



ANKASAM

bulletin

13 August 2023
ISSUE: 2023/32

Can the Coup d'état in Niger Bring About a Shift in the African Political Paradigm?



14

China's Foreign Policy Approach in the Context of Cooperation

20

Growing China-Russia Rap-prochement in the Asia-Pacific Region and Possible Scenarios

CONTENTS

ANKASAM ANALYSIS

- 03 France's Growing Interest in the Asia-Pacific**
Veli Can AKKAŞ
- 06 Australia's Security Concerns in the Context of China-Solomon Islands Relations**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN
- 08 Zambia's Reform Agenda and Active Diplomacy**
Şeyma KIZILAY
- 11 Contributions of China's Belt and Road Project to the Balkans**
Furkan DOĞDU
- 14 China's Foreign Policy Approach in the Context of Cooperation**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN
- 16 Can the Coup d'état in Niger Bring About a Shift in the African Political Paradigm?**
Dr. Ceren GÜRSELER
- 20 Growing China-Russia Rapprochement in the Asia-Pacific Region and Possible Scenarios**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN
- 23 Australia-China Relations in the Context of Regional Alliances**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN
- 26 The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on China-Africa Relations**
Elcan TOKMAK
- 28 North Korea's "Nuclear Threat" and the Security Conjecture of the Asia-Pacific**
Zeki Talustan GÜLTEN

ANKASAM IN PRESS

- 30 Media**

JOURNALS

- 31 Journal of International Crisis and Political Studies**

Journal of Regional Studies



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

France's Growing Interest in the Asia-Pacific

The competition among the dominant actors in the international system is accelerating every day and progressing towards an uncertain future. Particularly in the global conjuncture where the United States (USA) and China play a dominant role, many states are trying to secure their interests. One of the states that appears in this context is France. Paris, while playing a significant role in Europe, is also considered an important actor in global competition through

the French Overseas Territories Community. The interest of the Macron administration in the Asia-Pacific has recently increased, both due to the effect of the China-USA rivalry on the region's status quo and developments in domestic politics.

France's recent increased interest in the Asia-Pacific is a subject that needs to be addressed in terms of both foreign and domestic



Veli Can AKKAŞ

policy. If examined from a domestic policy perspective, recent protests in France have made a lot of noise and have led to a connection between immigration and crime, leading to a rise in right-wing views in the country. Also, the insistence on increasing the retirement age has weakened the government. Considering that Macron is entering the last year of his term, it is likely that he will make efforts to increase his legitimacy. In this context, it is possible to say that he has made an effort to change the country's agenda and draw an image aimed at protecting national interests and the unity of the country to alleviate the pressure on him.

The Asia-Pacific is very important for these interests. Indeed, France obtains 90% of its exclusive economic zone from its overseas territories. Therefore, risks to French sovereignty in the French Overseas Territories Community must be prevented. Currently, France's total foreign financial liabilities are greater than its total foreign financial assets, resulting in a negative international investment position. It can be argued that the continuation of the economic growth claimed by Macron will increase France's efforts to use its economic rights in the Asia-Pacific to close this gap and increase the return on international assets. The security of French presence in the region is significant at this point.

If we need to examine the interest in Asia-Pacific from a foreign policy perspective, France has the world's second-largest maritime area. This is due to the French Overseas Territories Community. Therefore, Paris's control and legitimacy over these regions are vital. The increasing USA-China rivalry in the Asia-Pacific not jeopardizing French interests can be seen as the primary goal of the Macron administration. Indeed, Paris's main aim is to avoid the negative impacts of this rivalry and make moves in line with its interests. The point to be emphasized here is that France wants to implement a foreign policy aimed at strengthening its position in the region rather than joining the Beijing-Washington race.

Considering France's extensive network in the region, it is likely to avoid bold steps. At this point, it should be stated that Paris has remained in the background of the competition between the two main actors. The Macron administration is concerned about the USA's regional cooperation initiatives separate from France and China's efforts to increase its military presence, and also wants to strengthen its resistance against developments outside its control. Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles confirming that missiles will be produced for the USA,[1] considering New Caledonia's geopolitical position, proves Paris's concerns.

In conclusion, France wants to protect its overseas territories such as La Reunion, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia, and its influence in the region. Therefore, it aims to deepen its relations in the geography in question. In this context, it can be argued that Paris is concerned about China's rise. Indeed, the emergence of a new imperialism in the region is directing France towards a status quo foreign policy. China, claiming rights over Vietnam and Taiwan and providing military training in the Paracel Islands,[2] shows its efforts to increase its military presence in the region. The underlying reason for this effort is that the region is seen as vital for China's national security. These efforts, leading to the escalation of crises, are pushing France to protect its presence in the region. Macron's diplomatic tour in the area,[3] seen as the main geopolitical battlefield between the two actors, shows that he will not remain a spectator in the surrounding power struggle.

It can be argued that the main concern of the Macron administration is China. Indeed, Beijing's rising economy has also been reflected in trade with France. France has a serious trade deficit against China. According to Chinese Deputy Prime Minister He Lifeng, Beijing wants to deepen cooperation with Paris and hopes that France will be beneficial in stabilizing EU-China relations.[4] China has opened up to the world with the Belt and Road Initiative and has turned its economic rise to its advantage in diplomacy. In this context, it wants to strengthen its relations with the EU. However, to prevent China's economic superiority from turning into political superiority against France, Paris is likely to try to reduce its dependence on China and increase the efficiency of its exclusive economic zones. In addition to this, France is avoiding a hostile attitude in its relations with China and is striving to eliminate the trade imbalance between them. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire's statement that France wants not to "separate" from the world's second-largest economy, China, but to have better access to the Chinese market and a more "balanced" trade relationship after meeting with Chinese officials at the China-France Economic and Financial Dialogue,[5] proves Paris's attitude.

When looking at Paris's strategy, India, being a strong balancer against China, is an attraction center for France's strategy in the region. Ultimately, New Delhi-Paris relations are showing an increasing momentum. What needs to be emphasized here is India's role. India is seen as a balancing weight against China's rising power. Indeed, the strategic moves of the Modi administration are perceived as a significant factor in Beijing's steps in the region. Fundamentally, India's growing geopolitical importance every day has caused it to be seen as a natural partner by other actors who want to gain superiority against China. In this context, France has entered into an effort to deepen relations with India. The fact that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the guest of honor and deemed worthy of an award at the "Bastille Day" military parade,[6] is evidence of this effort.

In conclusion, the course of France-India relations is quite positive. Particularly, New Delhi's discomfort with Beijing's increasing influence in the region and its efforts to strengthen its role in the international system are causing Paris to approach with optimism. It can be argued that the Modi administration's attitude towards increasing military power has contributed to cooperation between the two actors. Especially, the desire to develop the defense industry is decisive in its approach to France. Although their views on the Ukraine War may be different, the preliminary agreement for the same model of 26 fighter jets and 3 submarines, in addition to the previous agreement for 36 Rafale fighter jets and 6 Scorpene submarines,[7] can be presented as an example of this situation. This relationship, based fundamentally on defense cooperation, is also paving the way for partnership in various matters.

