



ANKASAM

bulletin

23 July 2023
ISSUE: 2023/29



A Strong Call for a Multipolar World: SCO Leaders Summit

08

Steinmeier's Visit to
Kazakhstan and the German-
Kazakh Business Forum

14

Bamboo Diplomacy
and Vietnam's Foreign
Policy

CONTENTS

ANKASAM ANALYSIS

- 03 A Reflection of Europe's Vulnerability: France Protests**
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
- 06 Growing Russian Influence in the Asia-Pacific Region**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN
- 08 Steinmeier's Visit to Kazakhstan and the German-Kazakh Business Forum**
Şeyma KIZILAY
- 11 A Strong Call for a Multipolar World: SCO Leaders Summit**
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
- 14 Bamboo Diplomacy and Vietnam's Foreign Policy**
Elcan TOKMAK
- 16 Foreign Policy Implications of the Conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina**
Veli Can AKKAŞ
- 18 Could Al-Qaeda Terrorist Organization Become an International Threat Again?**
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
- 21 Dokdo/Takeshima Island as an Obstacle in South Korea-Japan Relations**
Elcan TOKMAK
- 24 Signing of Serbia's EU Accession Support Package**
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
- 26 India-US Rapprochement in the Context of Border Disputes**
Veli Can AKKAŞ
- 29 Will Russia and NATO Engage in a Hot Conflict?**
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN

ANKASAM IN PRESS

- 32 Media**

JOURNALS

- 33 Journal of International Crisis and Political Studies**

Journal of Regional Studies



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

A Reflection of Europe's Vulnerability: France Protests

The killing of 17-year-old Nahel M by police in Nanterre, a Paris suburb, on June 28, 2023,[1] awakened the protest tradition in France. Indeed, France has witnessed extremely important events in its recent history. In particular, the "Yellow Vests Uprising" in 2018 put the Paris administration in a difficult situation. In the recent past, it is remembered that French Presi-

dent Emmanuel Macron's approval of the law gradually raising the retirement age from 62 to 64 by using the authority granted by Article 49, paragraph 3 of the French Constitution caused various incidents.[2] However, the killing of Nahel M is more similar to the events of 2005, which erupted after the murder of a Frenchman of Maghreb origin and lasted for three weeks.



Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
ANKASAM
AF-PAK Expert

Despite the differences and similarities between all these events, it is possible to state that there is a culture of street struggle in France that has its roots in the French Revolution of 1789. In other words, the French do not hesitate to show their reactions to various events on the streets and see street movements as one of the areas of the struggle for rights.

The last instance that reflects this situation is the event that took place after Nahel M's death. At this point, it is possible to state that the protests turned into vandalism and looting came to the fore. However, it is not a healthy approach to accuse all the people who took to the streets of vandalism. The protests clearly reveal the political and social fragility in France in particular and Europe in general.

In this framework, it is beneficial to analyze the masses participating in the demonstrations. Indeed, it can be said that the masses that took to the streets are composed of two main groups. The first of these is those who have been expressing their reaction in various ways since the pension law three months ago and who have reacted to the developments mainly through economic problems. It can be argued that the sensitivity of this group has a class basis.

The second group are the immigrants who caused France to turn into a fire and in a sense reflect the fire of the suburbs. According to them, people who were exploited for many years due to France's colonialist policies and then migrated to France are marginalized here as well. They also see the murder of Nahel M. as a reflection of anti-immigrant sentiments and racism. Therefore, the reaction is based on a systematic perception of racism, especially since it was a police murder.

On the other hand, looting incidents also trigger the anti-immigrant sentiments of far-right groups. In fact, in many countries experiencing economic problems, even class-based demands turn into anti-immigrant rhetoric over time, migrants are seen as the cause of economic problems, and political leaders use them as a means of othering or securitization. In particular, far-right leaders try to increase their votes with anti-immigrant rhetoric in the face of various problems. As a matter of fact, the increase in the votes of Marine Le Pen and the National Front following the protests of the "Yellow Vests" in 2018 is an indication of this. Moreover, the opposition's drift towards right-populist politics pushes the governments to make right-populist decisions in order to protect their votes. Therefore, the rise of the far right in France may lead the Macron administration to take anti-immigrant decisions.

Moreover, the rise of right-populist politics is not limited to France. In Italy, the fascist Brothers of Italy party is in power, even though France is a country where this fragility can be observed frequently due to its protest tradition. In Sweden, the Sweden Democrats, a neo-Nazi party, is a coalition partner. In Germany, recent polls indicate that the Alternative for Germany (AfD) may come to power.[3] In the England, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) continues its activities. In addition to all these, it is known that the events following the murder of Nahel M. spread to Belgium and Switzerland. This reveals that there is both a demand for migrants' rights and a far-right atmosphere in these countries.

As a result, in demographically heterogeneous societies, migrants are marginalized and subjected to a number of discriminatory acts. This situation, on the one hand, opens the door for migrants to politicize and express their reactions; on the other hand, it accelerates the mobilization of the far right. Undoubtedly, the final stage of this process is the erosion of the European identity with the rise of sharp nation-statism, i.e. the rise of nationalisms in European states. This means a Europe divided and in competition with each other. Therefore, it is possible to read the rise of the far right as "the return of Old Europe". France-centered developments are a precursor of it.

[1] "France Ignored Racist Police Violence for Decades. The Latest Uprising is the Price of That", Irish Examiner, <https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-41175340.html>, (Date of Accession: 04.07.2023).

[2] "French Left, Labour Unions Stage New Day of Protests Against Pension Reform", France 24, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230606-protesters-prepare-for-14th-day-of-protests-in-bid-to-stop-french-pension-overhaul>, (Date of Accession: 04.07.2023).

[3] "German far Right Surges in Polls, Alarming Mainstream Parties", Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2023/06/02/german-far-right-surges-in-polls-alarming-mainstream-parties>, (Date of Accession: 04.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Growing Russian Influence in the Asia-Pacific Region

China and the United States (US) make up the world's two largest economies.[1] This leads to an important competition between the two states at both regional and global levels. As a matter of fact, it can be said that this competition has many geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic dimensions. Therefore, the parties are inclined to develop various strategies and seek to achieve advantageous results.

In this context, the USA started to implement the containment strategy against China, which it applied against the Union of Soviet Socialist Re-

publics (USSR) and obtained advantageous results during the Cold War period.[2] For this reason, the rivalry between Washington and Beijing is taking on a regional character.

On the other hand, the Russia-Ukraine War, which started on February 24, 2022, was reflected in the rivalry between the two countries and had an impact on the balance of power. Because China is conducting a campaign against the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In this context, China's strategy is similar to that of the USSR.



**Zeki Talustan
GÜLTEN**
ANKASAM
Asia-Pacific
Research
Assistant

Moreover, although China and Russia may seem to be rivals in the geopolitical sense in the long term, in the short term they are allies in the context of the search for multipolarity expressed through the opposition of the United States and NATO.

Both the prominence of the regional framework of competition arising from Washington's containment strategy and the appearance of cooperation between Beijing and Moscow through anti-westernism lead to Russia's involvement in events in the Asia-Pacific Region more than in the past.

In this context, the display of two warships belonging to Russia near Taiwan on June 27, 2023 is very significant.[3] As a matter of fact, according to a statement from the Ministry of Defense of Taiwan, on June 23, 2023, Russian frigates were seen both of the east coast of Taiwan and on the north-south line of the Taiwan Strait.[4]

At the same time, the statement in question said that the ships had left Taiwan's intervention zone, but it did not say how far away they were detected.[5] This can be interpreted as Beijing receiving Moscow's support in the ongoing Taiwan Crisis between China and the West. In addition, this development can be considered as a challenge to the West by Russia and China.

