



# ANKASAM

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Expanding Strategic Circle of Turkic World Diplomacy: The Bishkek Summit



Ergün MAMEDOV

Currently, the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) stands out as a central body strengthening solidarity among Turkic states in Central Asia, the South Caucasus, and Anatolia by aligning the historical and cultural ties of the Turkic World with strategic objectives. Developing joint projects in various fields such as economy, security, environment, digitalization, and education, the OTS supports member states in their efforts to achieve a stronger and more independent position both regionally and globally. The Turkic states are constructing a shared vision of the future within the framework of strategic trade routes, energy corridors, and security cooperation, aiming to accelerate regional development while adapting to global changes.

The 11th Summit of the OTS emerged as a strategic platform to expand and deepen economic, cultural, and political cooperation within the Turkic World. Held on November 6, 2024, in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, this summit displayed the determination to reinforce solidarity within the Turkic World and to strengthen this unity in various fields, producing significant results on both regional and international levels. Documents prepared by the OTS Council of Foreign Ministers prior to the summit presented decisions on fundamental issues like the economy, digitalization, and security to state leaders and secured commitments for cooperation in these areas. The summit's main theme, "Empowering the Turkic World," reflects an objective to develop a strategic vision for sustainable development within the Turkic World. Within this framework, decisions such as the "Turkic Green Vision" and the designation of Bishkek as the Digital Capital for 2025 indicate the OTS member countries' intention to foster a more integrated cooperation in environmental, digitalization, and security matters.[1].

Additionally, the summit adopted key documents that reinforce the shared values and identity of the Turkic World with concrete symbols. The adoption of documents like the OTS Flag and the Turkic World Charter was seen as concrete steps toward strengthening regional cultural and political solidarity. In this context, awarding Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban the “Order of the Turkic World” symbolized the OTS’s commitment to fostering cooperation and promoting solidarity around shared values beyond borders.

The participation of figures such as Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto, and OTS Secretary-General Ambassador Kubanychbek Omuraliev, as well as the chairpersons of the OTS Council of Elders, TURKPA, TURKSOY, the Turkic Academy, the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, the Turkic Investment Fund, and the Union of Turkic Chambers of Commerce and Industry, highlighted the OTS’s expanding diplomatic network.

Kyrgyzstan’s assumption of the OTS presidency and the planned summits in Azerbaijan and Hungary for 2025 demonstrate a strong will to enhance the geopolitical and diplomatic influence of the Turkic World. After the summit, the discussions among OTS leaders on regional and international developments underscored the potential of the Turkic World to occupy a more strategic position within global power balances.<sup>[2]</sup>

Regarding language unity, during the Common Turkic Alphabet Commission meeting held in Baku on September 9–11, 2024, an agreement was reached on a new 34-letter alphabet draft. This alphabet, created with the support of the Turkic Academy and the Turkish Language Association, resulted from updating the draft prepared in 1991 and was adapted to meet modern needs. The Turkic Academy emphasized that this shared alphabet would reinforce linguistic unity among Turkic peoples and strengthen cultural ties. Indeed, at the Bishkek Summit, the encouragement of the adoption of this shared alphabet also drew attention as an expression of a commitment to preserving the linguistic heritage and maintaining cultural bonds within the Turkic World.<sup>[3]</sup>

On the other hand, the summit also emphasized security issues. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that the OTS currently has no plans to establish a joint military force but highlighted the importance of the Civil Protection Mechanism within the OTS. President Erdogan noted that this mechanism would enhance coordination and solidarity among member states in response to natural disasters and emergencies. The OTS’s cooperation in the fields of education and technology transfer has also been evaluated as another significant step strengthening security bonds. President Erdogan expressed that, in a period when the importance of alliances and international organizations is growing, such steps of solidarity bolster the strength of organizations. These statements underscore that the OTS focused on cooperation and development rather than a defense collaboration.<sup>[4]</sup>

The presence of the OTS in Central Asia has been criticized by certain Russian and Western media outlets, suggesting that the OTS’s increasing influence in the region could be perceived as a geopolitical threat to Russia. Some Russian media sources have commented that the OTS aims to bring the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) closer to Turkey economically. Some sources have also published analyses under titles like “Turkic States Building a Sovereign Corridor,” emphasizing that the OTS’s economic and political moves compete with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), of which Russia is a member. Additionally, some sources suggest that China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative could enhance cooperation by aligning the efforts of the OTS and the EEU, with China’s project seen as a bridge that could contribute to regional integration goals and highlighting the OTS’s strategic importance in the Asia-Europe trade route.<sup>[5]</sup>

[1] “The Eleventh Summit of the Organization of Turkic States convened in Bishkek”, Organization of Turkic States, [https://www.turkicstates.org/en/haberler/the-eleventh-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-convened-in-bishkek\\_3475](https://www.turkicstates.org/en/haberler/the-eleventh-summit-of-the-organization-of-turkic-states-convened-in-bishkek_3475), (Access Date: 12.11.2024).

[2] “Turk Mamleketter Uyumunun Tışkı İşter Ministrler Keleşinin Jyını Bolup Öttü”, Kırız Respublikasının Tışkı İşter Ministrliđi, <https://mfa.gov.kg/kg/zhogorku-menyu/press-kyzmaty/kystarylgan-zhaylyktar/-672b0aad5f340>, (Access Date: 12.11.2024).

