battery factory in Morowali, the Jatigede dam, the Medan-Kualanamu highway and the Kuala Tanjung port.[7] Coal, nickel, copper, palm oil and agricultural products are Indonesia's main export products. Especially after the tensions along the China-Australia relations, coal has become increasingly critical commodity for China. Jakarta, attracting significant investments from Japan, the European Union (EU), Australia, and non-regional actors, presents significant opportunities in various sectors, particularly in energy fields such as infrastructure and geothermal[8], thanks to its investment-friendly legal regulations. As a consequence of that, it not only promotes foreign investment but also reduces the unemployment rate within the Indonesia.

Jakarta is strengthening its economic relations with China, one of the main actors in the Indo-Pacific, while simultaneously deepening its security and military cooperation with the United States, another major actor in the Indo-Pacific. In recent years, relations between the United States and Indonesia have been rapidly developing in the security and diplomatic spheres and have been shaped around the common interests of both sides. The relationship, greatly enhanced by the visit of former US President Barack Obama, entered a new phase with the signing of the "Comprehensive Partnership"[9] agreement in 2010 and the subsequent signing of the "Strategic Partnership"[10] agreement in 2015. These agreements have significantly elevated the bilateral ties between the two countries. Washington stands as Indonesia's foremost defense ally, as evidenced by the extensive range of military exercises and events conducted annually, and as a crucial partner in the concerted efforts to combat terrorism and extremism.

In addition, Jakarta perceives Washington as its paramount security collaborator in addressing jurisdictional disputes and occasional tensions with Beijing concerning Natuna Island. The "Super Garuda Shield," a substantial joint military exercise between the two nations, is often regarded as Indonesia's pivotal deterrent in relation to the Natuna issue.

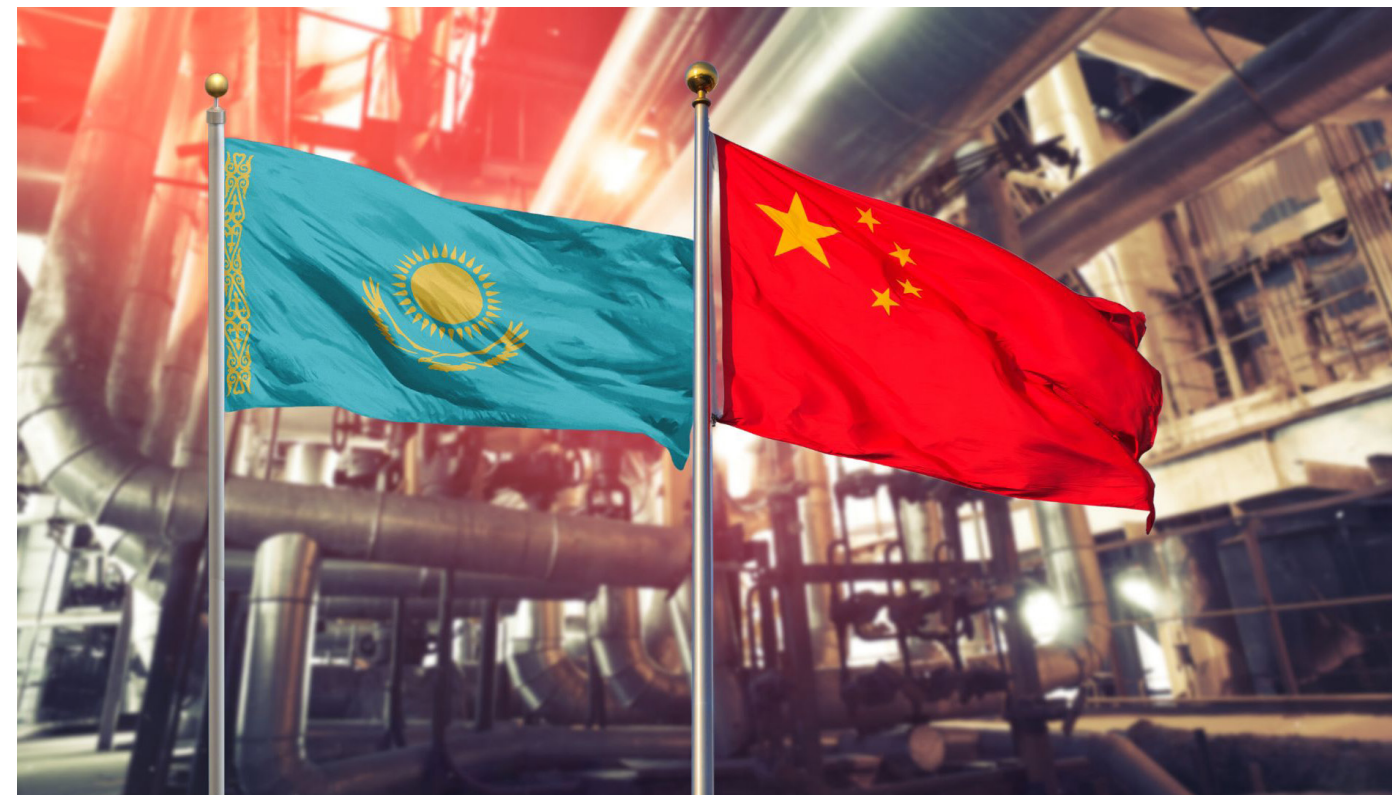
Arms sales also holds significance in the security alliance between Indonesia and the United States. According to data released by the US in 2021, Washington exported US\$1.88 billion worth of military equipment between 2015 and 2019, including vehicles such as F-16C/D Block 25 fighter aircraft, AH-64D Apache Block III Longbow helicopters, MV-22 Block C Osprey aircraft,