In addition to all this, Russia's Interfax News Agency reported on June 23, 2023 that a ship from the Russian Pacific Fleet crossed the South China Sea and then entered the southern regions from a point close to the Philippines.[6] Considering that the Taiwan Crisis, as well as the South China Sea-based disputes, are an important regional issue, it can be stated that Moscow has begun to intervene in the problems in the Asia-Pacific.

As a matter of fact, Beijing claims the South China Sea with a system called the Nine Line Lines.[7] The Philippines is also one of the leading states that feel this problem deeply. The sighting of a Russian ship in this region has clearly demonstrated Moscow's growing interest in the region and regional problems.

Based on all this information, it can be said that Moscow and Beijing are trying to show that they will carry out joint strategies against the West. Moreover, while Russia is fighting Ukraine on its western border, it may want to send a message that it can also deal with events in its east, and therefore that things are going well for itself from the Russia-Ukraine War.

As a result, although there are some issues that they may face in the long term, it is clear that a unity shaped by deconfliction between China and Russia has been built. However, the future and limits of this union are debatable. It is unclear whether Moscow will be able to support Beijing in a possible hot conflict in the Asia-Pacific.

[1] "The World's Largest Economies", World Data Info, <https://www.worlddata.info/largest-economies.php>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[2] "The History of Containment Policy", Thought Co, <https://www.thoughtco.com/definition-of-containment-2361022>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[3] "Japan Says Russian Warships Spotted Near Taiwan, Okinawa Islands, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-says-russian-warships-spotted-near-taiwan-okinawa-islands-2023-07-01/>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[4] "Taiwan Detects Two Russian Warships Near Its Waters", Reuters, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/28/taiwan-detects-two-russian-warships-near-its-waters>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[5] "Taiwan Detects Two Russian Warships Off Its Coast", The Moscow Times, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/28/taiwan-detects-two-russian-warships-off-its-coast-a81672>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[6] "Russian Warships Spotted off Taiwan's East Coast 'on Way Home' from Komodo Drills", South China Morning Post, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3225800/russian-warships-spotted-taiwans-east-coast-way-home-komodo-drills>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

[7] "What Is Nine-Dash Line? The Basis of China's Claim to Sovereignty over South China Sea", The Print, <https://theprint.in/the-print-essential/what-is-nine-dash-line-the-basis-of-chinas-claim-to-sovereignty-over-south-china-sea/469403/>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Steinmeier's Visit to Kazakhstan and the German-Kazakh Business Forum

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Kazakhstan from June 19th to 21st, 2023, upon the invitation of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. During the visit, the heads of state focused on enhancing cooperation in trade, economy, investment, transportation, logistics, and energy sectors, as well as deepening humanitarian ties, with the aim of strengthening the Kazakh-German strategic partnership. Ad-

ditionally, President Steinmeier became the first European leader to visit the Mangystau Region to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Kazakh-German Engineering Institute. He also participated in the launch ceremony of a test drilling at the green hydrogen production facility of the Swedish-German company Svevind, and delivered a speech at the forum attended by Kazakh and German rectors.[1]



Şeyma KIZILAY

During Steinmeier's visit, the Kazakh-German Business Forum was also held. The forum focused on strengthening the Kazakh-German strategic partnership with an emphasis on expanding cooperation in the fields of economy, logistics, and energy. President Tokayev, in his speech at the forum, used the following statements regarding Kazakh-German cooperation:[2]

"I have a vision of establishing a research center in Central Asia, with German universities being part of this center. I appreciate the active participation of German investment companies. Kazakhstan will maintain favorable conditions for the continued presence of German investments."

President Tokayev also highlighted the increasing international importance of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. It is well known that Central Asia plays a significant geopolitical role in the Eurasian region. Moreover, this role has grown over time as part of the connectivity between China and Europe. The strategic connection provided by the Central Corridor under the Belt and Road Initiative has further contributed to the growing interest in the region by neighboring countries.

Indeed, starting from 2022, the volume of cargo transported to European Union (EU) member countries through the Central Corridor has doubled. In this regard, President Tokayev mentioned that efforts are being made to improve infrastructure and remove barriers to support the increasing trade volume between East and West.[3]

During the forum, it was noted that German companies have invested approximately \$6 billion in Kazakhstan, with about 90% of the total investments being in non-primary sectors. It is evident that economic relations between Astana and Berlin are gaining momentum. In 2022, the bilateral trade volume increased by 25% to reach \$2.8 billion.[4] The economic ties between the two countries are open to further development. Various platforms, such as business forums, are being utilized to strengthen partnerships.

Furthermore, Germany is the only EU member state with embassies in all five capital cities of Central Asia. Being one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the newly independent republics after their independence in 1991, Germany rapidly opened embassies in the countries of the region.[5] Moreover, Germany is the third largest trading partner of the region after Russia and China, which highlights Berlin's importance to the region.

Another development that demonstrates Berlin's ties with Astana is the presence of German companies in the country. More than 1,000 companies with German capital actively operate in Kazakhstan. As economic ties progress at a high level, energy-based cooperation between the parties is also being developed.

During Steinmeier's visit, Kazakhstan announced that it would increase its crude oil exports to Germany by five times through land transportation in the second half of 2023. Kazakh Energy Minister Almasadam Satkaliyev stated that deliveries would be increased from approximately 150,000 barrels per day to around 733,000 barrels per day.[6] Indeed, energy cooperation remains a fundamental pillar of Kazakh-German friendship. Berlin continues to seek alternatives to Russian oil resources, and energy security has therefore become a prominent issue in relations between Astana and Berlin.

Berlin's policy towards the region indicates its desire for a closer relationship between the EU and Central Asia. Following the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, there has been a growing perception that Moscow's influence in the region has diminished. However, China is also a strong actor in the region, with a significant presence and efforts to strengthen its relations with Central Asian states. In this context, the increasing influence of Europe in Central Asia, which is an important arena of competition, would be a favorable development

for Berlin. The intensified visits and deepening ties are reflections of this effort. The multi-vector foreign policy approach of the regional countries also contributes to the deepening of relations with EU countries. It can be said that Astana is also moving in line with this trend.

The increased interest of Europe, particularly Germany, in Central Asia is influenced not only by the region's strategic role in transportation between Europe and Asia but also by the growing concerns of EU countries regarding energy security following the Russia-Ukraine War. The search for source diversification has further fueled the tendency to enhance relations with Central Asian countries. The recent EU-Central Asia Summit held in Kyrgyzstan indicates that this trend is expected to continue in the future. In fact, President Steinmeier's visit was not limited to Kazakhstan alone. He also conducted an official visit to Kyrgyzstan from 21st to 23rd June 2023. It is expected that the visit will contribute to the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Germany, reaffirming Germany's high level of interest in the region.

In summary, the Kazakh-German Business Forum is expected to take relations between Germany and Kazakhstan to a new level. The establishment of new agreements and strengthened partnerships also indicate that the relationship will continue on a positive trajectory.

[1] "President of Germany to Strengthen Ties with Kazakhstan During State Visit", The Astana Times, <https://astanatimes.com/2023/06/president-of-germany-to-strengthen-ties-with-kazakhstan-during-state-visit/>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).