[3] “Tyurkskiye Strany Utverdili Yedinyy Alfavit – TRT”, 24KG, [https://24.kg/obschestvo/304754\\_tyurkskie\\_stranyi\\_utverdili\\_edinyiy\\_alfavitnbspmdash\\_TRT](https://24.kg/obschestvo/304754_tyurkskie_stranyi_utverdili_edinyiy_alfavitnbspmdash_TRT), (Access Date: 12.11.2024).

[4] “Erdogan: Organizatsiya Tyurkskikh Gosudarstv Poka Ne Planiruyet Sozdaniye Armii”, TASS, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/22351739>, (Access Date: 12.11.2024).

[5] Mikhail Nemtyrev, “Tyurkskiye Gosudarstva Stroyat Suverenny Koridor”, Ekspert, <https://expert.ru/v-mire/tyurkskie-gosudarstva-stroyat-suverenny-koridor>, (Access Date: 12.11.2024).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# What Does Trump's Second Presidency Mean for China?



Ezgi KÖKLEN

Donald Trump was re-elected as President of the United States (U.S.) following the election held on November 5, 2024. While the election primarily focused on domestic policy issues such as the American economy and border security, its outcomes bear significant implications on a global scale. Notably, the rivalry between the U.S. and China exerts a direct influence on the geopolitical and security dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region. The relations the U.S. has strengthened with its allies to counter China's influence in the region play a crucial role in regional security.

From China's perspective, it can be argued that the political party in power in the White House makes little substantive difference. This is largely because China recognizes that its strategic competition with the United States will persist irrespective of whether the Republican or Democratic Party holds power. Consequently, Beijing predicts that domestic political shifts in the United States are unlikely to produce long-term effects on Sino-American relations. Moreover, Donald Trump's participation in three presidential elections has not only diminished his public appeal among the Chinese populace but has also provided the Chinese government with an opportunity to thoroughly analyze his policy approaches and leadership style. As a result, Chinese media demonstrated minimal interest in the U.S. elections, with significant coverage emerging only in the days leading up to election day. Indeed, Mao Ning, the spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when asked during a press conference held in Beijing about how Trump's return to the White House would affect U.S.-China relations, emphasized that "Our policy toward the United States remains consistent," thereby underlining that this approach will continue.<sup>[1]</sup>

China's primary challenge in dealing with Trump lies in the unpredictability of his behavior and the inconsistency of his policies. These factors have complicated efforts to establish stability in Sino-American relations and have created significant challenges in forecasting the long-term implications of his actions. Consequently, it is difficult to contend that China had a clearly articulated strategy in place to address Trump's presidency upon his assumption of office. Furthermore, Trump's approach to China has been marked by significant contradictions. On the one hand, he has openly praised President Xi Jinping, highlighting the "very strong relations" he claims to have fostered with him.<sup>[2]</sup> On the other hand, he has accused China of acting with "malicious intent." This inconsistency creates ambiguity regarding Trump's broader policy direction toward China.

Many of the policies that Beijing characterizes as a "containment" were initiated during the Trump administration and were expanded during the Biden administration. These policies include measures such as tariffs on Chinese imports, export controls on semiconductors, and the revitalization of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). However, the most significant difference between the two leaders lies in the tactics employed in the implementation of these policies. The Biden administration, in its strategic competition with a rising China, has not only sought to strengthen bilateral cooperation with allies but has also prioritized reinforcing relationships among its allies. In this context, the administration has placed considerable emphasis on developing a coordinated and unified approach to its China policy.

Trump's foreign policy and security strategies are characterized as isolationist, grounded in national interest, and framed within a realist perspective, largely due to his skeptical stance toward allies. With a pronounced mercantilist outlook, Trump is particularly noted for his acute focus on addressing trade deficits and implementing stringent measures aimed at cost reduction.<sup>[3]</sup> Moreover, Trump's demands for increased financial contributions from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, as well as Japan and South Korea, in exchange for U.S. military support, led to a significant distancing of these allies from his administration. Through such policies, Trump has targeted not only China but also U.S. allies with tariffs. Similarly, describing his relationship with Taiwan as a form of "purchasing insurance," Trump requested financial contributions from Taiwan in exchange for security guarantees during the pre-election period.

Within this framework, Trump's trade and security policies toward China similarly embody a hardline approach. While Trump has expressed his reluctance to engage in a trade war with China, he is expected to persist with a strategy of exerting pressure through the use of economic sanctions and tariffs.<sup>[4]</sup> During his election campaign, Trump pledged to impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese goods, a policy that could result in a 2.5-point reduction in China's projected economic growth rate.<sup>[5]</sup> Trump has additionally stated that he would impose tariffs ranging from 150% to 200% should China intervene in Taiwan.<sup>[6]</sup> From a military perspective, although Trump may not desire to engage in a direct war, he could aim to allocate more resources to the Asia-Pacific region to limit China's influence in the area and adopt a more assertive stance in critical regions such as the South China Sea and Taiwan.