Javelin, AIM-120C-7 AMRAAM, AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder, and AGM-65K2 Maverick missiles[11] and in 2022, the USA sold Indonesia 36 F-15EX fighter jets worth 14 billion dollars.[12] It is worth mentioning that this arms sale occurs in the context of Indonesia's decision to cancel its procurement of SU-35 fighter jets from Russia as a result of imposed sanctions. Indonesia views the principles of a free, open, and rules-based order, which constitute the foundation of its Indo-Pacific strategy, as crucial for regional peace. Therefore, it has been actively fostering a deepening partnership with the United States in pursuit of its own strategic interests.

The upcoming 2024 elections in Indonesia hold significant importance for the region, as they will shape the country's stance on economic interests, national security, and social cohesion in the midst of the power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region. Current Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, who is seen as the most likely candidate for the presidency instead of Widodo, who cannot run after two terms as per the law, could be a robust message from Indonesia against the current regional dynamics. This is because the evolving dynamics of international relations in the Indo-Pacific region have witnessed a shift from an economy-centric approach to a more defense and security-oriented framework in recent years. Against this backdrop, the emergence of a leader with a military background assuming a diplomatic role could potentially facilitate Indonesia's adept continuation of its long-standing strategy of maintaining equidistance between major actors in an increasingly securitized Indo-Pacific. This would enable Jakarta to navigate the complexities of the region and effectively respond to the changing geopolitical landscape.

In the Indo-Pacific, which is squeezed between China and the United States, Indonesia should be seen as one of the rising powers of the next period, trying to establish a regional geo-economic-geosecurity balance as the leading country ASEAN, and on the other hand, trying to pursue a policy of active neutrality on a global scale by meeting with the leaders of both Russia and Ukraine. An Indonesia that will maintain the "Bebas Dan Aktif" strategy, which can be translated as independent and active, as the main core of its foreign policy will undoubtedly be seen as an actor that can balance the escalating tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

[1] "Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region", The Department of Defence, <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF> (Date of Accession: 17.5.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Deepening Steps in China-Kazakhstan Energy Cooperation

China follows a foreign policy towards strengthening its ties with Central Asian countries. Regional states also trying to develop their improve relations with Beijing. Therefore, steps are being taken to strengthen partnership in various fields. It is seen that one of the most prominent issues among cooperation items is energy sector. While the crisis, which required countries to revise their energy policies due to Russia-Ukraine War, accelerated the existing projects and also affects the emergence of new cooperation plans.