[2] "Kazakh-German Business Forum has Become a Platform for Signing the Cooperation Agreement Between Satbayev University and Siemens", Satbayev University, <https://satbayev.university/en/news/kazakh-german-business-forum-has-become-a-platform-for-signing-the-cooperation-agreement-between-satbayev-university-and-siemens>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).

[3] "President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Took Part in the Kazakh-German Business Forum", Baiterek, <https://baiterek.gov.kz/en/pr/news/president-kassym-jomart-tokayev-took-part-in-the-kazakh-german-business-forum>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).

[4] "Tokayev Attends Kazakhstan-Germany Business Forum", Kazinform, https://www.inform.kz/en/tokayev-attends-kazakhstan-germany-business-forum_a4081317, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).

[5] "Germany and Central Asia", Auswärtiges Amt, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/1496762/51488be16e2241241b09f76e156f5867/zentralasien-engl-data.pdf>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).

[6] "Kazakhstan to Deliver More Oil to Boost Germany's Energy Security", Upstream Online, <https://www.upstreamonline.com/production/kazakhstan-to-deliver-more-oil-to-boost-germany-s-energy-security/2-1-1471094>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

A Strong Call for a Multipolar World: SCO Leaders Summit

On 4 July 2023, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Leaders' Summit was held under the chairmanship of India. The summit is of great importance as it shows that despite all their differences, SCO members are united in the pursuit of multipolarity and make joint efforts to solve regional issues. Multipolarity was emphasized in the final declaration of the summit and the following statements were included in the introduction of the declaration:[1]

"The world is undergoing unprecedented transformations and is entering a new era of rapid technological development that requires an increase in the effectiveness of global institutions. These fundamental processes are accompanied by ever-stronger multipolarity, increasing interconnectedness, interdependence and an accelerated pace of digitalization."



Dr. Doğan BAŞARAN
ANKASAM
AF-PAK Expert

As can be understood, SCO members believe that the structure of the international system is undergoing a transformation and each state is driven by the desire to become a power center in a world that is evolving towards multipolarity. The SCO's multipolarity goal is also motivated by the fact that its member states account for 40 percent of the world's population and 30 percent of global GDP. [2] In other words, the SCO is a power center that cannot be ignored with its economic capacity and potential in terms of manpower.

In this sense, the SCO can be described as the "Monroe Doctrine of Asia". In a sense, the regional capitals, challenging the global hegemony of the United States of America (USA), send a message to the Washington administration to "stay away from Asia's affairs" and make joint efforts against regional problems.

However, the disputes between the members of the organization are at the heart of the discussions on the future of the SCO. Because, although the organization was established with the aim of resolving the problems between the member states and has been beneficial in terms of creating a dialogue mechanism, the disputes between the member states continue. Therefore, even though the parties are united on multipolarity, they still face some problems.

This was also reflected in the last summit. As a matter of fact, India made a dissenting comment on the inclusion of statements supporting the Belt and Road Initiative in the final declaration, and the following statements in the declaration made it clear that India will continue its opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative:[3]

"Reaffirming their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan highlight the ongoing work to jointly implement the project."

On the other hand, despite the disagreements, the parties agree on the continuation of cooperation in the fight against separatism, extremism and terrorism, which played a decisive role in the establishment of the SCO. This means that the actors care about cooperation not only in the context of multipolarity but also in terms of regional security. This is why the following statements were included in the declaration:

"Reaffirming their strong commitment to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism, Member States are determined to continue to take active measures to eliminate the enabling conditions for the spread of terrorism, to block terrorist financing channels, and to prevent recruitment activities and cross-border movements of terrorist organizations."

The inclusion of this sentence in the declaration can be interpreted as a harbinger that the parties will expand and deepen their cooperation on extremism, separatism and terrorism. Moreover, Chinese President Xi Jinping has made statements that he resolutely opposes foreign interference in the internal affairs of the countries in the region and attempts to provoke 'color revolutions'. [4] At one level, this statement is an objection to US hegemony. This is because it is known that the color revolutions were attempted to be implemented through groups supported by the US, especially in post-Soviet countries.

In fact, it can be said that the West uses terrorist organizations as proxy actors in line with its interests. Therefore, it is possible to read the possibility of terrorism destabilizing the SCO through the US's efforts for regional chaos.

Another sign of multipolarity came from Russian President Vladimir Putin. During his speech, the Russian leader emphasized the importance of trade in local currencies. [5] Of course, Putin's remarks indicate that efforts to de-dollarize will increase. Thus, Russia, especially together with China, wants to end the hegemony of the dollar by promoting yuan-ruble based trade relations.

It should also be emphasized that Iran's accession to the SCO has taken place and the procedural processes have been completed, and a memorandum of understanding was signed with Belarus, which includes the determination of obligations for membership and the creation of a roadmap. [6] Considering the fact that Iran has had problematic relations with the West since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and has been facing various sanctions again, especially under former US President Donald Trump, and that Belarus has internalized a political positioning close to Russia in recent years and has been subjected to sanctions, especially after the war in Ukraine, it can be argued that the SCO has reinforced its stance as an "alliance of others".

In addition, on the occasion of this summit chaired by India, the SCO has clearly demonstrated its interest in global issues. As a matter of fact, various issues ranging from digital transformation to the declaration of 2024 as the "Year of Environment" were included in the final declaration. [7] Therefore, the organization seems to be ready to take the initiative in the transition to an environmentally friendly green economy in the context of combating climate change. This shows that SCO members are willing to find solutions to not only regional but also global problems.

In conclusion, the SCO Leaders' Summit, held under India's presidency, has once again brought to light the search for a multipolar world. For all their disagreements, member states seem to be united in their objection to the structure of the international system and American leadership.

[1] "New Delhi Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization", Ministry of External Affairs Government of India, https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/36751/New_Delhi_Declaration_of_the_Council_of_Heads_of_State_of_Shanghai_Cooperation_Organization, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).

[2] Emre Aytakin, "Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü Değişen Dünya Dengelerinde Kritik Ağırlık Kazanıyor", Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/sanghay-isbirligi-orgutu-degisen-dunya-dengelerinde-kritik-agirlik-kazaniyor/2684833>, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).

[3] "New Delhi Declaration...", a.g.m.

[4] "Çin-Orta Asya Zirvesinde 'Renkli Devrim' Uyarısı Yapan Şi: Ekonomik Potansiyelimizi Ortaya Çıkaralım", Sputnik News, <https://sputniknews.com.tr/20230519/cin-orta-asya-zirvesinde-renkli-devrim-uyarisi-yapan-si-ekonomik-potansiyelimizi-ortaya-cikaralim-1071296263.html>, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).

[5] "Local Currencies in His First International Appearance After the Failed Wagner Mutiny", Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/dedollarization-russia-putin-trade-local-national-currencies-yuan-ruble-sco-2023-7>, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).

[6] "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Expands with the Entry of Iran", Agenzia Nova, <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/lorganizzazione-per-la-cooperazione-di-shanghai-si-allarga-con-lingresso-delliran/>, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).

[7] "New Delhi Declaration...", a.g.m.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Bamboo Diplomacy and Vietnam's Foreign Policy

Vietnam is located in the heart of the region where the competition between the United States (US) and China is most intense in Southeast Asia. As one of the most active markets and production centers in the region, Vietnam's total exports reached \$371.3 billion in 2022, while its imports amounted to \$358.9 billion. The foreign trade volume increased by 9.1% compared to the previous year.ⁱ Approximately \$170 billion of its exports consist of high-tech items such as phones and computers.ⁱⁱ This situation highlights the economic and commercial potential of the country. The interest generated by Vietnam's economic potential has led to efforts by regional and non-regional actors to enhance their relations with Vietnam.