In addition to his economic and military pressure policies, Trump's perception of the relationship between China and Russia as a threat to global balances may bring the effort to decouple these two countries to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy priorities. Trump considers the China-Russia alliance as a threat to global stability and argues that Biden's policies have fostered solidarity between these states. During his campaign, Trump criticized the Biden administration for fostering closer ties between Beijing and Moscow, stating, "Biden has brought Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and other countries together; it's disgraceful," and pledged, "I will separate them." Such rhetoric suggests that Trump may adopt a more proactive foreign policy strategy aimed at preventing coordinated actions between China and Russia.

On the other hand, Trump's victory could also present certain strategic advantages for China. Trump's foreign policy, which opposes globalization and multilateralism, could weaken the United States' ties with its allies, thereby complicating their efforts to act jointly in balancing against China. This, in turn, could undermine U.S. efforts to curb China's influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, a second Trump administration that distances itself from international agreements and commitments could provide China with an opportunity to strengthen its relations with the Global South, Europe, and Northeast Asian countries.

During his election campaign, Trump claimed to possess the ability to bring an end to the Russia-Ukraine War within 24 hours and pledged to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict in the Middle East.<sup>[7]</sup> In his pursuit of fulfilling the promise of being a "peaceful president," Trump may aim to strengthen cooperation with China in these areas. It is worth recalling that Trump had previously sought China's assistance in addressing North Korea's nuclear issue, and in late 2016, China demonstrated its significant influence in regional matters by supporting United Nations (UN) sanctions on North Korea. Considering North Korea's support for Russia in the Ukraine War, China's support could play a critical role in U.S. efforts to re-engage North Korea in negotiation processes. Indeed, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has also emphasized China's determination to play a constructive role in the Russia-Ukraine War.<sup>[8]</sup>

In conclusion, Trump's re-election necessitates a recalibration of the balance in U.S.-China relations. For China, this new period presents both opportunities and challenges. Trump's anti-globalization and isolationist foreign policy has the potential to weaken the United States' alliances, which could, in turn, provide China with opportunities to strengthen its global and regional partnerships. However, Trump's unpredictability and stringent economic policies may pose significant risks to China's economic growth, potentially reigniting the trade war between the two countries. Trump's efforts to position himself as a "peaceful president" could open avenues for limited cooperation with China in specific areas. Nevertheless, the United States' inclination to intensify strategic competition is likely to continue unsettling the geopolitical balance in the Asia-Pacific region. Against this backdrop, Trump's foreign policy may result in renewed tensions in U.S.-China relations. In the forthcoming period, both countries will need to assess opportunities for cooperation with a focus on their pragmatic interests.

[1] "China will work with US, government says, but more rivalry expected under Trump", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/taiwan-trade-china-braces-more-rivalry-close-us-presidential-race-ends-2024-11-05/> , (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[2] "Trump says China respects him because Xi knows he is 'crazy', BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c39189j10e1o>, (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[3] "Harris vs. Trump: If Asia Could Vote in the US Election", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/10/harris-vs-trump-if-asia-could-vote-in-the-us-election/>, (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[4] "Trump praises Xi, while raising prospect of higher tariffs on Chinese imports", Politico, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/02/04/trump-xi-chinese-tariff-00139531> , (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[5] "China is bracing for fresh tensions with Trump over trade, tech, and Taiwan", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-china-tariffs-taiwan-foreign-policy-7351ce1069654f1c1aefb560b36dcc17> , (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[6] "Trump says he would impose tariffs on China if China went into Taiwan", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/trump-says-he-would-impose-tariffs-china-if-china-went-into-taiwan-2024-10-18/>, (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[7] "What Trump's win means for Ukraine, Middle East, and China", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2dl0e4l7lzo> , (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).

[8] "At UN, China warns against 'expansion of the battlefield' in Russia's war with Ukraine", PBS News, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/at-un-china-warns-against-expansion-of-the-battlefield-in-russias-war-with-ukraine> , (Date of Access: 08.11.2024).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# "Market Economy Status" Debates on the Vietnam-US Line

Emin Mirtabur SEVAL

According to the United States of America (USA), twelve countries in the world today do not have market economy status.[1]. Historically, the status of non-market economy country has generally been granted to countries that were formerly part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Of the twelve, only China and Vietnam were not members of the USSR at the time.

The criteria for the US to recognize a country as a market economy are: whether its currency is convertible, wages are freely negotiated, foreign investment is allowed, the state controls production and some resources, and prices are freely set. The US also uses its own assessment and considers other issues such as human rights. If the US considers a country to meet these criteria, it can grant it market economy status.

Vietnam-US relations were upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in September 2023. Following this, one of Vietnam's most desired changes was the designation of the country as a "market economy". Two days before US President Joe Biden visited Vietnam in 2023, the Vietnamese Ministry of Trade and Industry applied to the US Department of Commerce to initiate a "Change of Status Review" to upgrade Vietnam's non-market economy status. They have also engaged in lobbying activities.

Such a change in status would bring both symbolic and tangible trade benefits for Vietnam. This is because the country is constantly subjected to anti-dumping duties by the United States. These duties are imposed on products that are found to be sold in the American market at a lower price than the cost of production in Vietnam. The US argues that these duties prevent unfair competition in the market. Vietnam, for example, currently faces tariffs of about 26% on its exports of frozen farmed shrimp to the US, while Thailand, which has market economy status, faces tariffs of only 5%.[2].