In conclusion, one of the geographies where global competition is shaping is the Asia Pacific. Paris does not want to be adversely affected by the power struggle in the region. Indeed, France has the world's second-largest maritime area due to the Overseas Territories Community. China's and the USA's increasing military presence in the mentioned region is causing France to worry about security. The Macron administration is turning to its overseas territories to both regain the support it lost due to tensions in the country by emphasizing national interests and to reduce its dependency on China's economic superiority.

There must be no threat for the policies to be implemented in the overseas territories of the country that gives an international investment position deficit. The Paris administration, wanting to guarantee its own interests, is turning to collaborate with India to increase its political influence in the region. New Delhi's interest in defense is ensuring Paris to approach positively. Based on all these, it can be argued that Paris-New Delhi relations will strengthen in the coming period.

[1] "Австралија ќе произведува ракети за САД", Slobodenpecat, <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/avstralija-kje-proizveduva-raketi-za-sad/>, (Date of Accession: 29.07.2023).

[2] "China to Conduct Military Training in Disputed Part Of South China Sea", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-conduct-military-training-disputed-part-south-china-sea-2023-07-28/>, (Date of Accession: 28.07.2023).

[3] "Macron Promotes French Interests On A Trip To South Pacific Where US-China Rivalry Is Intensifying", Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/france-south-pacific-us-china-f7b0d5c0d7fb994ce6bd826f4155df2c>, (Date of Accession: 24.07.2023).

[4] "China Hopes France Can Help Take Heat Out Of Relations With EU", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china-hopes-france-can-help-take-heat-out-relations-with-eu-2023-07-29/>, (Date of Accession: 29.07.2023).

[5] "Le Maire Says France Wants Better China Access, Not Decoupling", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/le-maire-says-france-wants-better-china-market-access-2023-07-30/>, (Date of Accession: 30.07.2023).

[6] "France Fetes India's Modi At Bastille Day Celebration", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/france-fete-indias-modi-bastille-day-celebration-2023-07-14/>, (Date of Accession: 14.07.2023).

[7] "India's Modi And France's Macron Agree On Defense Ties But Stand Apart On Ukraine", Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/france-india-war-planes-bastille-day-macron-modi-081f753a6c239e74af7c119f2f025213>, (Date of Accession: 14.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Australia's Security Concerns in the Context of China-Solomon Islands Relations

There is an increasing rapprochement between the Solomon Islands and China in the Asia-Pacific Region. As a matter of fact, both states are developing positive relations and furthering their cooperation. In this context, it was seen that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare held a meeting on 10 July 2023 and made an announcement that they called "comprehensive strategic partnership" at this meeting.[1]

The meeting in question took place in Beijing and Sogavare also met with Chinese Premier Li Qiang before Xi.[2] As a matter of fact, after the meeting in question, positive messages came from both Sogavare and Li, and both sides expressed their desire to increase cooperation.[3]

On July 11, 2023, the Embassy of the Solomon Islands was opened in Beijing. It is very important that this embassy was opened four years after the two



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

states officially started diplomatic relations, right after the meeting in question.[4]

In addition to all this, it is worth noting that the Solomon Islands are one of the earliest states to[5] join the Belt and Road Initiative, just six months after starting diplomatic contacts with China. Moreover, a security agreement was signed between Beijing and Honiara in April 2022.[6]

In this context, it can be said that the struggle with the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) pushed China to seek new alliances, and at this point, the Solomon Islands, with which it already has good relations, come to the fore.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the cooperation and alliances that China has implemented disturb the pro-Western actors in the region. For example, Australia requested the parties to the agreement signed in Beijing on 11 July 2023 to explain the details of the agreement and to ensure the transparency of its intentions towards the region.[7]

It is known that Australia is one of the important allies of the USA and NATO. Because it is included both in the AUKUS Pact formed by the partnership of the USA, the UK and Australia, in the Quadruple Security Dialogue (QUAD) implemented by the USA, India, Japan and Australia, and in the ANZUS Agreement established with the cooperation of Australia, New Zealand and the USA. The Canberra administration is a critical actor for the West. Because in all three Western-based formations established in the Asia-Pacific Region, Australia is the only unchanging actor that takes place with the USA.

In a statement on the subject, the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that they are concerned that this development will invite more regional competition. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong used the following statements:[8]

"The Solomon Islands and China should publish the agreement immediately, ensuring transparency of their intentions towards Australia and the region. So the Pacific family can collectively assess the impact on our shared security."

As a result, it can be argued that a Sino-Solomon Islands rapprochement that took place in the Asia-Pacific disturbed Australia, one of the most important regional allies of the USA and NATO and caused security-based concerns in the Canberra Administration. However, it can be claimed that Australia is also involved

in many Western-based pacts, which deepens the security dilemma in the region. For this reason, the tensions between the parties will not decrease in the short term; On the contrary, it can be stated that the polarization in the Asia-Pacific will increase even more.

[1] "China, Solomon Islands Elevate 'Strategic' Ties", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/10/china-solomon-islands-elevate-strategic-ties>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[2] "China, Solomon Islands Ink Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to Upgrade Ties", China Global Television Network, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2023-07-10/Xi-meets-with-Solomon-Islands-PM-Manasseh-Sogavare-1lkcondnfqiA/index.html>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[3] "Xi Meets Sogavare, Urging Enhanced China-Solomon Islands Cooperation", Xinhua, <https://english.news.cn/20230711/58f81aea-c3204031aa927a687c467668/c.html>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[4] "Solomon Islands Officially Opens Embassy in Beijing, 'A Big Milestone' to Further Enhance Relations Between Countries and People", Global Times, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294157.shtml> (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[5] "Solomon Islands Joins China's Belt and Road Initiative, as Leaders Meet in Beijing", Australia Broadcasting Corporation, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-10/solomon-islands-joins-chinas-belt-and-road-as-leaders-meet/11590068>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[6] "China-Solomon Islands Security Agreement and Competition for Influence in Oceania", George Journal of International Affairs, <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2022/12/02/china-solomon-islands-security-agreement-and-competition-for-influence-in-oceania/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[7] "Australia 'Concerned' by China-Solomon Islands Policing Deal", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/11/australia-concerned-by-china-solomon-islands-policing-deal>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).

[8] "Australia Calls on China, Solomon Islands to 'Immediately' Publish New Policing Deal, as Sogavare Praises 'Visionary' Xi", Australian Broadcasting Corporation, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-11/australia-says-china-solomon-islands-must-publish-policing-deal/102589210>, (Erişim Tarihi: 12.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Zambia's Reform Agenda and Active Diplomacy

Zambia, one of the rising and prominent actors in Southern Africa, has been attracting attention in recent years with its reform efforts under the presidency of Hakainde Hichilema. The decision-making mechanism under Hichilema's presidency brings various projects and reforms to the agenda, aiming at Zambia's economic, social and political development. In addition to taking economic-based steps, moves are also

being made to develop and strengthen bilateral relations. On this basis, a strategy is being pursued to improve relations with cooperation partners such as the United States of America (USA), the European Union (EU), Russia, China and India.