China and Kazakhstan also agreed on the expansion of oil pipelines on May 29, 2023. Kazakhstan's state oil and gas company KazMunayGas (KMG) and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) discussed the expansion of the two oil pipelines. It is on the agenda to double the capacity of the Kenkiyak-Atyrau Oil Pipeline, from 6 million tons to 12 million tons per year. The capacity of the Kenkiyak-Kumkol Pipeline can be increased from 10 mil-

lion tons per year to 15 million tons per year.[1] The line expansion project is estimated to cost \$200 million and take two to three years.[2]

The Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline consists of two parts. First, towards China is the Kenkiyak-Atasu-Alashankou section with an annual oil capacity of 20 million tons. It is designed for the transport of oil to China from the Aktobe and Kumkol oil fields in Western Kazakhstan and for the transit of Russian oil. The other is the Kenkiyak-Atyrau Line with an annual oil capacity of 6 million tons. It transports oil to the Atyrau Refinery and to the system of export pipelines controlled by Russian Transneft through the Atyrau-Samara Pipeline and the Caspian Pipeline Consortium.[3]

The two lines planned to be developed will also form the pillar of the Kazakhstan-China energy partnership. It also has the efficiency to increase the volume of Kazakhstan's crude oil exports to



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China. The Kenkiyak-Kumkol Oil Pipeline forms the first part of the Kazakhstan-China Pipeline, which carries crude oil from the West-Kazakhstan and Aktobe oil fields. The maximum capacity of the pipeline is 10 million tons per year and its length is 794 km. The Kenkiyak-Atyrau Line also has a significant impact. KMG announced that in 2022, 4.5 million tons of oil was pumped via Kenkiyak-Atyrau and 8.1 million tons of oil was pumped over Kenkiyak-Kumkol.[4]

It is seen that the last point reached in the energy cooperation between China and Kazakhstan is based on the agreements signed at the C+C5 event held in Xian on May 18-19, 2023. Within the scope of the visit of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to China, KMG and China's state-owned energy giant CNPC signed an agreement to expand their strategic cooperation in the oil and gas industry. The agreement includes enhancing cooperation in geological exploration and oil refining, as well as exploring opportunities to increase transport volumes via the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline.[5]

In order to facilitate the energy supply between them, Astana and Beijing have undertaken initiatives in the past years, such as the construction of gas pipelines to provide resources from Kazakhstan to China, the modernization of the domestic oil refinery (Shymkent) and the construction of the domestic gas processing plant (Zhanazhol). Through the ties and partnerships developed, over the years, China has become one of Kazakhstan's main energy partners.

In this sense, the CNPC has a critical role in the energy cooperation between the two countries. Other Chinese investors active in the energy sector in Kazakhstan include China International Trust and Investment Corporation and China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation. There are also many small private Chinese companies.[6]

Since the 2000s, it has been witnessed that China has increased its ties with Kazakh energy companies. For example, CNPC has bought a 100% stake in PetroKazakhstan. At the same time, Beijing gained control of the South Kumkol Field and purchased a 50% stake in the North Kumkol Field, operated by Turgay Petrol. In addition, CNPC, which purchased an 8.33% stake in Kazakhstan's Kashagan Caspian Offshore Field, paid over \$5 billion for its stake in the North Caspian Operation Company, which is responsible for the development of the Kashagan Field.[7]

As can be seen, China and Kazakhstan are seriously active in the oil and gas sector. The bilateral partnerships that have developed since the beginning of the 2000s continue in different di-

mensions today. Visiting China for the C+C5 meeting, Mr. Tokayev held several meetings with senior executives of major Chinese companies working on oil and gas, petrochemicals, energy, metallurgy, telecommunications, finance and banking activities, and oil and gas production, processing and transportation. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Kazakh-Chinese relations in the energy sector are at a strategic level. As a matter of fact, in various meetings held during this visit, the commitment to deepen the strategic cooperation between the two countries was reiterated. [8]

On the other hand, it can be understood that the energy partnership between Astana and Beijing, will continue to develop. Chinese investors in Kazakhstan, act with the aim of securing the transportation of energy resources to China. At the same time, there is a Beijing administration trying to maintain its position in Central Asia at the point of meeting the increasing energy need. This situation reveals that Kazakhstan's geopolitical importance for China in the context of energy cooperation has increased. Beijing can also make new moves to diversify its energy partnership in order to protect its geopolitical interests in the region and in Kazakhstan in particular. The expansion project of the two oil pipelines can also be evaluated in this way.