Acceptance of market economy status would exempt Vietnam from excess tariffs and thus increase US imports of Vietnamese goods. In addition, Vietnam's market economy status would increase foreign investment. This is because US investors will feel more comfortable investing in a country where the government is not tightly controlled.

On July 24, 2024, the US Department of Commerce postponed its decision on whether Vietnam would become a market economy due to technical problems. These dates also coincided with the death of Nguyen Phu Trong, the leader of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The decision date was therefore set for the first week of August. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was on a tour of Asia at the time, also visited Vietnam and attended the funeral of the Communist Party leader.<sup>[3]</sup> On August 2, 2024, the request, which was reviewed again, was not approved by the US Department of Commerce.

#### **Vietnam's Arguments:**

Vietnam offers many arguments in favor of the US recognizing it as a market economy. First of all, 72 countries around the world, including China, the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan, recognize Vietnam's market economy status. According to Vietnam, doing business with these major partners shows that it is a market economy, and this status should be granted by the United States.<sup>[4]</sup>

Vietnam makes the following arguments that it deserves market economy status: First, it aims to increase the convertibility of its currency, the Dong, has stepped up efforts to achieve macroeconomic balance, and has increased the exchange rate band to 5%. The country also states that it has laws to protect labor rights and that wages are negotiated. Indeed, Vietnam attracts foreign direct investment (FDI), generating 20% of its GDP, 50% of its industrial production and 70% of its exports from the FDI sector. It also aims to increase the private sector's contribution to GDP to 60–65% by reducing the role of state-sponsored enterprises. In 2023, Vietnam abolished price controls on most consumer goods through a price law and authorized limited intervention only in emergencies.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### **United States of America's Arguments:**

In the US, groups such as steel producers, Gulf Coast shrimpers, honey producers, the American Manufacturing Association, legislators in the Senate and House of Representatives, the Southern Shrimp Association and the American Shrimp Processors Association do not want Vietnam to be granted market economy status. In addition, some trade and labor organizations believe that Vietnam's recognition as a market economy would not benefit the United States. These groups are motivated by evidence of unfair competition. In addition, Human Rights Watch has questioned Vietnam's argument that workers can freely unionize, noting that the government only allows state-controlled unions to exist. However, some retailers and other business groups support this position.<sup>[6]</sup>

American steelworkers allege that China is funneling steel products into the US through a third country. It is also alleged that many Chinese state-owned companies have large investments in Vietnam and are already shipping products to the US through Vietnam. Therefore, they argue, Vietnam's transition to a market economy will be to the detriment of American workers and producers.<sup>[7]</sup>

According to the American Manufacturing Association, Vietnam continues to restrict money and capital accounts and influence the foreign exchange market. It also manipulates the value of its currency. Indeed, the US Treasury Department has placed Vietnam back on its currency manipulation watch list. In addition, workers in Vietnam lack basic rights such as the right to organize, bargain and strike, so salaries are allegedly not set through free bargaining. More allegedly, the country restricts joint ventures and investments by foreign firms, with the majority of permitted investments coming from China. This, it is claimed, increases China's control. In general terms, the transition of Vietnam to market economy status would jeopardize US economic and national security interests.<sup>[8]</sup>

In China's view, market economy status is a geopolitical tool used by the United States. Some Vietnamese experts have argued that the US refusal to recognize Vietnam's market economy would bring Vietnam closer to China. Indeed, the new Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, To Lam, has started to attach more importance to cooperation with China. One of the biggest fears of the US is Chinese firms doing business in Vietnam.

#### **Conclusion:**

Vietnam's request for market economy status is an issue that could affect not only economic relations between the two countries, but also international dynamics. Even if the US were to grant Vietnam market economy status, there is no doubt that it would consider this as part of its trade war against China. The granting of market economy status to Vietnam by the US would mean tangible benefits for Vietnam in getting closer to the US and in trade. It seems that the US intends to hold the market economy status for Vietnam as a trump card.

[1] "Countries Currently Designated by Commerce as Non-Market Economy Countries", US Department of Commerce, <https://www.trade.gov/nme-countries-list>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

[2] "Vietnam's Quest for "Market Economy" Status", the Vietnamese, <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2024/07/vietnams-quest-for-market-economy-status/>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

[3] "US delays sensitive Vietnam 'market economy' decision until August", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-commerce-dept-delays-sensitive-vietnam-decision-until-august-memorandum-2024-07-24/>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