These efforts have necessitated Vietnam to pursue its own unique foreign policy approach and effectively assess risks and opportunities. In this context, Vietnam has referred to its foreign policy since 2016 as "Bamboo Diplomacy".

"Bamboo Diplomacy" takes its name from the bamboo plant, which has a sturdy root system and flexible branches, symbolizing resilience and adaptability. Vietnam chose this title for its foreign policy approach due to its alignment with the national identity. The concept of "Bamboo Diplomacy" was first proposed by Nguyen Phu Trong, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, at the Vietnam Diplomatic Conference in 2016. It was reaffirmed as



Elcan TOKMAK

a guiding principle of foreign policy at the first National Congress on External Relations held in 2021.ⁱⁱⁱ "Bamboo Diplomacy" is best described by referring to the statements made by Nguyen Phu Trong, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, during the National Congress on External Relations on December 14, 2021. In his speech, Trong provided the following explanations for "Bamboo Diplomacy":^{iv}

"Vietnam's diplomacy is described as soft and wise, yet persistent and resolute. It is characterized by being flexible and creative in the face of all struggles and challenges that stand in the way of national independence and people's happiness. At the same time, it remains consistent, courageous, resilient, united, and humane. The diplomacy is committed to protecting national interests while demonstrating determination and patience."

In this context, it can be said that Vietnam's foreign policy is shaped within the framework of national interests, devoid of ideological approaches, and with a realistic perspective. Indeed, Vietnam maintains good relations with both the United States and the West, as well as with China. Furthermore, Vietnam attaches importance to its trade relations with both sides.

During the first 11 months of 2022, Vietnam's exports to the United States increased by 18% compared to the previous year, reaching \$101.5 billion.^v Imports from the United States, on the other hand, remained at around \$11.3 billion.^{vi} In the same year, imports from China reached \$177.89 billion^{vii}, while exports to China were measured at \$146.96 billion.^{viii}

As evident, Vietnam maintains a realistic approach and benefits from its trade relations with both sides without displaying an ideological stance in its relations. In terms of ideology, it is observed that Vietnam has good trade relations with the United States, which is the country it should position itself against ideologically. This aligns well with "Bamboo Diplomacy".

In addition to economic and trade relations, Vietnam also acts in accordance with the requirements of Bamboo Diplomacy in its political relations. For example, on June 25, 2023, the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier from the United States visited Vietnam for the first time since 2018.^{ix} At the time the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier arrived in Vietnam, Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, upon an invitation from Chinese Premier Li Qiang, had traveled to China for an official visit and reached Beijing. During the meetings, Li emphasized the ability of Vietnam and China to overcome issues in the South China Sea together, while Pham expressed that Vietnam would never forget the support provided by China during their struggle for independence.^x Vietnam's Foreign

Minister Bui Tanh stated that during the meeting, the leaders of both countries emphasized the importance of building political trust to develop a stable, healthy, effective, and enduring comprehensive strategic cooperation. He also mentioned that Beijing attaches importance to friendly relations with Hanoi, particularly in key areas such as security and defense, and expressed sincerity in deepening bilateral cooperation through party channels.^{xi}

Some analysts associate these two events with Vietnam's attempt to balance between the two major powers.^{xii} In this context, the arrival of the US ship in Vietnam, coinciding with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of comprehensive partnership, was interpreted as a message of unity between two countries that have concerns about China.

Ultimately, Vietnam's foreign policy exhibits a balanced approach shaped in line with the principle of "Bamboo Diplomacy." Vietnam, as guided by this principle, demonstrates flexible approaches beyond national interests and refrains from taking sides in conflicts between different parties. In the context of US-China competition, Vietnam follows this path, seeking peaceful resolutions to issues with both parties and striving to enhance relations with both countries.

ⁱ "Viet Nam's Export and Import 2022", Vantage Logistic Corp, vantage-logistics.com.vn/viet-nams-export-and-import-2022-bv216.htm#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20the%20total%20export,inc-rease%20over%20the%20previous%20year, (Date of Accession: 02.06.2023).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Japanese Expert Lauds Vietnam's "Bamboo Diplomacy", Vietnam +, en.vietnamplus.vn/japanese-expert-lauds-viet-nams-bamboo-diplomacy/255590.vnp, (Date of Accession: 01.07.2023).

^{iv} Linh Ha, Hong Nhung, "Vietnam's Bamboo Diplomacy: From Tradition to Innovation", Vietnam +, en.vietnamplus.vn/viet-nams-bamboo-diplomacy-from-tradition-to-innovation/251418.vnp, (Date of Accession: 02.06.2023).

^v Tr ng L ng, "Export-Import of Vietnam Set a New Record in 2022, Unlocking Tremendous Potentials in International Trade.", Viettonkin, www.viettonkinconsulting.com/global-business/export-import-of-vietnam-set-a-new-record-in-2022-unlocking-tremendous-potentials-in-international-trade/#:~:text=In%20the%20first%2011%20months,of%20the%20national%20trade%20turnover, (Date of Accession: 02.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Foreign Policy Implications of the Conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Balkans hosted the worst genocide since World War II. The Serbs, who were uncomfortable with the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, committed acts unworthy of modern civilizations. Although there are various attempts to recognize the Srebrenica Massacre as genocide, these efforts remain insufficient. It should be noted that the region has extremely troubled dynamics. Serbs, in particular, interpret the new order established after the breakup of

Yugoslavia as a system that was created to oppress Serbs. The outcome of this situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was that Republika Srpska undermined the country's integration process with the West.

To put things in perspective, the Balkans is a geography that has been home to various conflicts since the past. The demographic structure of the region has been the main rea-



**Veli Can
AKKAŞ**

son for these conflicts. In addition, the rivalry of actors seeking to have influence over the region has also led to the escalation of tensions. As a result, it is difficult to say that political stability has been achieved in the Balkan region even today.

As it is known, Milorad Dodik, the leader of Republika Srpska, has been emphasizing independence against Bosnia and Herzegovina for a long time. In addition, Dodik, whose relations with Russia are quite strong, often leads to new polemics with his anti-Western stance. As a matter of fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina seems to want to build both its economic structure and security in cooperation with the West in general and the United States of America (USA) in particular. However, Dodik's stance makes this difficult.

Apparently, Bosnia and Herzegovina is unable to adopt a common foreign policy stance. Strong disagreements in domestic politics are also reflected in diplomacy. On the other hand, it should be noted that Russia's interest in the Balkans has increased as its room for maneuver has diminished due to the war in Ukraine.

The unstable structure in the region attracts attention as a potential area of conflict. What should not be overlooked here is that Europe will be directly affected by a possible crisis in the region.

Another issue that needs to be emphasized is that Moscow, which wants to maintain its power against the West, acts with the aim of "Balkanization of the Balkans". As the far right is normalized in Europe, a favorable environment is created for the spread of the negative effects of nationalism.

Religion emerges as a strong factor in the separation of Balkan peoples. In this respect, Pan-Slavism is at the forefront of Russian foreign policy efforts in the region. The tension in the region is largely shaped by the Serbs. In addition to the tension on the Kosovo-Serbia line, the steps of the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina cause some problems. It is necessary to state that the West will not hold back from both economic and diplomatic sanctions in order to change Dodik's attitude in the diplomatic tension that continues with increasing momentum.