Immediately after taking office, Hichilema has taken steps ranging from the deployment of security forces to a drive for economic reform. Efforts are



Şeyma KIZILAY

also being made to increase confidence in state institutions. Various contacts are also being made with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the country's debts. On June 15, 2023, the IMF announced that Zambia's creditors were on the verge of finalizing a debt restructuring agreement paving the way for a \$188 million payment from the IMF.[1]

The restructuring agreement is crucial for Zambia's economic development. At the same time, the economic liberalization steps taken within the country are also crucial for future cooperation. Economic reforms are critical to attracting investors and greater cooperation.

Infrastructure works also have a great impact on national development. At this point, it can be said that both domestic activities and regional projects will trigger development. As a matter of fact, the efforts to reactivate the Tanzania-Zambia Railway and Zambia's role in the Trans-Africa Network Project are of great importance in this sense. Both projects reveal the geostrategic potential of Lusaka.

Domestic reforms that prioritize the constitution and respect for the rule of law have also been welcomed by the international community. For example, the EU Commissioner for International Partnership, Jutta Urpilainen, stated on June 21, 2023 that she visited Zambia to announce increased budget allocations and strengthened cooperation because she was impressed by Zambia's reform agenda for 2022.[2]

The Union supports Lusaka's reform efforts. The provision of an additional €110 million to support the country's economic sectors such as energy, education and health is a critical development. It is also known that three other support programs have been signed for Zambia as the EU's strategic partner in Southern Africa. In this context, activities are being carried out to ensure development in many areas, especially in education and health services, green energy and food security.

At the same time, Hichilema aims to increase his international contacts to have a significant impact on the country's development. One of these contacts is the recently strengthened ties with Egypt. On 19 June 2023, the Zambian Minister of Defence visited Cairo at the head of a high-level military delegation and met with his Egyptian counterpart and senior defense officials. As a result of the consultations, a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation and joint training activities was signed. The defense ministers of the two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation and training.[3] Shortly before these agreements, the Egyptian President paid a visit to South Africa. This visit, which is significant as it was the first of its kind, paved the way for the development of defense-security cooperation between the two countries.

Hichilema also paid a visit to Rwanda on June 21, 2023. This visit is also important for strengthening regional integration, bilateral relations and cooperation.

In addition to domestic developments and national development, Lusaka is seeking to increase its international influence by playing a role in regional developments. Zambian President Hichilema was part of the African Mission that visited Moscow and Kiev to propose a solution to the Russian-Ukrainian War. This demonstrates that Lusaka is as active on global developments as it is on domestic reforms, bilateral relations and regional issues.

Close relations with Russia have also contributed to Lusaka being part of this regional mission. However, Zambia also pays attention to its dialogue with the West and is keen to strengthen ties. The ongoing rapprochement process with the EU is a case in point. The fact that a number of visits have taken place shows that diplomatic activism is being maintained on both sides.

In sum, it can be said that Zambia under the Hichilema presidency has made significant progress in the international arena thanks to the reform steps taken in various fields since 2021. This is evidenced by recent developments such as the recent EU-centered visits, the role played in the initiative to address the Russia-Ukraine War and the rapprochement with China. Partnerships, cooperation agree-

ments and investments with major power countries, which are among the most influential actors in the international arena, strengthen Lusaka's strategy of prioritizing multi-vectoral policies. Reform efforts in various areas of national development, particularly in the economy, also provide the basis for the development of bilateral cooperation. With the positive progress of the activities carried out with the IMF, it can be said that Zambia will gain more prominence and progress both in the Southern African geography and on international platforms in the coming periods. The positive reception and follow-up of national development reforms by the EU points to new developments in Zambia's relations with European countries.

[1] "Zambia Nears Debt Restructuring Deal-IMF", African Business, <https://african.business/2023/06/finance-services/zambia-nears-debt-restructuring-deal-imf>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[2] "We're Impressed with Zambia's Reform Agenda – EU", Diggers, <https://diggers.news/local/2023/06/21/maina-soko-medical-centre-conducts-successful-brain-surgery-2/>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[3] "Egypt and Zambia Agrees to Enhance Military Cooperation and Training", Military Africa, <https://www.military.africa/2023/06/egypt-and-zambia-agrees-to-enhance-military-cooperation-and-training/>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Contributions of China's Belt and Road Project to the Balkans

"China's Belt and Road Initiative" or the "Belt and Road Project" came to the agenda during the President of the People's Republic Of China Xi Jinping's visits to Indonesia and Kazakhstan in 2013 and found a response in a wide geography including the Balkans. The project sees Silk Road as a historical foothold and to revive it in two parts that are land and sea routes has

been the purpose of China. The land route is from China to Europe passing through Turkey and the sea route that starts from China and it includes the Indian Ocean, Suez Canal and the European ports. It aims to connect East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, Africa and Europe commercially while also achieving sustainable and balanced development is desired.



Furkan DOĞDU

The Balkan countries that include the land routes are crucial for the Belt and Road Project due to their geopolitical positions. As a result, China will be able to cross to Europe through the Balkan countries and it will provide a wide market area for China. From the news article that was published in 2021, it could be observed that there exists 135 projects in Balkans that originated from China. It also says that these projects are worth over 32 billion Euros[1]. The Chinese capital has been making various economic investments in the countries Greece, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia and Serbia.

One of the factors that have been shown as an example of the Chinese capital entering the Balkan lands is the 2008 Global Economic Crisis. To recall what have been happening, the economic crisis broke out as the ruptures from Yugoslavia had just ended but there could be a dynamic picture that could be drawn from Balkans. The disintegration process of Yugoslavia started with Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in 1991, then Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, Montenegro in 2006 and ended with Kosovo in 2008. The eruption of the Crisis in such a hectic time had negative effects on the geography. Significant decreases in the growth rates of these countries were observed and these helped the Chinese capital to enter to Europe.

Albania is an important part of the Belt and Road Project in Balkans. China and Albania have a history that started 50 years ago through the alliances made during the socialist era and Albania has a part in this project. European influence to the country made its communist ties with China and Russia to break. Within the scope of the project, these two have started being mentioned together again. As the Chinese capital started to flow into the country, in 2016 there have been an investment of 384.6 million Euros in the Patos-Marinza oil field. Also, the entire Tirana International Airport was sold to China. After that, the amount of capital invested in Albania started going down and eventually no Chinese investments were done after 2016.

Albanian President Edi Rama has talked about this situation during his visit to Tokyo. Referring to the Belt and Road Project, Rama drew attention to the fact that the 17+1 economic partnership has no profit. But Rama also added that, in order to keep the communication channels open with China, they will not be leaving the table. It is possible to interpret this as the end of the economic activities between the two[2].