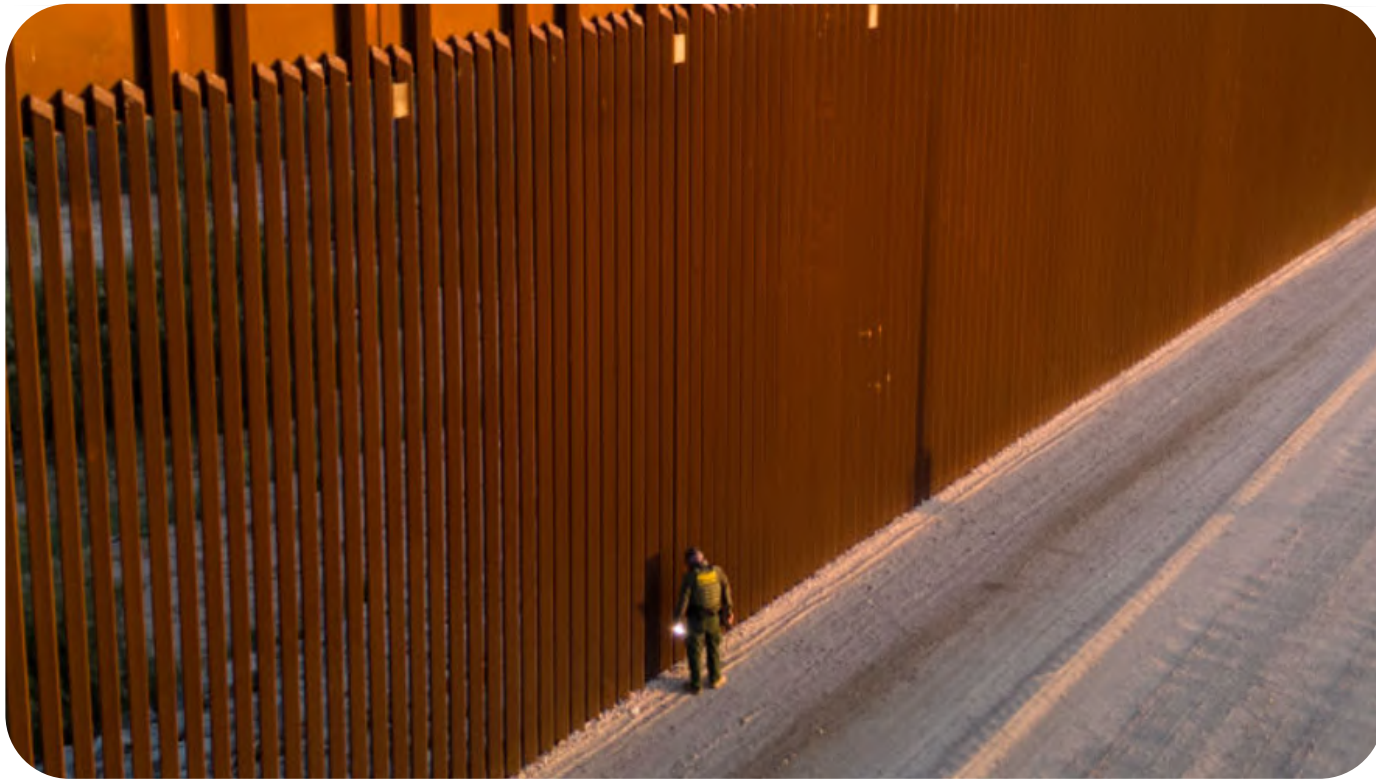
[4] "Why the US should recognise Vietnam's market economy status", RMIT University, <https://www.rmit.edu.vn/news/all-news/2024/jul/why-the-us-should-recognise-vietnams-market-economy-status>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

[5] Ibid.

[6] "Vietnam's Quest for "Market Economy" Status", the Vietnamese, <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2024/07/vietnams-quest-for-market-economy-status/>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

[7] "Vietnam is Not a Market Economy", Alliance for American Manufacturing, <https://www.americanmanufacturing.org/blog/vietnam-is-not-a-market-economy/>, (Accessed: 15.11.2024).

[8] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Trump's Return: A New Era at the U.S.-Mexico Border



Ayşe Azra  
GILAVCI

As the United States prepares for President Donald Trump's second term, the Mexican government has once again reaffirmed its determination to manage migration flows at the country's northern border. On Friday, November 8, 2024, Mexico's Foreign Minister Juan Ramon de la Fuente highlighted the administration's success in reducing migrant crossings, pledging to continue these measures. His remarks came just days after Trump's re-election and his renewed threats regarding strict policies aimed at curbing illegal immigration.

Emphasizing Mexico's commitment to maintaining its migration model, de la Fuente referred to U.S. border enforcement data showing a 76% decrease in migrant arrests since December of the the previous year. "This model is working well, and we will continue to move forward with it," he stated. Mexico's strategy involves transporting non-Mexican migrants by bus or plane to the country's southern regions and intensifying control over its southern border, despite its continued adherence to a humane migration policy.

The minister's reassurance came during a joint press conference with President Claudia Sheinbaum, following their first meeting with President Trump after his electoral victory. In what Sheinbaum described as an "extremely sincere" discussion, concerns about border security were addressed. Trump reiterated his hardline stance, a hallmark of his previous presidency, pressuring Mexico to control migration or face economic repercussions.[1]

While Trump's rhetoric may seem familiar, his threats carry significant economic implications for Mexico. He has once again floated the idea of imposing a 25% tariff on all Mexican exports if the country fails to curb the flow of migrants and drugs across the U.S.-Mexico border. Mexico's economy is heavily reliant on exports to the U.S., which account for approximately 80% of its total trade. This vulnerability forces the Mexican government to balance its humanitarian goals with the pressure of potential sanctions, compelling Mexico to take Trump's demands seriously.