Consequently, it can be predicted that in the short and medium term, China will continue to take steps to strengthen its energy ties with Kazakhstan. The Astana administration is also pleased with the developing partnership. It can be say that China will make new moves in the energy sector and deepen win-win relations in cooperation with Central Asian countries, whose international role and value has increased within the scope of the Middle Corridor. Because China exhibits an active entrepreneurship in this regard. Therefore, it can be say that CNPC, which has been operating in Kazakhstan for years, has become a symbol in the energy partnership between the two countries.

[1] "Kazakhstan and China Discuss Expanding Oil Pipelines", Oil-price, <https://oilprice.com/Latest-Energy-News/World-News/Kazakhstan-And-China-Discuss-Expanding-Oil-Pipelines.html>, (Date of Accession: 30.05.2023).

[2] "KazMunayGas, CNPC Discuss Expansion of Kenkiyak-Atyrau, Kenkiyak-Kumkol Oil Pipelines", Interfax, <https://interfax.com/news-room/top-stories/90922/>, (Date of Accession: 30.05.2023).

[3] "China and Kazakhstan to Expand Cooperation in Energy Sector", KzKursiv, <https://kzkursiv.media/en/2023-05-18/china-and-kazakhstan-to-expand-cooperation-in-energy-sector/>, (Date of Accession: 30.05.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Nuclear Hazard in Asia-Pacific and South Korea's Quests for Security

The Asia-Pacific Region, like North Korea, attracts the attention of the international public in terms of security, as it is a geography that is both authoritarian and isolated from the global system and contains a sizable nuclear power. Because North Korea is increasing its nuclear power day by day and increasing its nuclear and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) tests.

This situation causes serious security concerns both regionally and globally. As a matter of fact, the close relations and exercises organized by the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with actors in the region such as South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Japan do not deter Pyongyang; it even has a provocative effect.



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Moreover, alliances such as the AUKUS Pact, ANZUS and QUAD are not enough to ensure that the West gets a result. At the same time, the periodic calls for dialogue by the USA and the sanctions decisions taken at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) do not yield any results.

As a matter of fact, it can be said that South Korea is one of the states that closely feel the danger posed by North Korea due to its geopolitical position, historical relations and good relations with the West and the USA. South Korea is in a serious search for security in an environment where so many actions and rhetoric do not yield any results. Therefore, Seoul wants to establish its security in co-operation with the West and the United States.

As a matter of fact, at this point, when South Korea's search for security is examined, it is noteworthy that South Korea, Japan and the USA firstly condemned North Korea's first solid fuel ICBM test and reached an agreement to develop security cooperation. It is important for the three countries to discuss this situation at the 13th Trilateral Defense Negotiations, held in Washington on April 15, 2023, and discuss regularization of missile defense and anti-submarine exercises as a deterrent and response to North Korea's "nuclear and missile threats". situation creates.

After the meeting in question, Pyongyang was called to "immediately cease all destabilizing activities" and "reaffirmed that a nuclear test in North Korea would be met with a strong and determined response from the international community".[1]

On the other hand, according to the statement made by the South Korean Presidential Office on April 25, 2023, it was said that a document detailing the expanded deterrence measures will be announced after the summit between South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and US President Joe Biden on April 26, 2023. According to a statement made by Kim Eun-hye, Yoon's senior press secretary, the document includes a more advanced version of the expanded deterrence strategy. Extended deterrence expresses the United States' commitment to mobilize all its military capabilities to defend its allies against threats.[2] This shows how much importance South Korea attaches to US deterrence in the face of the North Korean threat, and that the US and the West take the nuclear danger posed by Pyongyang seriously.

At this point, it can be said that Japan, the most important ally of the USA and the West in the Asia-Pacific, has an important place in Seoul against North Korea in terms of security. For example, on April 27, 2023, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, in his speech to US lawmakers, said that it is necessary to accelerate trilateral cooperation with Japan and the United States against the increasing nuclear threats of North Korea.[3] In addition, on April 25, 2023, Yoon expressed his reactions to criticism for his statement that Tokyo should not "kneel" in order to improve ties with historically troubled Japan.