Serbia is one of the Balkan countries that is being guided by the Chinese capital due to the Belt and Road Project. There exists 61 projects that has the value of 18.7 billion Euros financed by the Chinese capital. Chinese companies that provided more than 2 billion Euros to support 16 projects between 2012 and 2021 while giving a loan of 5.7 billion Euros. Serbia stands out more when compared to other Balkan countries. Such that, from 2009 to 2021, 10.3 billion Euros of the 32 billion Euros of Chinese capital flowed to Serbia. During that time, Serbia signed the Bulgaria-Pozega Road Project worth 333.74 billion Dollars with the Shangdong International Economic and Technical Cooperation Group. This project started in 2014 and ended in 2017.

Although Serbia is a European Union (EU) candidate, they are not hesitant to have ties with Russia and China. This leads to the idea that Serbia is moving away from the EU bloc. In 2023, negotiations between the two countries on the free trade agreements between China and Serbia have officially started. The Ukrainian War affected Serbia in a way that they have taken a more moderate stance which lead to harsh reactions from the EU. The continuation of this process could be interpreted as there will be an increase in the Eastern capital in Serbia[3].

Road construction works being done in line with the finances received from China can also be observed in countries such as Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Montenegro entered the road project as a result of the contract they have signed with the Chinese capital in 2014. Agreements have been made with a company called China Road with 1 billion Dollars taken from the Import-Export

Bank of China and with Bridge Corporation for bridges. Despite the years of work that was put out, only 41 kilometers of the 163 kilometer road have been put into service due to some technical difficulties. On the other hand, Shandong International Economic and Technical Cooperation Group continues to work for the tram infrastructure in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, the same Chinese firm have signed a contract for the construction of two highways in the Serbian Republic.

As a result, the "Belt and Road Project" announced by Xi Jinping in 2013 had a positive impact in the Balkan countries. In this context, the Chinese firms made investments in many Balkan countries. In fact, as seen in the Serbia example, these investments turned these countries away from the EU and closer to China and Russia. However, this situation was not the same in every Balkan country. As it can be seen in the Albania example, there are also countries that China did not receive sufficient attention from China. In addition, the Montenegro issue shows that the countries that fall under the credit given above the limits have started looking for the solution in the Western capital. The whole picture shows us that China's Belt and Road Project will continue to increase its importance in the Balkans.

[1] "China in The Balkans: Controversy and Cost", Balkan Insight, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/12/15/china-in-the-balkans-controversy-and-cost/>, (Date of Accession: 29.07.2023).

[2] "Albanian PM: No Economic Benefits from Chinese Cooperation", Euro Activ, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/albanian-pm-no-economic-benefits-from-chinese-cooperation/>, (Date of Accession: 29.07.2023).

[3] "China Returns to the Western Balkans", Emerging, <https://emerging-europe.com/news/china-returns-to-the-western-balkans/>, (Date of Accession: 29.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

China's Foreign Policy Approach in the Context of Cooperation

China started to reap the fruits of its breakthrough policy, which it started with Deng Xiaoping in 1978, in the 2000s, and as a matter of fact, after the global economic crisis[1] that started in 2008, it surpassed[2] Japan in 2010 to become the world's second largest economy.[3] Beijing has risen to the top of the global supply chain with its growing economy in the following periods.[4] The situation in question has brought China's efforts to develop an alternative to the "rules-based and liberal democracy framework international order" established on the basis of the United States (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after the Cold War.

The competition in question has brought along a very important global polarization in a geopolitical and geostrategic dimension but on a geo-economic basis. As a matter of fact, this rivalry is also called the "New Cold War" by many academics and analysts.[5] In this context, both actors do not want to be alone within the framework of this competition and try to acquire allies both regionally and globally. In this context, it can be said that the USA has allies such as NATO and the European Union (EU), which constitute the cornerstones of the liberal democratic order and have important roles in the international order as concrete outputs of the Western ideology.



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

For China, on the other hand, there is a more complex picture in terms of cooperation. Considering that the global system is based on the West, it is known that actors with different ideological stances or states aiming to challenge the aforementioned order face legitimacy problems and are touted as "disorder-breaking actors".

As a matter of fact, states such as Russia and North Korea are actors that shape their foreign policy production processes on the basis of anti-Westernism. However, both the reason mentioned above, the Russia-Ukraine War[6] that started on February 24, 2022, and North Korea's increasing Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and nuclear tests[7] create significant legitimacy crises for the mentioned states. This causes China to act more reluctantly at the point of building cooperation with the relevant states.

On the other hand, these states are also looking forward to the cooperation to be developed with China. As a matter of fact, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine War, Moscow needs Beijing's alliance. Likewise, North Korea is a country whose isolation in the global system continues due to ICBM trials. At the same time, there is a strong United Nations (UN) pressure on Pyongyang. For this reason, the sanction decisions that are tried to be taken within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) against North Korea face the veto of Russia and China.[8]

In addition to all these, the foreign policy production processes of these three states have a common denominator over their opposition to the West, the USA and NATO. However, it can be argued that due to China's foreign policy that it is trying to build, especially within the scope of "peaceful diplomacy" and the cooperation it has implemented all over the world in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing tries to be careful in choosing an ally and tries to behave in a way that does not have an international legitimacy problem.

As a result, although states such as China, Russia and North Korea have a common foreign policy production process in terms of anti-Westernism, it can be said that Beijing tries to be much more careful in choosing an ally in line with its global goals.

[1] "JP Morgan Bond Chief Bob Michele Sees Worrying Echoes of 2008 in Market Calm" Consumer News and Business Channel, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/06/09/recession-jpmorgan-bond-chief-bob-michele-sees-worrying-echoes-of-2008.html>, (Date of Accession: 13.06.2023).

[2] "China Overtakes Japan as World's Second-Biggest Economy", British Broadcasting News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-12427321>, (Date of Accession: 13.06.2023).

[3] "The World's Largest Economies", World Data Info, <https://www.worlddata.info/largest-economies.php>, (Date of Accession: 14.06.2023).

[4] "China's Dominance in Global Supply Chains", The German Marshall Fund of the United States, <https://www.gmfus.org/news/china-dominance-global-supply-chains>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[5] "Is the US-China Strategic Competition A Cold War?", Atlantic Council, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/is-the-us-china-strategic-competition-a-cold-war/>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[6] "Ukraine in Maps: Tracking the War With Russia", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[7] "North Korea Resumes Launching Missile Tests. How Worried Should We Be?", Time Magazine, <https://time.com/6266737/north-korea-ballistic-missile-tests-2023/>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).

[8] "China and Russia Veto New UN Sanctions on North Korea for First Time Since 2006", CNN, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/26/asia/us-north-korea-united-nations-int-hnk/index.html#:~:text=Russia%20and%20China%20on%20Thursday,develop%20nuclear%20capable%20missile%20systems>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Can the Coup d'état in Niger Bring About a Shift in the African Political Paradigm?