President Claudia Sheinbaum, a prominent political figure known for her progressive ideals, defends Mexico's approach to migration by prioritizing the welfare and human rights of migrants. Sheinbaum stated, "We aim not only to halt migration in the south but also to provide employment," emphasizing efforts to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty and lack of opportunities. Under her leadership, the focus has been on creating jobs and improving the quality of life for migrants who choose to remain in Mexico. [2]

However, on-the-ground practices have revealed a harsher reality that contradicts these objectives. Since the beginning of the year, Mexico has been increasing migration control measures under pressure from the Biden administration. These actions have sparked criticism from human rights advocates, who argue that they conflict with the government's stated humanitarian goals.

As Trump prepares to return to office with promises of tough border security measures, Mexico stands at a critical juncture. Managing its relationship with the U.S. while upholding its humanitarian concerns for migrants is now more urgent than ever. Mexico must navigate these challenges while attempting to avoid economic retaliation from the U.S. and maintain its image as a defender of human rights, a task that will repeatedly test President Sheinbaum's diplomatic skills.[3]

Observers and experts acknowledge that Mexico's current strategy faces limitations, particularly under external pressure. Migration experts warn that security measures, if prioritized over long-term solutions, may lead to lasting social and economic consequences both within Mexico and beyond. The coming years will reveal whether Mexico can preserve its humanitarian goals or be forced to align more closely with Trump's uncompromising demands. For now, the future of Mexico's border and migration policies remains uncertain as negotiations between the two countries continue.

In conclusion, under President Claudia Sheinbaum's leadership, the Mexican government is striving to strike a difficult balance between humanitarian policies that prioritize the welfare of migrants and the economic and diplomatic pressures it faces. The intensifying pressure from Trump's re-election makes it essential for Mexico to reassess its relations with the U.S. and revise its strategies. Human rights advocates worry that this process could lead to further humanitarian crises. Whether Mexico can continue to protect migrant rights while safeguarding its national interests will be a defining factor in the policies and international relations of the coming years. The extent to which promises to improve migrants' employment and living conditions will be realized will have lasting effects on both Mexico and the region's social fabric.

[1]. "Mexico to stick with policies aimed at stopping migrants after Trump win", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-stick-with-policies-aimed-stopping-migrants-after-trump-win-2024-11-08/>, (Access Date: 10.11.2024)

[2]. Ibid.

[3]. "What We Don't Know About Mexico's Efforts to Stop Migrants", DC Report, <https://t.ly/1yOhZ>, (Access Date: 10.11.2024).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Future of U.S.-China Relations and Their Impact on Global Security



Berra KIZILYAZI

As both permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the world's two largest economies, the relationship between China and the United States (U.S.) holds significant implications for global security and stability. The contemporary characteristics of a multipolar world, economic globalization, and increasing cultural diversity have amplified the importance and impact of U.S.-China relations. This dynamic affects not only the prosperity of their respective populations but also global welfare across various domains, including economics, politics, society, and culture, thereby playing a critical role in ensuring world peace and development. [1]

With Donald Trump's re-election, it is anticipated that economic competition between the U.S. and China will persist, along with notable shifts in global security dynamics. Trump's explicit support for Taiwan could escalate tensions with China, leading to intensified military activities in the region and jeopardizing regional security. On the other hand, Trump's expected isolationist stance toward international organizations may create space for China to accelerate its multilateral collaborations, intensifying the global power struggle between the two nations.

In U.S. politics, the president and their advisors significantly influence the formation of foreign policy. For instance, during Trump's first term, his National Security Advisor, John Bolton, regarded China's economic and military advancements as a direct threat to the U.S., advocating for preventive measures. This perspective led to the adoption of stricter policies against China, which have continued to shape U.S. strategies. Examples include imposing high tariffs on what were perceived as China's unfair trade practices, restricting Huawei's software sales, increasing arms sales to Taiwan, and enhancing security cooperation with India, Japan, and Australia as part of a broader containment policy.

In 2018, Trump also launched the controversial "China Initiative" as part of his national security strategy. This counter-espionage measure targeted Chinese academics and researchers working in the U.S., granting the Department of Justice authority to investigate and prosecute individuals allegedly transferring technology contrary to U.S. interests. This initiative, seen as a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, aimed to curtail China's growing economic influence but was discontinued in 2022 under the Biden administration due to criticism of racial profiling and discrimination. [2]

Under Joe Biden, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan adopted a more strategic approach to managing U.S.-China competition, focusing on balanced policies and cooperation on critical issues. As Trump's potential second-term National Security Advisor remains uncertain, figures like Robert O'Brien, who previously served as Trump's chief mediator and National Security Advisor, are considered strong candidates. [3] O'Brien is known for his traditionalist foreign policy perspective, which could influence the U.S. approach to China significantly. [4]

If Trump returns to office, it is likely that the rivalry with China will persist, coupled with the weakening of U.S. alliances due to his "America First" policy. Meanwhile, China's continued economic development and multilateral partnerships suggest that it will be prepared to counter U.S. strategies. The choice of National Security Advisor, a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy, will thus be crucial in determining the stance toward China. This is especially pertinent to the Taiwan issue, as China has grown stronger economically and militarily since Trump's first term.