The decree of the Banja Luka administration not to publish the decisions of the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schmidt proves that Dodik is moving further and further away from the West.ⁱ The decree is considered by the West to represent an attack against the constitutional order and the state of

Bosnia and Herzegovina. All these developments open the door to questioning the legitimacy of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Genocide Remembrance Day in Srebrenica also triggers crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina from time to time. The main reason for this situation is the inability to find a common position due to Republika Srpska. One of the developments that illustrates this conflict is the failure to reach consensus on the decision to declare July 11 as a day of mourning in Bosnia and Herzegovina.ⁱⁱ

Ultimately, developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina disturb the West. In order to maintain its place in the global struggle, the US is careful not to lose the trust of its allies. In this context, it can be said that it will increase its initiatives to address security concerns in the region. The US Ambassador to Sarajevo Michael Murphy emphasized Washington's commitment to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.ⁱⁱⁱ

Developments in Kosovo on the one hand and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other undermine the prospects for an "Open Balkans". In particular, political instability in the region poses an obstacle to initiatives to ensure cooperation on various issues. At this point, although Albania's initiatives for political stability in the region are noteworthy, it is very difficult to see positive progress in the short term. This is because the fragile structure in the region persists.

ⁱ "Dodik potpisao sporni zakon o neobjavlivanju odluka OHR-a", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/7/7/dodik-potpisao-neustavni-zakon-o-neobjavlivanju-odluka-ohr-a>, (Date of Accession: 07.07.2023).

ⁱⁱ "Vijeće ministara BiH odbilo proglasiti 11. juli danom žalosti", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/7/5/vijece-ministara-bih-odbilo-proglasiti-11-juli-danom-zalosti>, (Date of Accession: 05.07.2023).

ⁱⁱⁱ "Američki ambasador Michael Murphy: Kada se Sarajevo našlo pod opsadom, oklijevali smo", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/7/6/americki-ambasador-kada-se-sarajevo-naslo-pod-opsadom-oklijevali-smo>, (Date of Accession: 06.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Could Al-Qaeda Terrorist Organization Become an International Threat Again?

During the first Taliban period, Afghanistan was isolated by the international community and the Taliban government was not recognized by any state. During this period, the Taliban turned to cooperation with the terrorist organization al-Qaeda and allowed the organization to use Afghanistan's territory as a base. Consequently, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States of America (USA) and its allies overthrew the Taliban regime on October 7, 2001 by carrying out what they called "Operation Enduring Freedom". However, in 20 years of occupation, the US and its allies have failed to destroy the Taliban and to establish a healthy regime in Afghanistan.

Under the influence of this situation, the US and its allies gradually came to the conclusion that it was necessary to negotiate with the Taliban and signed the Doha Agreement on February 29, 2020. In the course of the agreement, the Taliban pledged to the United States that they would not allow the use of Afghan territory by terrorist organizations, that they would fight terrorism and that Afghanistan would not be used against foreign states. This is why, on the one hand, the Taliban is resolutely fighting the terrorist organization State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and, on the other hand, rejects the presence of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization in Afghanistan. However, the neutralization of al-Qae-



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

da terrorist organization leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in Kabul on August 1, 2022 as a result of an air operation organized by the US led to increased criticism of the Taliban administration. This has deepened the Taliban's recognition problem.

The main point to note here is that the United States has sanctioned some Taliban leaders, particularly the Haqqani Network, on the grounds of links to the al-Qaeda terrorist organization. Therefore, the West has the idea that the Taliban is linked to terrorism. In fact, this idea is one of the main reasons why the Taliban faced recognition problems in its second term.

Undoubtedly, this is also used by Taliban opponents. Indeed, from time to time, the most powerful resistance group against the Taliban, the Panshir Movement, makes statements drawing attention to the risk of terrorism and criticizes the Taliban regime for allegedly maintaining relations with al-Qaeda and demands support from the international community.

However, allegations that the Taliban is in contact with the al-Qaeda terrorist organization are not only voiced by the Panshir Movement, but also by other Taliban opposition figures. Most recently, former Balkh Governor Ata Mohammad Nur claimed that the al-Qaeda terrorist organization was training terrorists inside Afghanistan and preparing to carry out international attacks.[1] This indicates that anti-Taliban groups want to wear down the Taliban through the al-Qaeda factor.

The possibility that such a scenario could come true is undeniable. The main concern about the second Taliban era, especially among Afghanistan's neighboring states, is the possibility of terrorism spreading to their geography. This is because groups that many states consider terrorist organizations are affiliated with al-Qaeda or DAESH.

In fact, it is claimed that one of the reasons for the US withdrawal from Afghanistan was to plunge the region into chaos. This is because Afghanistan is located in a geographical location where instability can destabilize US rivals. There is a possibility that terrorism and conflicts could spread to China through the Wahan Corridor and to Russia through Central Asia. In other words, while withdrawing from a geography where it could not ensure stability, the US may have preferred to concentrate on a scenario where it could destabilize its rivals by paving the way for radicalization.

Moreover, the pressure from the United States and its allies on other states not to recognize the Taliban may also stem from this. Because a Taliban that is isolated from the international community may eventually radicalize. Similarly, the possibility that the al-Qaeda terrorist organization may turn to the Taliban for financial support to meet its basing needs and to use its old relations is not a scenario that can be denied.

As a result, Nur's statements have once again brought to the agenda the discussions about al-Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan, which were voiced by the leaders of the Panshir Movement in the past. While it is unclear to what extent these allegations reflect reality, it is clear that the rise of radicalization and terrorism in Afghanistan will serve regional chaos scenarios. This would mean the destabilization of US rivals.

[1] "تسا ناتسناغفا لخدازا لملل انابى تاى لمع يارب ىشكه شقن لاج رد هدعاق لا: رون دمحم اطع", AFINTL, <https://www.afintl.com/202307099578>, (Date of Accession: 10.07.2023).

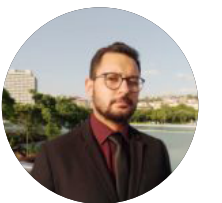


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Dokdo/Takeshima Island as an Obstacle in South Korea-Japan Relations

Japan-South Korea relations have shown significant development in the past few years, with efforts made to resolve existing issues one by one. The main reason for the positive atmosphere in the relationship is the increasing economic and military capacity of China, particularly in the region and globally, along

with its allied states. Among these states, North Korea and Russia are prominent. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine War and North Korea's increasing military activities have led Japan and South Korea, with the support of the United States (US), to seek stronger cooperation and have brought them closer together.



Elcan TOKMAK

While the overall trend of the relationship is positive, there are also points of contention. One of the most prominent and currently seemingly distant from a resolution is the Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute. Like some other issues, the Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute emerged after World War II.

Despite the positive atmosphere in the relationship, it is observed that tensions persist in the aforementioned dispute. For example, on December 16, 2022, Japan issued its National Security Strategy, stating that the island belongs to Japan. In response, South Korea condemned the statement.[1]

On March 28, 2023, following the depiction of Dokdo/Takeshima Island as belonging to South Korea in South Korean textbooks, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan issued a protest statement and summoned the South Korean Ambassador to the ministry.[2]

In another instance, on December 23, 2022, South Korea conducted military exercises near Dokdo/Takeshima Island, which drew a reaction from Japan.[3] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan conveyed to Kim Yong Gil, the South Korean Ambassador in Tokyo, that the exercises reported to have taken place were absolutely unacceptable and deeply regrettable.[4]

While these developments were unfolding, the positive atmosphere on the Seoul-Tokyo line did not wane, and steps were continued to be taken towards discussions and the resolution of issues. For example, during the Yoon Suk Yeol-Fumio Kishida summit held in May 2023, commitments were made to take steps towards resolving the problems.[5]

Furthermore, on April 13, 2023, a meeting was held between South Korean Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Park Bo-gyoon and his Japanese counterpart Saito Tetsuo to discuss necessary steps for the development of tourism.[6] During the meeting, there was an exchange of ideas on increasing bilateral tourism activities and enhancing relations.