On July 26, 2023 a coup was carried out against President Mohammed Bazoum in Niger. He was overthrown by the protection unit. Those who carried out the coup cite the deposed president's inability to provide security in the country as their main reason. However, it is known that there is tension and competition between the president and some of the military staff.

It must be recollected that Bazoum ascended to authority subsequent to triumphing in the 2021 elections. This aspect is noteworthy as it

constitutes the foremost constitutional and democratic alteration of governance since Niger attained sovereignty. Conversely, the insurrection in Niger, or more specifically, the ultimate phase of the insurrection progression in Western Africa, indicates that African politics and external interference in aforementioned politics continue to remain pertinent and legitimate. Furthermore, it has also given rise to the examination of the neo-colonial constituents of the extant system in Africa.



**Dr. Ceren
GÜRSELER**

Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU), hold significant importance as they establish the primary political and legal frameworks of African politics as continental structures. The largest difference between the OAU and the AU is that the latter opposes and is not confined to the alteration of administration through unconstitutional means, such as a coup, but also intervenes in its member states, including the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, in the event of such an occurrence. Alongside the OAU and the AU, sub-continental or regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African Countries (ECOWAS) may also enforce a range of sanctions, including military intervention, when an unconstitutional change of government transpires, such as a coup. Niger has also attained membership status where ECOWAS intervenes in the process using various measures. The deadline stipulated by ECOWAS for the transition to democracy, the reinstatement of Bazoum, and the transition to the constitutional order expired on Sunday.

Thus, the potential for interference by both the AU and ECOWAS lies within the purview of the political framework, which has been implemented across the continent since the latter part of the 1990s and possesses nearly the same legal standing and importance as a jus cogens norm. Like the AU, ECOWAS engages in interventions solely within its member nations, rather than any nation on the African continent. An applicable article exists within the Organization's statute, and members opt to embrace said article and join ECOWAS. Niger, as a member of ECOWAS, has also approved the Organization's charter.

Both internal and external sources have made affirming statements and criticism regarding the military action taken by ECOWAS. In this particular context, it is imperative to explicate the legality and legitimacy of the potential intervention by ECOWAS. It is noteworthy that Niger is a constituent member of ECOWAS and therefore, is obligated to comply with the legal framework established by the organization. In certain situations, when there is a violation of the rule of law, human rights, and democratic principles, ECOWAS has the authority to intervene in the domestic affairs of its members and engage in military interventions.

In this context, Articles 10 and 25 of the Protocol on Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of ECOWAS can be taken into consideration. Article 25 indicates that the organization has the authority to intervene militarily under certain conditions. The relevant article reserves the right of the organization to intervene in cases such as major vi-

olations of the rule of law in the member state, the overthrow of the democratically elected government or its attempts. Article 10 authorizes the Reconciliation and Security Council of ECOWAS to intervene in any way and to decide on the deployment of political and military task forces. The relevant body of the Organization, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), has made similar interventions in Sierra Leone, Liberia, in the past in connection with government changes through unconstitutional means.

There exist diverse noteworthy aspects that necessitate consideration whilst evaluating the Niger coup and the ensuing reactions. Primarily, the junta regime, which assumed government control through a coup, opposes both ECOWAS and military intervention, as well as the actors advocating for such measures. In lieu of establishing a definitive timeline for the transition to a constitutional order and the restoration of President Bazoum to his rightful position, the junta regime elects to confront ECOWAS. The military intervention of ECOWAS is viewed by the junta as an assault on Niger, and it has been proclaimed that retaliatory measures will be taken. It is noteworthy that Nigeria is presently in possession of the rotating presidency of ECOWAS. The organization has already begun to impose financial and commercial sanctions on Niger, with a commercial embargo currently enforced. Furthermore, ECOWAS has declared a no-fly zone and has closed the border.

The second element is that the actors opposing ECOWAS and its intervention are not limited to Niger. The reactions of Burkina Faso and Mali, which are among the other actors of the coup d'etat in West Africa, are noteworthy. In these countries, there have been changes in the administration with unconstitutional methods. These two ECOWAS member countries have therefore been subjected to similar pressure and sanctions by the organization. Therefore, it can be considered as an attempt to provide their own legitimacy that there should be no intervention in the statements against Niger and that if there is a military intervention, it could be an attack against them. There are regional countries such as Algeria that oppose ECOWAS's response plan. In other words, Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria and Guinea have expressed their opposition to the military intervention of ECOWAS and that they can respond. The ECOWAS memberships of Mali and Burkina Faso were suspended because the coup took place.

The fact that not only some countries in Africa but also Russia from outside the continent make similar comments, causes the formation of an anti-intervention front and its support. According

to the front, the option of military intervention against the coups, which has become customary in the context of the principles of the African Union and ECOWAS, threatens the security and stability of not only Niger but West Africa. However, during the period of OAU, that is, in the process of the elimination of colonialism, the perception of Africa in the continent and in the international public opinion was emphasized as the main threat to the politics and stability of the continent.

The third notable feature of the Niger affair is the loss of power in West Africa by France, its former colony. The withdrawal from Mali, the other countries where the coups took place, was equated with the withdrawal of the USA from Afghanistan and was therefore considered a failure.

Another aspect to be taken into account in Niger, which is linked to the decline in influence of France, is the aspiration of the military junta and a section of society in Niger to cultivate ties with Russia, as opposed to Western nations. Despite the completion of the era of decolonization, the present socioeconomic landscape prevalent in some African countries bears resemblance to the dynamics of colonial times. This implies that the neocolonial age is indeed underway, and particularly the leaders and elites of African nations enjoy close relations with former colonial powers such as France, enabling them to reap benefits. As a result, some of the profits and advantages accrued from bilateral agreements and cooperation are not equitably distributed amongst the populace, with a significant portion remaining in the hands of the elites.

Particularly in certain regions of African societies, there exists a basis for criticism of neo-colonial politics and relations with former colonies. For instance, in Niger, opposition to the president has arisen from those who supported the coup as well as those who carried it out. Furthermore, the lack of equitable distribution of wealth and income to society and the formation of a relationship with Western countries to the detriment of Niger are cited as reasons for discontent. Wagner's name is frequently invoked by the junta that seeks support in this regard. In various parts of the continent, such as West Africa, Wagner endeavors to augment its presence and activities. It is noteworthy to mention that Russia has expanded its relations with the continent and is eager to continue doing so. The summit between Russia and Africa held in St. Petersburg in July 2023, is a testament to this development. During the summit, the leaders of Burkina Faso and Mali expressed their support for Russia and even condoned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In a seemingly concerted effort to establish an opposing stance against the West and its interventions, the junta has recalled Niger's ambassadors from Togo, Nigeria, the United States, and France. This move suggests a desire to detach from the West and foster closer ties with Russia.

The West African region, specifically the Sahel area, has been a persistent subject of international concern. The principal threats to security in this region include unconstitutional regime changes, coups, electoral result refusals, the proliferation of terrorist factions, terror attacks, and separatist movements. Notably, ISIS's West African branch has been striving to bolster its influence in the area.