Traveling to the United States for a six-day state visit, Yoon sought to increase regional security cooperation in the face of increasing threats from North Korea and stated that he made strengthening relations with Tokyo an important element of his administration's policy. Because South Korea has problems with Japan both historically and currently over Dokdo and Takeshima Islands. As a matter of fact, despite all this, the fact that Seoul attaches great importance to cooperation with Tokyo proves how high South Korea's security concerns are.

As a result, North Korea poses a very serious nuclear threat in the Asia-Pacific Region, and South Korea is one of the states that feel this threat most closely. This situation pushes Seoul to seek security. However, it can be argued that these security pursuits will have a provocative effect rather than a deterrent on Pyongyang.

[1] "South Korea, Japan, United States to Deepen Security Ties Amid North Korea Threat", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/15/s-korea-japan-us-to-deepen-security-ties-amid-n-korea-threat>, (Date of Accession: 05.05.2023).

[2] "S. Korea, United States to Unveil Separate Documents on Extend Deterrence", The Korea Herald, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230425000076>, (Date of Accession: 05.05.2023).

[3] "South Korea Leader Stresses Need for Cooperation with Japan on North Korea", Reuters <https://www.reuters.com/world/south-korea-leader-tells-us-congress-necessary-speed-cooperation-with-japan-2023-04-27/>, (Date of Accession: 05.05.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Russia-Kazakhstan Energy Ties Gain Momentum

Russia, which has some of the world's major energy resources, aimed to use energy as an effective tool in foreign policy in the post-Cold War period and to become one of the most influential states in the world in this regard. In this context, various agreements were signed with European states and various projects were realized. However, strained Russian-Ukrainian relations and Moscow's sometimes harsh rhetoric have given the United States of America (USA) an important pressure tool. As it is known, while Nord Stream 2, which was launched in 2015, strengthened the energy ties between Germany and Russia, the pipeline has been subjected to various sanctions by the US since 2019.[1]

With the escalation of the process in Ukraine, the Washington administration, which wants to influence Europe, has toughened its stance. Russia followed a similar policy and used the energy card. In this period, Moscow's aim was to create an important crack in the Atlantic and to enable Europe to act more independently from the US. However, Russia's expectations did not materialize and with the Russia-Ukraine War, Europe preferred the United States.

While Europe's preference led to the search for alternative energy sources, Moscow accelerated its energy-centered policies. First of all, the Kremlin administration turned to the Asian market instead of Europe. It increased its energy exports to coun-

tries like China and added an energy dimension to its relations with countries like India. On the other hand, in order to control the energy market, it started to sell its energy resources below market prices and deepened its relations with energy exporting countries. In particular, it proposed the establishment of a "trilateral gas union" to the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Russia tried to improve its relations with these states when they did not respond positively to this proposal. However, for a certain period, there were also developments that would negatively affect Russia's energy leverage.

During this process, relations between Astana and Moscow were strained due to Russian comments on Kazakhstan's territorial integrity and the suspension of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium/ Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) by Russia. However, Russia, which has been subjected to Western sanctions, has suffered significant economic damage and needs Kazakhstan to reach Asia, has had to change its rhetoric and policies at this point. In addition, Kazakhstan's strengthening of its relations with Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea and its continued export of energy to the world market through various routes has increased Kazakhstan's costs, but has significantly reduced Russia's losses.

In the context of the developments, Russia's first step was to restart the activities of the CPC. In the second step, Russia approved the transfer of oil from Kazakhstan to Germany via the Druzhba Pipeline and an increase in the volume. This led to the normalization of strained relations between the parties, and the lose-lose equation between the parties was reshaped into a win-win one.

In addition to Druzhba and CPC, there have been other important developments in energy-related developments between Kazakhstan and Russia. For example, in April 2023, the volume of Kazakh oil exports to Germany increased by 150% to a total of 50,000 tons. In this context, the amount of oil planned to be exported from Kazakhstan to Germany using Russian pipelines in 2023 is 1.2 million tons.[2] On the other hand, the national company KazMunayGas said in a statement that Kazakhstan transferred 16.3 million tons of oil in the first quarter of 2023. This is an increase of 3.5% compared to the first quarter of 2022.[3]