By June 7, 2023, South Korea conducted another military exercise near Dokdo/Takeshima Island.[7] In response, on the same date, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan summoned a senior diplomat from the South Korean Embassy in Tokyo, while the Japanese Embassy in Seoul also summoned a high-ranking Korean official to protest the incident. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan issued a statement that included the following remarks:[8]

“Takeshima is unquestionably Japan’s natural territory, based on historical facts and international law... The military exercises by the South Korean Army are unacceptable and deeply regrettable.”

In a statement from South Korea, it was mentioned that the defense exercise in the East Sea region was conducted to fulfill South Korea’s duty to protect its region, people, and property. Additionally, in a statement from the US Department of State, emphasis was placed on the resolution of the issues, highlighting the critical importance of the trilateral relationship in terms of shared security and common interests.[9]

In the end, the convergence of regional threat perceptions has led South Korea and Japan to seek stronger cooperation. With the support of the United States, these efforts contribute to taking steps towards resolving issues and undertaking more integrated actions against North Korea. However, it cannot be said that issues like the Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute have been completely resolved. It is evident that these issues will not escalate into large-scale conflicts. The reconciliatory role of the United States in this context should not be overlooked.

[1] “South Korea Protests Japan’s Island Claim in National Security Strategy”, Reuters, www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-protests-japans-island-claim-national-security-strategy-2022-12-16/, (Date of Accession: 16.12.2022).

[2] “South Korea Lodges Protest with Japan over New Textbooks’ Descriptions”, The Japan Times, www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2023/03/28/national/japan-south-korea-textbook-protests/, (Date of Accession: 28.03.2023).

[3] “Japan Protests South Korean Military Drills Near Disputed Isles”, Kyodo News, english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/12/ef5c7a24d4e0-japan-protests-s-korean-military-drills-near-disputed-isles.html, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[4] Ibid.

[5] “Yoon, Kishida Vow better Seoul-Tokyo Ties Following Summit”, AP News, apnews.com/article/south-korea-japan-yoon-kishida-2451347b173896fd04ea633d7fe3986e, (Date of Accession: 03.04.2023).

[6] “S. Korea, Japan Agree to Boost Tourism”, Yonhab News Agency, en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230415002100320, (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023).

[7] Chae Yun-hwan, “(LEAD) S. Korea Held Regular Defense Drills Around Dokdo Last Month”, Yonhab News Agency, en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230707002551325, (Date of Accession: 07.07.2023).

[8] “Japan Protests over Military Drills on Dokdo Islands”, The Kore Times, www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/07/113_354522.html, (Date of Accession: 09.07.2023).

[9] “Japan Protests over...”, a.g.m.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Signing of Serbia's EU Accession Support Package

The package of annual aid as part of Serbia's accession process to the European Union (EU) was signed on June 21, 2023. Accordingly, the Union will provide €162.2 million in aid to Belgrade. The document was announced at a ceremony attended by Serbian Minister of European Integration Tanja Miscevic and Head of the EU Delegation in Serbia Emmanuel Joffre. In a video released before the ceremony, EU Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi pointed out that the EU is Serbia's largest investor and trading partner and that the Union will continue to strengthen partnerships with Belgrade.[1]

Both the signed agreement and Varhelyi's statements show the importance that Brussels attaches to relations with Belgrade. It can be stated that the economic factor is among the driving forces in the relations. On the other hand, Serbia is an actor forced to make a geopolitical choice. It does not agree with the sanctions imposed by the EU on Moscow following the Russia-Ukraine War. Especially in the context of energy security, Serbia attaches importance to its relations with Russia. This leads Belgrade to pursue a delicate balancing policy. This policy of balance, on the other hand, faces various criticisms that it contradicts EU solidarity and Belgrade is forced to make a choice.



Dr. Doğan BAŞARAN
ANKASAM
AF-PAK Expert

One of the reasons for Serbia's forced choice is undoubtedly Russia's increasing influence in Balkan geopolitics through pan-Slavism. With the impact of historical, cultural and ethnic problems in the Balkans, i.e. problems stemming from the internal dynamics of the Balkans, Russia is using the rising Serbian nationalism to increase its influence in the region. In this framework, the Kremlin administration is making efforts to influence Serbia, Kosovo Serbs and the Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rising Serbian nationalism increases ethnic fragility in the Balkans and makes the region insecure.

It is possible to say that Moscow's efforts to increase its influence in the region within the framework of pan-Slavist arguments increased after the Russia-Ukraine War. This is because Moscow thinks that it can destabilize Europe, which has openly supported Ukraine and imposed sanctions on it, in terms of migration and security through the Balkans, and thus, make the Union countries backtrack. This is because the Balkans are basically Southeastern Europe. This means that crises in the Balkans will negatively affect European security.

As a matter of fact, after the Russia-Ukraine War, the increase in the conflicts between Kosovo Serbs in particular and the Pristina administration in particular, and between Kosovo and Serbia in general, especially in the north of Kosovo, stems from this. Undoubtedly, this situation is closely related to the Belgrade administration's ideal of "Greater Serbia". In any case, Belgrade does not recognize the independence of Kosovo. Moreover, Kosovo gained its independence with the support of the United States (USA) and EU member actors. Of course, this makes it easier for Russia, which maintains its influence in the region through ethnic, historical and cultural elements and pan-Slavism, to establish close relations with Serbia. Moreover, the independence of Kosovo was realized "despite Russia" and the Moscow administration, like Belgrade, does not support the independence of the country in question.

In such an environment, as the Kosovo-centered tension escalates, the EU, together with the USA, emphasizes mediation diplomacy and tries to prevent a hot conflict in the region. At this point, despite all the difficulties for the EU, it can be said that the balance policy carried out by Serbian President Alexander Vucic is of great importance. Because, although Serbia has close relations with Russia, it acts with a multi-faceted foreign policy understanding. In this direction, the country sees itself as a part of Europe and wants to become a member of the EU.