Niger's abundant natural resources, such as its nearly 7 percent of global uranium reserves, are significant factors to consider. These resources shed light on Niger's international relations, such as France's potential dependence on Niger's uranium. In fact, uranium accounts for over 70 percent of France's energy needs. The uranium trade between France and Niger, therefore, holds great importance.

In addition to its resources, its strategic location indicates the importance of developments in Niger and which front will come to the fore. The USA, Germany, France and Italy have military bases in Niger. France has approximately 1500 soldiers in Niger and provides training, mainly in the fields of counter-terrorism and intelligence. It is stated that the USA has about 1000 soldiers. In addition, the French troops in Niger were operating within the scope of the anti-terrorism elements in the region. The arrival of French soldiers in Niger after leaving Mali and the fact that the French and the Americans had a base created discomfort in the Niger army. In fact, the junta has shown its reaction by terminating its military agreements with France. In return for this type of behavior, France and the USA stopped their aid to Niger.

All eyes are on France, because as stated above, one of the first activities of those who took over the government with a military coup was to end the military cooperation with France. The broadcasts of France 24 and RFI in the country were also stopped. These steps against France are important because Niger is considered the last ally of the Western countries in West Africa. Africa is important for France's domestic and foreign policy. For example, the continent served as a means of demonstrating French power overseas under different French administrations. Apart from this, it contains answers about France's adaptation to the post-Cold War neo-liberal new world order and why it should still be a permanent member of the UN Security Council. France; In addition to having close and historical relations, it has a military presence in Africa. This military title comes to the fore in relations with some African countries such as Mali and Niger. Since 2002, France has had a military presence in different parts of Africa. It is the most important international actor, especially in the Sahel.

There have been observations that the military involvement of ECOWAS might lead to an aspect of uncertainty. However, it is worth noting that instability was already present in the West African locality prior to the intervention. The primary indicator of such instability is coups, denoting the alteration of governance through unconstitutional means. To the point that a sequence of coups has been transpiring in West Africa since 2020. In 2020, coups took place in Mali, while Chad and Guinea experienced the same in 2021, and Burkina Faso in 2022.

There exists an alternative scenario that warrants contemplation and recollection in the endeavors to obscure the mutiny in Niger and the legitimacy of the subsequent military intervention: Bazoum aspired to modernize the army, revamp the upper echelon of the military, and discharge the principal figure of the uprising, General Tchiani. Consequently, there was a contention for power between a faction of the army and the head of state. Furthermore, a crucial aspect that has been disregarded, which is pivotal in comprehending the mutiny and the ensuing reactions, is the ethnic composition within the Niger demographic and the power struggles that arise within this composition. Bazoum belongs to the Arab ethnicity, and as a minority in the Niger demographic, the Arab population is a minority.

Therefore, one might ponder, "Are African politics reverting to the initial stages? An introduction to the fight against coups?" It is uncertain whether these inquiries will resurface in the aftermath of the 2000s. With the conclusion of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, several African nations were deprived of a significant ally. During Nikita Khrushov's reign, the Soviets commenced providing support for the national liberation crusades in Africa and the states that gained independence during the eradication of colonialism. Nevertheless, the cessation of this aid during the 1990s compelled Africa to turn towards Western countries and institutions. This orientation ushered in conditions such as the implementation of democracy/transition to democratic administration and the observance of human rights.

In the era of the abolition of colonialism, equating the continental politics with the coup and providing aid to the above-mentioned conditions caused African states to adopt the reform of the OAU and to oppose the change of government in unconstitutional ways as the dominant norm. However, what happened and those who expressed it within the scope of Niger today question whether Africa will return to the beginning. On the other hand, drawing attention to the neo-colonial system, even with a coup, makes it question whether relations with the West and ex-colonial countries will settle on a new plane in favor of African peoples. In connection with the aforementioned question, it is wondered how Russia will increase its activities in the region and establish a different relationship with African states compared to the West.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Growing China-Russia Rap- prochement in the Asia-Pacific Region and Possible Scenarios

The United States of America (USA) and China have the most powerful economies in the world^[i], which creates geoeconomic, geopolitical and geostrategic competition between these actors. At the same time, it can be argued that this rivalry is both regional and global in nature. Therefore, both Washington and Beijing are developing strategies against each other in the context of this competition.

Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine War that started on February 24, 2022^[ii] had a significant impact on the rivalry between the US and China. This is because Beijing has a foreign policy approach shaped by its opposition to the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Russia, on the other hand, has an anti-Western stance dating back to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Although this situation seemed to be changing in the early 2000s, Moscow's foreign policy is now based on anti-Western and anti-NATO sentiments, especially after the war in Ukraine.

In addition, Beijing and Moscow are cooperating on the basis of anti-Westernism in the short term, even though in the long term, they appear to be rivals from a geopolitical perspective. In this context, China supported Moscow at the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War because it thought that Russia would weaken the West with a quick victory; however, things did not go as planned on the ground and the war consolidated the West. This led to a



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

change in China's perspective on the war. However, despite these developments, it can be said that these two states have managed to build an alliance in terms of opposition to the West.

In this context, it can be stated that Washington has implemented the containment strategy against the Soviet Union during the Cold War against Beijing. This is because the US benefited from this strategy during the Cold War and gained an advantageous outcome for itself. Therefore, this action of the US against China gives a regional character to the rivalry between Washington and Beijing.

Both the regional power struggle arising from the US strategy^[i-ii] and the unity between Russia and China in opposition to the US, NATO, and the West pave the way for Moscow to improve its ties with Beijing and to have more say in the developments in the Asia-Pacific region.

In this regard, the sighting of two Russian warships near the Taiwan Strait on June 27, 2023 was a remarkable development.^[iv] Moreover, according to a report in Russia's Interfax news agency, a ship from the Russian Pacific Fleet was also observed in the South China Sea.^[v]

Moreover, on July 16, 2023, the Chinese Defense Ministry announced on the ministry's official WeChat account that the Chinese fleet of five warships and four helicopters had left the eastern port of Qingdao and would join the Russian naval and air forces for an exercise to "ensure the security of strategic waterways" in a pre-determined area over the Sea of Japan. ^[vi] Indeed, when Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu met with the commander of the Russian Navy, Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, in Beijing in July 2023, both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthen military ties. ^[vii]

In this framework, it can be argued that China and Russia aim to send a message of unity against the West. Moreover, it can be said that Moscow also aims to show that it can take care of its eastern border while fighting Kyiv on its western border.

In short, although they are geopolitical rivals in the long run, there is a collaboration between China and Russia based on anti-Western sentiments. Expanding the scope of this cooperation could pave the way for both actors to adopt a more competitive stance against the West.

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

^[ii] "Ukraine in Maps: Tracking the War with Russia", British Broadcasting Corporation News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

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

^[iv] "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).