The U.S. and European Union's sanctions against Russia in response to the Ukraine crisis, which led to increased energy costs for European nations, exemplify the potential repercussions of radical decisions. Similarly, a drastic U.S. policy on Taiwan could backfire and isolate Washington. Opting for reconciliation over confrontation with China would be a prudent strategy. While the U.S. claims to support the "One China" policy, its increasing arms sales to Taiwan complicate the issue.

In conclusion, U.S. foreign policy is shaped not only by the president but also by their advisors. Whether Trump's second term will witness a continuation or alteration of his prior radical policies, and the approach his National Security Advisor will adopt, remains to be seen. In a multipolar world led by powers such as Russia and China, the strategies employed by a Trump administration would have profound implications for global peace and security.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Issue of Personnel Recruitment in Western Naval Forces



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After the Cold War, many European countries transitioned from mandatory conscription to professional armies, and in light of the Russia-Ukraine War, these countries have revisited the topic. Germany leads this shift, while Denmark plans to extend compulsory military service to women starting in 2026, in addition to mandatory service for men aged 18 and over. [1]. Among the Baltic countries most affected by the war, Latvia has reinstated mandatory military service in 2023 after a 16-year hiatus, requiring all men aged 18 to 27 to serve for 11 months.

Apart from compulsory conscription, another significant issue facing Western countries is the decline in applications for professional military service, with the naval forces being particularly impacted. For example, the German Minister of Defense stated in June 2023 that the number of applications to the German Armed Forces had decreased after the COVID-19 pandemic, and there was a shortage of qualified personnel. As part of the goal to increase the number of military personnel in the German Armed Forces, recruitment advertisements were issued, including in Turkish, with the phrase "Become part of our Navy." [2].

In the United Kingdom, another country experiencing difficulty in recruiting professional sailors, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Ben Kay expressed that the Navy was struggling to meet expectations for new recruits to connect with friends and family. He also noted a declining interest in submarine service. [3]. According to another report, the Royal Navy/Marines' workforce shrank by 4.1% between July 2022 and July 2023, a decline that is expected to create problems in fulfilling even the Navy's basic missions. [4].

The United States stands out as the country facing the most significant challenges in this area. [5]. In 2023, the Navy aimed to recruit 37,700 personnel but only achieved 30,236. A document detailing the "U.S. Navy's Navigation Plan," also known as "Project 33" (referring to the 33rd Force Commander), outlines seven key areas [6]. for improvement and development by 2027, particularly in light of a potential conflict with China. One of the primary objectives is "recruitment and retention of personnel to maintain a greater presence in operational theaters, especially in the Pacific." [7]. This document highlighted a personnel shortfall of 22,000 as of the beginning of 2024.

RAND Corporation experts, in addressing the personnel shortage, have warned that if the situation continues, the Navy may face challenges in assigning ships, providing coastal support, and could encounter significant structural issues. The Navy's Personnel Chief Admiral has proposed reforms, including eliminating the requirement for a high school diploma, raising the enlistment age from 39 to 41, increasing recruitment bonuses, and covering prior university tuition fees. However, experts have criticized the lowering of personnel standards as a solution. [8]

Additionally, rising obesity rates [9] and a perceived decline in patriotism among the "Generation Z" (those born after 2000) have emerged as further challenges. [10] To engage this generation, both the UK and the US have launched digital campaigns and advertisements targeting youth.

In conclusion, the significant decline in naval recruitment in Western countries, especially in the US and the UK, can be attributed not only to the characteristics of Generation Z but also to the increasing crime rates among young people. Measures to address the issue include attention-grabbing advertising campaigns, increased financial incentives, and, in the US, policies to make higher education more accessible. Given the long-term nature of the problem, it is expected that personnel shortages will continue to be a significant issue, particularly in scenarios involving potential conflicts, such as the highly discussed possibility of military engagement between the US and China, particularly over Taiwan in the South China Sea.

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[5] Mongilio, H., "Navy Misses All Recruiting Goals in FY 2023, Raises Goals for FY 2024", USNI News, <https://news.usni.org/2023/10/11/navy-misses-all-recruiting-goals-in-fy-2023-raises-goals-for-fy-2024>, (Date Accession 24.09.2024).

[6] Preventing delays in the periodic maintenance of surface ships, submarines, and [naval] aviation vehicles, emphasizing robotic and autonomous systems to rapidly integrate more platforms, establishing command centers needed by fleets in a dispersed battlefield, employing the required personnel strength, providing service quality to [Naval Forces] personnel commensurate with their sacrifices, preparing for combat in real conditions and virtually, and improving critical infrastructure needed for combat and operations.

[7] U.S. Naval Institute Staff, "CNO Franchetti's New Navy Navigation Plan", USNI News, <https://news.usni.org/2024/09/18/cno-franchettis-new-navy-navigation-plan>, (Date Accession 24.09.2024).

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[9] In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense, the percentage of young adults aged 17-24 who are eligible to join the military was 29% in 2016, but this rate dropped to 23% in 2020. The criteria sought for eligibility include physical condition, educational status, criminal record, etc., and the study states that at least one in three young adults is overweight and therefore ineligible to serve in the U.S. military.