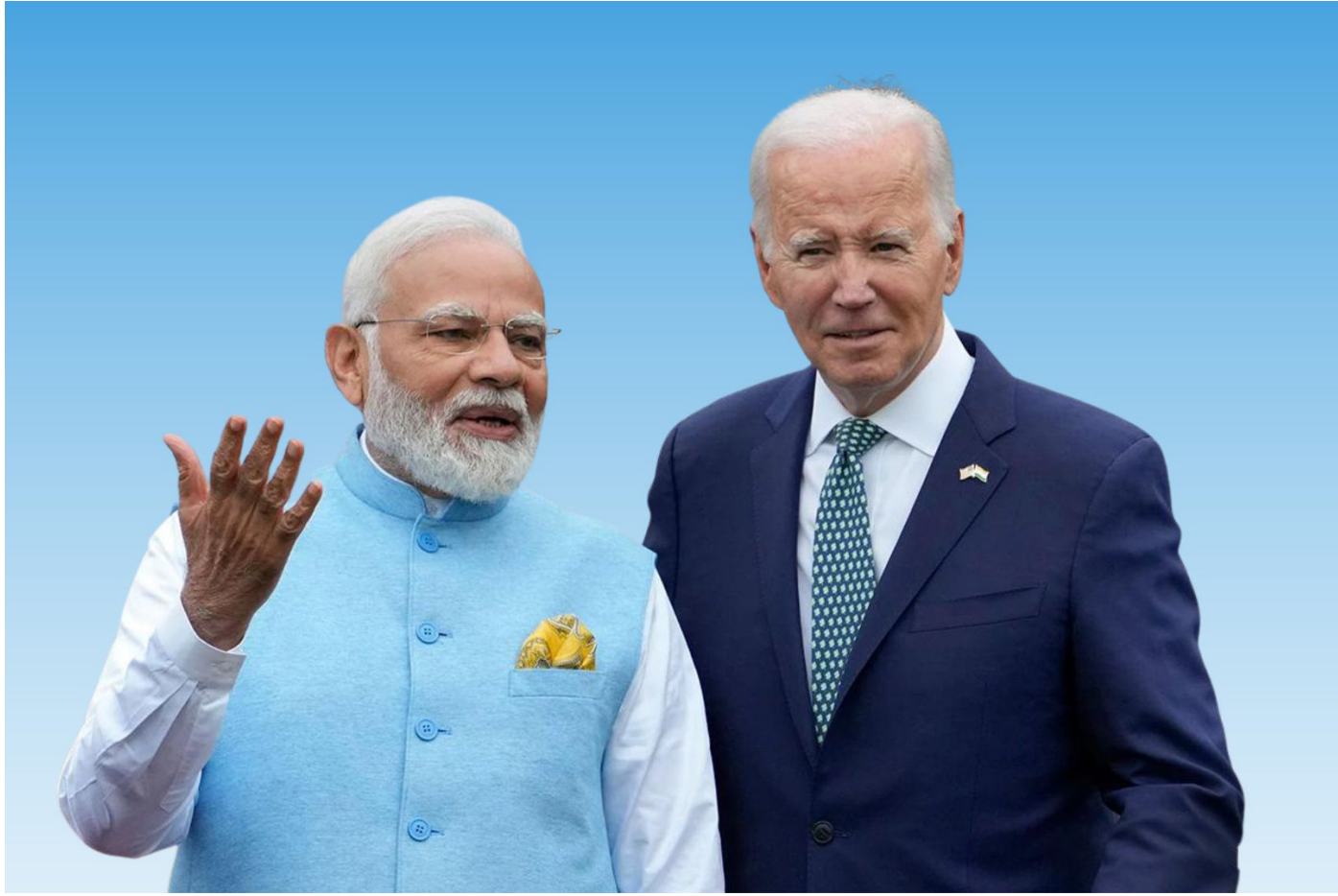
Of course, this situation allows the EU to mediate during the crises in the Balkan geography, especially the Kosovo Crisis. In other words, Serbia's EU membership goal is one of the most critical factors preventing a hot conflict in the region.

Within the framework of all this information, it should be noted that; It is very important to sign the donation agreement regarding the aid that Serbia will receive in line with its EU membership goal, at a time when Brussels is increasing the pressure on the Belgrade and Pristina administrations to reach an agreement.

As expected, the Union, on the one hand, sends messages to Belgrade through economic aid that it does not want to lose Serbia and perceives it as a part of Europe; on the other hand, it cares about Belgrade's continued pursuit of EU membership in order to prevent the Kosovo Crisis from escalating.

As a result, the EU does not want conflicts in the Balkan geography, which it considers as its immediate neighborhood and therefore will be affected by its instability. Therefore, it is trying to prevent the pan-Slavist policy of Serbia and Russia. In this context, Brussels sees Belgrade's EU membership aspirations as an opportunity. The agreement in question also confirms this. In the light of all this information, it can be predicted that the EU will continue to play a mediation role in the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo by using various instruments.

[1] "Potpisan paket pomoći EU-a Srbiji od 162,2 miliona eura", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/6/21/potpisan-paket-pomoci-eu-srbiji-od-1622-miliona-eura>, (Date of Accession: 23.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

India-US Rapprochement in the Context of Border Disputes

The role of borders has been important throughout history as they have been decisive in relations between states. As is well known, borders, on the one hand, ensure that the output produced in a certain region is shared in that region; on the other hand, they facilitate the attribution of identity to societies. The issue that needs to be discussed at this point is that

border disputes still exist today. This is because states have conflicts of interest over borders. In fact, actors are even developing policies to address border problems, which they characterize as the soft underbelly of their rivals.

As is well known, China is increasing its diplomatic power as well as its economic power in



**Veli Can
AKKAŞ**

the international arena. The United States (US) aims to defend the system it leads against China. Therefore, it is possible to state that Beijing and Washington have confronted each other on many issues. It is possible to argue that the parties in this rivalry pursue policies aimed at weakening the rival and narrowing its sphere of influence, rather than open hostility. In this context, it would not be surprising for both China and the US to focus on their rival's soft underbelly.

As can be seen, while China pursues policies against US interests, Washington tries to squeeze Beijing on various issues. The Joe Biden administration is also pursuing a multi-pronged containment policy against China. At this point, it is very important for the US to improve its relations with India.

To put things in perspective, in addition to the territorial rivalry between China and India, the two sides also have a border dispute over the Sikkim region. In Arunachal Pradesh State in particular, both sides have claims. The two actors went to war in 1962 over a dispute over the territory in question. Although there are no hot conflicts today, border crises occasionally escalate. This is evidenced by the tension between New Delhi and Beijing in 2017 and the conflict in 2020.

An analysis of American foreign policy reveals an approach that seeks to exploit the problems of its rivals to achieve results in its favor. As a matter of fact, during the Cold War, the United States, while fighting against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), saw the conflict between China and the USSR over the Ussuri River in 1969 and improved its relations with China. It can be concluded that Washington saw China as a potential maneuvering ground against the USSR and turned towards cooperation. At this point, Washington wants to cooperate with New Delhi against Beijing.

It is possible to say that the US interest in India has been reciprocated. New Delhi has a positive attitude towards the US, even though it has good relations with Russia and tries to pursue an independent policy. There are two main reasons for India's positive attitude. The first one is that China is getting stronger every day. This is an obstacle to New Delhi's influence in the region.

The second is the China-Pakistan rapprochement. Islamabad and Beijing are cooperating on various issues. One of the most important outcomes of this rapprochement is the \$4.8 billion nuclear power plant deal. In particular, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif described China as Pakistan's most reliable ally as a result of this agreement.[1] In addition to its border dispute with China, India has historically had problems with Pakistan over the Kashmir region. Based on this dispute that has been carried to the present day, the New Delhi administration does not ignore the rapprochement of the two actors with whom it has a border dispute.

It can be said that Washington is experiencing a turning point in its rivalry with China. Indeed, the fact that US President Joe Biden called Chinese President Xi Jinping a dictator one day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to China opens the door to new crises in the struggle between the parties. Beijing called this statement a "ridiculous provocation".[2] Nevertheless, it can be argued that this tension has brought the rivalry between Beijing and Washington to a new level. At this point, the US is likely to accelerate its policy of containment of China.

In short, Washington sees India as a potential ally to cooperate with in its struggle against China. In this sense, the ceremony organized during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States is noteworthy.[3] One of the most important outcomes of Modi's contacts in Washington was the permission for the US Navy to use Indian shipyards. This will contribute to Washington's military presence in the region. This will obviously cause discomfort in Beijing.