^[v] 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>, (Erişim Tarihi: 03.07.2023).

^[vi] "China, Russia to Start Joint Air and Sea Drill in Sea of Japan", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china-russia-start-joint-air-sea-drill-sea-japan-2023-07-16/>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).

^[vii] "China's Defence Minister Meets Russian Navy Head in Beijing", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/chinas-defence-minister-meets-russian-navy-head-beijing-defence-ministry-2023-07-03/>, (Date of Accession: 03.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Australia-China Relations in the Context of Regional Alliances

Although Australia is located in the Asia-Pacific Region, it is considered a Western state in terms of alliances it has established. In this respect, the Canberra administration has positive relations with Western actors, especially the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States of America (USA). As a matter of fact, since the Second World War, Australia has

been carrying out policies on the axis of the West, the USA and NATO, both due to its threat perception and its regional conjuncture.

This is clearly understood from the Western-based alliances that Australia is in. But at the same time, especially with the election of Anthony Albanese as the Prime Minister of Aus-



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

tralia in May 2022, the dialogue on the Canberra-Beijing line has strengthened and Australia has adopted an approach that emphasizes diplomacy in its relations with China.

In addition to all these, Australia; is a strategic member of the AUKUS Pact implemented by the USA and the UK.[1] The pact in question is very important in terms of increasing the influence of two important Western actors in the Asia-Pacific Region. Essentially, the alliance in question was established with the aim of surrounding China. Because the USA and NATO want to apply the Containment Policy[2] against Beijing, which it achieved an advantageous result by applying it against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Therefore, the AUKUS Pact increases the distrust and tension between Beijing and Canberra.

On the other hand, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), another regional alliance involving Australia, is a Western-based entity in Asia-Pacific. This alliance was formed between Australia, USA, Japan and India.[3] QUAD was established with the aim of bringing together countries that have internalized democratic principles.[4] However, it can be argued that the main purpose of the alliance in question is to limit Beijing's activities in the South China Sea and to wage a regional struggle with China. At the same time, building a resistance against China's regional pressure and influence is also one of the main goals of the alliance in question. Therefore, considering the geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic rivalries of the USA and the West with Beijing, it can be argued that QUAD acts as an important front for the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region.

To give an example from history; The ANZUS Agreement was signed in 1951 between Australia, the USA and New Zealand.[5] The situation in question clearly reveals Canberra's attitude, side, position and perspective in the Asia-Pacific Region. This situation makes Australia a concrete party on the Asia-Pacific geopolitics. In particular, in the agreement in question; Any military attack against the parties will be perceived as a threat by other states. Because in the agreement, "Other states will consider an attack against another state as a danger to their own security and peace." it is called.[6] Therefore, this situation is very important in terms of showing the legal basis of Canberra's position.

As a result, Australia is the only actor in both the ANZUS Agreement, the AUKUS Pact and the QUAD that has not changed with the USA. This adds a very Western perspective to Canberra. Although there are signs of softening between Australia and China with the election of Anthony Albanese as Prime Minister, the alliances in question and Canberra's attitude cause a tense contact with Beijing.

[1] "What is the Aukus Alliance and What are Its Implications?", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/sep/16/what-is-the-aukus-alliance-and-what-are-its-implications>, (Date of Acces: 03.02.2023).

[2] Mustafa Cem Koyuncu, "Hint-Pasifik Bölgesinin "Yeni Yıldızı" QUAD: Zayıflıklar, Fırsatlar, Tehditler ve Avantajlar", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/hint-pasifik-bolgesinin-yeni-yildizi-quad-zayifliklar-firsatlar-tehditler-ve-avantajlar/>, (Date of Access: 31.01.2023).

[3] "Quad Members Meet in New Delhi, Assure it is not a Military Grouping or Meant to Counter China", The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/quad-members-meet-in-new-delhi-assure-it-is-not-a-military-grouping-or-meant-to-counter-something/articleshow/98391209.cms>, (Date of Access: 31.01.2023).

[4] "What is The Quad, and How Did it Come About?", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/24/what-is-the-quad-and-how-did-it-come-about>, (Date of Access: 31.01.2023).

[5] "The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty), 1951", Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/anzus>, (Date of Access: 31.01.2023).

[6] "The ANZUS Treaty Does not Make Australia Safer. Rather, it Fuels a Fear of Perpetual Military Threat", The Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/the-anzus-treaty-does-not-make-australia-safer-rather-it-fuels-a-fear-of-perpetual-military-threat-165670>, (Date of Access: 31.01.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on China-Africa Relations

In the 10 years since its launch in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative has come a long way. While the infrastructure investments and financial support of the project made the project attractive for many countries, it caused the Western states to approach the project cautiously. In 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Italy and a memorandum of understanding was signed between the two states within the scope of the Belt and Road Project. Thus, Italy participated in the project.

However, after 4 years, there are still discussions about the continuation of the agreement signed between Italy and China. On July 27, 2023, Italian President Georgia Meloni and United States (USA) President Joe Biden also discussed this issue dur-

ing their meeting. Meloni pointed out that the USA does not dictate anything, but the situation will become clear by the end of 2023.[1]

On the other hand, for the development of relations with Pakistan, which is one of the partners of the project, China has reduced the debt it provided to the country in question to 2.4 billion dollars. [2] In this context, it can be said that Pakistan-China relations have developed within the framework of the project and a new dimension has been reached in bilateral relations.

One of the most important working areas of the project is Africa. The importance of the Belt and Road Initiative is increasing day by day, as the



Elcan TOKMAK
ANKASAM
Asia-Pacific
Research Assistant

continent has been facing major problems since the colonial period and needs investment especially in solving economic problems. At this point, countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Burundi and Mauritania stand out as some of the states where the Belt and Road Initiative is most effective in the region.

Zimbabwe is a country that has been subject to Western sanctions for 23 years. Due to the land reform put into effect by the Harare Government in 2000, many sanctions were imposed on the country by the Western states and as a result, the country's economy remained in a difficult situation. Zimbabwe's Central Bank, which went to print money in order to close the deficit in the country, caused the country to be dragged into hyperinflation. In the following process, the use of different state currencies, especially the US dollar, in official affairs relieved the economy to some extent.

China came to the rescue of Zimbabwe, which was in search of an alternative to the Western states due to the difficult situation it was in. In the context of the "Look East" policy implemented by Zimbabwe since 2003, Zimbabwe has been developing its political and economic relations with China. During the bilateral meetings held on 30 July 2023, President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa pointed out that they established friendly relations with China.[3]

As a result of the positive atmosphere in bilateral relations, China has taken an active role in many infrastructure and construction processes in the country. China's position in the country is constantly increasing with the Belt and Road Initiative, which is currently participating in the expansion[4] of Gabriel Mugabe International Airport.