As a response, Kazakhstan announced the extension of the agreement to transport Russian oil to China. The pipeline operator Kaztransoil announced on May 15, 2023 that the agreement to transport Russian oil to China was extended until January 1, 2034. [4] The continuation of this agreement has created an important balancing factor between Kazakhstan and Russia with respect to Germany and China. Kazakhstan has shown that they need each

other geographically to reach Germany and Russia to reach China. Another significant development was a proposal made by Kazakhstan. Astana has proposed to Moscow and Beijing to build a new international gas pipeline from Russia to China through the territory of Kazakhstan. The details of this proposal are unclear. However, as far as it is known, the line will pass through the eastern part of Kazakhstan.[5]

According to recent announcements, Kazakhstan and Russia have agreed on the route of the line to China. On May 16, 2023, Kazakhstan's Energy Minister Almasadam Satkaliyev announced that the route has been determined and the conditions for the construction of the pipeline are being negotiated. With the construction of the pipeline, Russia gains the opportunity to export energy to China in a more secure way, while trying to compensate for its loss in the European market. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to deliver the energy needed by the central, northern and eastern regions.[6]

Russia today is significantly geopolitically dependent on Kazakhstan. Indeed, Moscow needs Astana's leadership both to go south and export energy to Central Asia and to maintain exports to China via Kazakhstan until the Power of Siberia-2 is realized. In order to balance Kazakhstan, Russia has given it access to Germany. Astana's increasing use of alternative routes since the Russian-Ukrainian War can be seen as a significant achievement. Through this process, Kazakhstan has seized an important potential to maximize its interests. The deepening of energy-based relations between the two sides is closely linked to Moscow's interest in Asian markets, particularly China. The strengthening of energy and geopolitics-based relations between the two sides will prevent another lose-lose situation.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Problematic of US Weapons in the Islamabad-TTP Struggle

Pakistan is going through a challenging process in the fight against terrorism. In addition to local radical groups in the region, the regional structures of the terrorist organisation State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), which acts in line with global goals, also carry out actions against Pakistan. The terrorist organisation Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has recently emerged as the biggest security challenge for Islamabad.

Especially after the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan, the TTP has become more active in the security environment where threat perceptions have increased.

In addition, the TTP entered into a negotiation and ceasefire process with the Islamabad administration, but failed to reach an agreement



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with the government and ended the ceasefire. Another actor that plays an active role in the negotiation process between the parties and in periods of conflict is the Taliban. It is also understood that the US, which withdrew from Afghanistan, indirectly influenced the conflict dynamics between the parties. On May 22, 2023, news reports claimed that the ammunition and equipment left behind by the US during its withdrawal from Afghanistan fell into the hands of the TTP[1]. Therefore, the impact of the US attitude on Pakistan's security perception and system is emphasised.

It is reported that the US left behind \$7.12 billion worth of military equipment, including small arms and light weapons, night vision devices and military communications equipment, during its withdrawal from Afghanistan. There have also been allegations that these weapons and equipment have leaked into different conflict areas in Pakistan and beyond. There are also data to confirm these allegations. For example, on May 16, 2023, the TTP posted photos on its social media platforms of US weapons, including rifles and helmets equipped with thermal sights, laser sights and rifles, wearing modern military suits. Similarly, another TTP video released in August 2022 showed militants carrying M24 sniper rifles, M16 4A rifles with thermal scopes, M4s with Trijicon ACOG scopes, heavy machine guns and 107 mm Type 85 rocket launchers.[2]

The TTP has significantly increased its attacks and visibility in Pakistan over the last two years. This is one of the most challenging factors faced by the Islamabad administration. Developments in the supply of weapons and ammunition increase the impact of the organisation's attacks and the casualties caused by its actions. The ammunition used by the organisation in attacks is also important.

On the other hand, the increase in military activity has led to an increase in the losses suffered by Pakistani security forces. In 2021 and 2022, it is reflected in the reports that the number of TTP attacks both increased and became more lethal. In this context, it can be inferred that captured munitions played an important role in the increase in the dose and severity of the organisation's attacks. Moreover, this effect is seen not only in the mobility of the TTP but also in the behavior of separatist Baloch groups. Therefore, it can be said that such groups were also able to obtain various ammunition.