New Delhi aims to diversify its supply routes by reducing economic dependence on China. In this context, it is deepening its relations with Washington. Given Modi's multifaceted foreign policy, it is worth noting that India will not easily give up its emphasis on independence. The cooperation between the United States and India, while solid in the short term, may face challenges in the long term due to the emphasis on independence and the positive relations between Moscow and New Delhi.

As a result, the US aims to deepen its relations with India in order to contain China. This policy of the US also finds a positive response in India. One of the most important reasons for this is India's border disputes with China and Pakistan and the close relations between Beijing and Islamabad.

[1] "Pakistan and China Sign \$4.8 Billion Nuclear Power Plant Deal", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/pakistan-china-sign-48-bl-nuclear-power-plant-deal-2023-06-20/>, (Date of Accession: 20.06.2023)

[2] "China Hits Back After Biden Calls Xi a 'Dictator'", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-calls-chinese-president-xi-dictator-2023-06-21/>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023)

[3] "Biden dočekao Modija u Bijeloj kući raskošnom ceremonijom.", Aljazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/world/2023/6/22/biden-docekao-modija-u-bijeloj-kuci-raskosnom-ceremonijom>, (Date of Accession: 22.06.2023)



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Will Russia and NATO Engage in a Hot Conflict?

In a statement on June 20, 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) opposition to ending the war in Ukraine would mean planning to get involved in the war and stated that the Moscow administration was ready for such a scenario.[1] On June 22, 2023, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zaharova warned that the aggressive policies of the West could lead to Deconfliction between the nucle-

ar powers. In this context, Zaharova suggested that the responsibility for the crises that may occur belongs to the West and made the following statement:[2]

"The biggest risk is that the United States (USA) and NATO will continue to provoke themselves with their aggressive policies in order to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia in Ukraine and will be drawn deeper into the military conflict."



Dr. Doğan BAŞARAN
ANKASAM
AF-PAK Expert

It can be said that the successive statements coming from Moscow that there may be a hot conflict with the West are extremely remarkable. Moreover, the emphasis on the risk of nuclear conflict in the Russian outlets in question is also very important. The question that should be discussed at this point is whether Russia and NATO can afford to get into a heated conflict with each other.

As it is known, the Moscow administration has overcome the trauma caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union after Vladimir Putin became the President of Russia and acted with the desire to prove that it has the status of a "great power" during its actions in international politics.

In this context, the Kremlin has made efforts to maintain its influence in the post-Soviet geography within the framework of the "Doctrine of the Immediate Environment", also known as the "Primakov Doctrine". Therefore, Russia has carried out a strategy aimed at preventing the formation of pro-Western administrations in the former Soviet countries. On the other hand, the United States, which considers increasing its influence in the Eurasian geography as a prerequisite for its global leadership, has tried to ensure the formation of pro-Western regimes in the post-Soviet geography by supporting color revolutions on the one hand; on the other hand, it encouraged NATO's eastward expansion policy by violating the guarantees given to Russia after the Cold War.

As might be expected, Russia considered NATO's eastward expansion as part of its containment policy. In this context, it can be stated that NATO's acceptance of Romania and Bulgaria as members in 2004 became a border for the Moscow administration. Because Russia thought that after the membership of these states, NATO had reached the maximum limits to which it could expand among former Warsaw Pact members. Accordingly, in the ongoing process, it has revealed that the West will perceive increasing its influence in the Russian immediate environment as a reason for war. Because the Moscow administration has started to think that Western actors are encircling Russia through the Black Sea through NATO expansion.

The most concrete response of the Kremlin administration to this situation is the military intervention it carried out in 2008 to block Georgia's Western orientation. Six years after the Russo-Georgian War, Russia has taken Ukraine's reaction to the European Union (EU) and NATO orientation one step further with its military intervention, in which it annexed Crimea in violation of international law and tried to create a de facto situation in eastern Ukraine. Moreover, the NATO and EU orientations of the Kiev government also played a decisive role in the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine War, which began on February 24, 2022.

Undoubtedly, there are many historical problems between Moscow and Kiev. However, one of the most important triggers of Russia's intervention in Ukraine is that NATO's expansion strategy has caused the disappearance of these qualities of the countries that assumed the "buffer zone" character after the Cold War. Therefore, the Kremlin believes that it is at war not only with Ukraine, but also with the West and, of course, with NATO.

It is also necessary to emphasize that there is a share of truth in the belief in question. Because in the current situation, Ukraine's resistance depends on the assistance of states that have internalized Western values, the majority of which are NATO members. Of course, it is obvious that the fate of the war will also be determined by the continuity of aid. Similarly, the sanctions of these actors targeting the Moscow administration lead to Russia's isolation from the international community. For this reason, in a sense, it can be suggested that the West is waging a proxy war against Russia. Moscow, on the other hand, is waging hybrid war in accordance with the "Gerasimov Doctrine". In this context, on the one hand, it supports the separatists of Russian origin in Ukraine; on the other hand, it makes use of the military elements that it uses in the war nobly.

In fact, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which it announced at the beginning of the war, and its departure from the goal of overthrowing Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky are also a result of Russia-Western rivalry. As of the current point, the Moscow gov-

ernment is far from the victory that it plans to achieve in a short time. Moreover, it is understood that the war has turned into a war of attrition that will continue for many years, especially the strategy of the United States and Britain is in this direction. As a matter of fact, the statements of Lavrov and Zaharova that are the subject of the bet are also due to this.

Russia implies that the process may evolve into a hot conflict with NATO, and in saying so, it shows that it holds the trump card of "nuclear war", which it has been voicing from time to time since the beginning of the war. In a sense, the Kremlin administration, although it does not express it openly, implicitly demands that the support given to Kiev be cut off, implying that a war in which Russia will be defeated in Ukraine will open the door to a process in which the whole world loses.

It should be stated at this point that it is not expected that there will be a Russia-NATO War and that the parties will enter a hot conflict in this context. Because this is not rational from the point of view of both sides. Because the Russia-NATO War, the extent to which its destruction will reach, will lead to unpredictable conflicts. Because this means the "Third World War".

As a result, both Lavrov's and Zaharova's statements stem from their belief that Russia is at war with the West in Ukraine. On these statements, Moscow is bluffing that it can nobly draw NATO into war and raises its hands with the emphasis on the "nuclear threat". However, it is not expected that the parties will enter a hot conflict. Because this is not a rational option.

[1] "Лавров: НАТО хочет воевать на Украине, Москва к этому готова", Vesti, <https://www.vesti.ru/article/3413594>, (Erişim Tarihi: 22.06.2023).

[2] "US, NATO's Aggressive Policies May Result in Clash between Nuclear Powers-Russian MFA", TASS, <https://tass.com/defense/1636187>, (Erişim Tarihi: 22.06.2023).

ANKASAM IN PRESS

18 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Cem Karadeli, Senior Advisor at the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), commented on the NATO Leaders' Summit and Sweden's NATO membership in this context for TVNET.

22 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), evaluated Uzbekistan's relations with the Gulf countries for DUNYO, one of the leading news agencies of Uzbekistan.

22 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), commented on Russia's bombing of grain export ports and its effects on food security 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.

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

JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

The latest issue of the Journal of Regional Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Crisis and Political Research Center (ANKASAM), has been published. Our journal is scanned by Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Index and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases. You can reach our journal via the link below.

ANKASAM JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES VOLUME VIII, ISSUE I.