Kenya, another African country, has an important place in the Belt and Road Initiative. Participating in the project in accordance with the agreement signed in 2017, Kenya's[5] positive relations with China were reflected in the trade of the two countries. As a matter of fact, while Kenya's exports to China in 2017 were around 95 million dollars; By 2021, it reached \$199.62 million.[6] Looking at the export data of China, the export realized in the band of 550 million dollars in 2017; By 2022, it reached \$8.25 billion.[7]

On July 24, 2023, during the meeting between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the President of Kenya in Nairobi, both Beijing and Nairobi Governments agreed on the development of relations within the scope of the Belt and Road Initiative.[8]

As can be seen, the Belt and Road Initiative not only contributed to the development of economic relations between China and African countries, but also enabled the development of political

relations with the help of developing economic relations.

Brundi and Mauritania are other countries that the project has opened a door for in the context of developing relations with China in the region. During the meeting between Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani and Chinese President Xi Jinping on July 29, 2023, Xi thanked the President of Mauritania for considering China's fundamental interests and as a result of the meeting, the Belt and Road Initiative between the two states was reached. development agreement was signed.[9]

On the same date, a meeting was held between President of Brundi, Evariste Ndayishimiye and Xi Jinping, who visited China within the scope of the "FISU World University Games". During the meeting, Ndayishimiye expressed his commitment to the "One China Principle" and reiterated his support for the Belt and Road Initiative. China, on the other hand, indicated that it will continue to support the country.[10]

As a result, the Belt and Road Initiative announced by China in 2013 has faced various challenges in the past 10 years. While the project was viewed with skepticism by Western states, it found widespread support in Africa. In this context, as in the Zimbabwe example, it has been observed that the project has a positive impact on political relations while improving economic relations.

[1] "China Tops Agenda as Biden Meets Meloni in Washington", EURACTIV, www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/china-tops-agenda-as-biden-meets-meloni-in-washington/, (Date of Acces: 28.07.2023).

[2] Guransh Kaur, "China Extends \$2.4 Billion Loan to Pakistan, Strengthening Economic Ties", INVENTIVA, www.inventiva.co.in/trends/china-extends-2-4-billion-loan/, (Date of Access: 29.07.2023).

[3] "Chinese Assistance, Investments Stand Out Showing Growing Bond with Zimbabwe", New Zimbabwe, www.newzimbabwe.com/chinese-assistance-investments-stand-out-showing-growing-bond-with-zimbabwe/, (Date of Access: 30.07.2023).

[4] Aynı yer.

[5] "What Kenya's Presidential Election Means for China's Belt and Road Initiative", The Diplomat, thediplomat.com/2022/08/what-kenyas-presidential-election-means-for-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/#:~:text=Kenya%20was%20the%20third%20African,massive%20infrastructural%20projects%20across%20Kenya, (Date of Access: 30.07.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

North Korea's "Nuclear Threat" and the Security Conjecture of the Asia-Pacific

North Korea is a very dangerous nuclear power both globally and regionally.[1] Because Pyongyang, on the one hand, is developing its nuclear power, on the other hand, it carries out nuclear exercises and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Tests (ICBM). Because 2022 has been the year that North Korea made the most ICBM tests.[2] As a matter of fact, it can be argued that Pyongyang's nuclear threat has caused security concerns of global as well as regional importance. At the same time, the sanctions resolutions that are tried to be taken within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) against North Korea are also faced with the vetoes of China and Russia.[3]

North Korea; It challenges the rules-based international order led by the United States (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). There is a global rivalry between the Western camp and Pyongyang because of both the nuclear danger and the challenge involved. In this context, Western actors such as the USA and NATO organize various exercises in the Asia-Pacific. States that feel the nuclear threat of Pyongyang most closely, such as South Korea and Japan, also participate in these exercises.[4]

The danger posed by North Korea also creates a legitimate basis for the West's goals of



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

gaining influence in the region due to its opposition to China. As a matter of fact, the USA and NATO aim to establish a pole and gain influence in the Asia-Pacific on the basis of the global competition with Beijing. Therefore, the existence of North Korea also creates a justification for these aspirations of the West. In short, the presence of Pyongyang is used as a legitimating tool in the West's containment policy against Beijing in the region.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said on July 16, 2023, that the Biden Administration remains concerned that North Korea may conduct a new and more powerful ICBM test. [5] This shows that Pyongyang paints an image that does not back down at the point of nuclear tests. On the other hand, according to a report worshiped by KCNA, the official state media of North Korea; North Korean Defense Minister Kang Sun Nam said that the deployment of US aircraft carriers, bombers or missile submarines in South Korea could meet Pyongyang's criteria for using nuclear weapons and cause it to use those weapons. [6] Kang used the following statements in his statement:[7]

"The deployment of nuclear submarines and other strategic weapons may fall under the terms of use of nuclear weapons under the North Korean Constitution."

The moves of states such as South Korea, Japan and Australia, which can be called as the USA and its important allies in the Asia-Pacific, appear as a provoking issue for North Korea rather than creating a deterrent. The situation in question may be a factor that increases the nuclear danger from a regional and global perspective. In this context, it can be said that the tension between the West and North Korea will continue to increase.

As a result, it can be argued that North Korea and its nuclear power have a devastating effect on the security conjecture of the Asia-Pacific Region. This situation pushes countries such as South Korea and Japan, which are the states that feel the danger most closely, to conduct exercises with the USA. However, all these steps provoke Pyongyang even more.

[1] "Is it Time to Accept North Korea is a Nuclear Power?", Cable News Network World, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/28/asia/north-korea-nuclear-threat-solution-analysis-intl-hnk/index.html>, (Erişim Tarihi: 24.07.2023).

[2] "North Korea Resumes Launching Missile Tests. How Worried Should We Be?", The Time, <https://time.com/6266737/north-korea-ballistic-missile-tests-2023/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 24.07.2023).

[3] "China and Russia Veto New UN Sanctions on North Korea For First Time Since 2006", Cable News Network World, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/26/asia/us-north-korea-united-nations-intl-hnk/index.html#:~:text=Russia%20and%20China%20on%20Thursday,develop%20nuclear%20capable%20missile%20systems,> (Erişim Tarihi: 24.07.2023).

[4] "South Korea, US, Japan Hold anti-North Korea Submarine Drill", Associated Press News, <https://apnews.com/article/south-korea-us-japan-north-korea-drills-5ce09e9d8b7a0f76b-043588b5745716e>, (Erişim Tarihi: 24.07.2023).

[5] "US Remains Concerned North Korea Will Conduct Another Missile Test", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/white-house-remains-concerned-north-korea-will-conduct-another-missile-test-2023-07-16/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 24.07.2023).

[6] "North Korea Threatens Nuclear Retaliation over US Displays of Military Force", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-korea-says-deployment-us-strategic-assets-meets-condition-its-nuclear-2023-07-20/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 21.07.2023).

[7] Aynı yer.

ANKASAM IN PRESS

8 August 2023

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

10 August 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM) International Relations Specialist Göktuğ Çalıřkan's views on developments in Africa and France's presence in the region were published in İHA.



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 VII, 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 VII, ISSUE I.