Discussions about US weapons falling into the hands of various groups have been raised before. In April 2022, it was claimed to have used advanced US weapons such as M16 machine guns and M4 assault rifles, night vision goggles and military communications equipment.[3]

It is known that the organization generally used small arms, light and heavy machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets and IEDs to carry out attacks. In the period from early 2022 to May, the TTP is reported to have carried out attacks on the border with Pakistan using long-range sniper rifles equipped with thermal sighting devices, leading to increased casualties among security forces.[4]

However, when the attacks that took place in Pakistan during the aforementioned period are analyzed, the possibilities that the supply of weapons may be possible are also strengthened. As a matter of fact, there are also reports indicating that the TTP's terrorist attacks and violence increased in 2022 compared to the previous year. The Global Terrorism Index also noted that attacks in the period in question increased by 120%. Moreover, with these attacks, the terrorist organisation TTP ranked eighth on the list of the deadliest groups in the world.[5]

On the other hand, the possibility that these allegations may be unfounded should also be considered. Taliban officials have stated that they captured more than 300,000 light weapons, 26,000 heavy weapons and approximately 61,000 military vehicles after the US withdrawal. However, they have stated that this equipment has not fallen into the hands of the TTP, but that very few and less alarming weapons may have been smuggled.[6] The emergence of such allegations may be aimed at shaping the tendency of the US and the Pakistani government to act jointly in the fight against terrorism.

In conclusion, the fact that the increasing terrorist acts in Pakistan and the escalation in the severity of TTP attacks may be linked to the weapons left behind by the US has an impact on regional security dynamics. In addition to affecting the Taliban's ability to manage



the mobility of groups, this issue has implications for Pakistan's dialog with the US and the Taliban in the fight against terrorism. The direction of the TTP's activity and distribution of power, the munitions used in the attacks and the impact they have had, will also shape the debate.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Main Playing Field of Global Competition: Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region stands out as a geography where the fault lines of global security are located and which affects the basis of international power struggles. Indeed, there are many reasons for this. The first is the presence of a large, hegemonic state like China, which aims to compete with the Western-based rules-based international order and is the second largest economy in the world.[1] Another reason is that one of the world's most important nuclear powers, North Korea, is also located in this region. In addition to all these, Japan,

the world's third largest economy, is also located in this region.[2]

On the other hand, France's islands in the region give it influence in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, Australia, a geographically eastern but intellectually Western state integrated into the Anglo-Saxon world, is also located in this region.

Moreover, it is known that the region harbors many crises and disputes due to issues such



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as the Kuril Islands Issue between Japan and Russia, the Taiwan Crisis between China and Taiwan, the Dokdo and Takeshima Islands Problem between Japan and South Korea, which still maintains its importance and relevance as a historical problem, legitimacy debates in the South China Sea in the context of the Nine-Dash Line issue, border disputes between North Korea and South Korea, and Pyongyang's growing nuclear power and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Tests. All of these put the region at the center of global political debates.

All these issues, of course, have led to increased interest in the region by the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In particular, the economic-based global competition between Beijing and Washington underpins the West's regional policy. This is because the West, and the United States in particular, has been forging various alliances in order to increase its influence in the region.

Indeed, the Western Pole states allied with the United States include South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, Indonesia and New Zealand. As expected, these states cooperate with the US and NATO in the framework of their opposition to China and North Korea. This is exemplified by the drills organized in cooperation between Seoul, Tokyo and Washington in opposition to North Korea.[3]

At the same time, QUAD, launched in 2007 between the US, Australia, India and Japan, is one of the most influential Western alliances in the region.[4] In addition, the AUKUS Pact,[5] established by Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States in 2021, is also an important indicator of this unity. These alliances are based on the idea of encircling China, putting pressure on Beijing over the South China Sea, and creating a deterrent conjuncture against Beijing, especially with the Taiwan Issue. On the other hand, it can be said that the North Korea factor also creates a legitimate ground for these alliances.

In conclusion, the Asia-Pacific will continue to be one of the most dynamic regions of global politics. China continues to grow and is expected to overtake the US both economically and militarily in the near future. North Korea is also continuing its nuclear development activities. At the same time, the interest of the US in particular and the West in general in the region is growing. Therefore, it can be predicted that the Asia-Pacific region will continue to be the primary playing field of the global power struggle.

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# ANKASAM IN PRESS

**12 June 2023**

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), analyzed the meeting between the Taliban leader and the Prime Minister of Qatar for TVNET.





*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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