[10] Schlott, R., "Military faces recruitment crisis thanks to 'unpatriotic' Gen Z, obesity, therapy ban", US News, <https://nypost.com/2023/09/07/military-faces-recruitment-crisis-as-unpatriotic-gen-z-fails-to-join-up/>, (Date Accession 25.09.2024).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# “Donald Trump” Concerns in the European Union

Erdem Baran ALKAN

Donald Trump was elected the 47th President of the United States of America (USA) on November 5, with a decisive victory over Kamala Harris in the Presidential election. This election caused great repercussions, especially in Europe. The future of the international system is being debated again.[1].

His tendency to question the current US position in the international arena and his criticism of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) show that Trump is a revisionist. In addition, Trump’s nationalist approaches and his “America First” motto reveal his isolationist identity. His statement that Taiwan must pay before it can receive defense support and his criticism of the funds provided to Ukraine by both himself and the public are clear reflections of these political schools. It is also claimed that Trump will withdraw American troops from Syria, whose lives are under threat.

One of the most questionable issues is the future of the Russian-Ukrainian war in Europe. This war has led to a debate on NATO’s competence. With the arrival of Trump, it seems inevitable that these debates will flare up. The West and NATO have clearly failed on the Black Sea, and day by day, the West is being overburdened. In his 2014 article criticizing the foreign policy of the pre-Trump administration, Henry Kissinger foresaw what is happening in Ukraine and criticized NATO’s eastern expansionism.[2]What happened first in Georgia and then in Ukraine vindicates these sentiments.

The 19th century British Empire’s policy on the Black Sea is similar to NATO’s post-Cold War policy in the region. This is one of the factors that could trigger Russian aggravation. This justifies Trump’s criticism of the West’s stance in this conflict and his belief that NATO, whose founding purpose was to prevent the spread of communism, is now pointless.

European states, fearing Russian aggression, are under the NATO security umbrella. However, Trump’s critical approach to NATO and his protectionist stance under the motto “America First” raise questions about the future of American bases in many parts of the world, especially in Europe.

In 2014, following Russia’s annexation of Crimea, a rule was introduced in NATO that countries should allocate 2% of their national income for defense. Following this rule, the US has become more skeptical of NATO countries. Although Poland is currently at the highest point at 4.1%, the majority of member states are below 2%. Trump expects countries to reach at least 3%. This demand creates serious problems and debates in EU countries.

In the immediate aftermath of the US elections, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed Finance Minister Christian Lindner, leading to the collapse of his coalition of three, which had been at odds over the defense budget.[3]. Trump’s election could have other jarring effects on Europe.

A week before the election, Trump said that if elected, he would make the EU pay a high price for not buying enough American products.[4]. This would involve raising tariffs, which could lead to an increase in missiles and higher prices around the world. This would undoubtedly have a negative impact on European countries, whether they are US allies or not. The EU’s low level of economic growth compared to China and the United States, and its declining share in world trade as well as domestic production, encourages the EU to take more concrete measures.

On the other hand, the EU countries’ reactions to Trump’s approaches have been mild. However, it may take much longer for continental Europe, which has become dependent on the US in the post-World War II order, to break free from these ties. Even though opposition to Trump is high within the EU, names like Viktor Orban and Georgia Meloni, who see themselves as close to Trump, could also shape European politics. Such transatlantic ties greatly reduce unity within the European Project. Trump’s policies therefore pose a danger even for EU allies.[5].

In the shadow of these circumstances, the European Political Community Summit was held in Hungary three days after the US elections and Trump was the main agenda item. The leaders gathered in Budapest signed a declaration to increase the troubled competitiveness. The leaders emphasized that the question of “what should be done” should no longer be asked to America, but to Europe itself, and that the steps taken should not only be in reaction to the elections. In response, Orban emphasized that there were no serious disagreements between the countries and that everyone agreed on competitiveness.[6].

Important steps are being taken at such summits. But more concrete steps need to be taken. In 1954, the French parliament rejected the European Defense Community, which is now out of the question, and a common army and a review of defense options may be on the agenda. Or the EU countries could acquiesce to Trump’s terms. Neither option would change the nature of the transatlantic relationship and solve Europe’s major security challenges and tensions.

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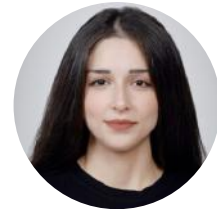
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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# APEC and China's Investment in Latin America: New Economic Era



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The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a platform established in 1989 to liberalize regional trade and represents about 60% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The negotiations held in this platform play a critical role in determining the direction of not only regional but also global economic dynamics. China's active involvement in multilateral fora such as APEC reflects not only economic development but also the goal of building a multipolar world order. By taking a positive approach to issues such as trade liberalization and investment transparency, China aims to provide opportunities to emerging economies around the world. At the same time, US leadership on this platform carries an important responsibility for further global cooperation and trade promotion.

On November 14, 2024, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Peru, Dina Boluarte Zegarra, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid an official visit to Lima to attend the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. This visit, which emphasized the historical ties between China and Peru, marks a period that calls for a reassessment of Chinese influence in Latin America, both regionally and globally. Xi's statements highlighted the goals of deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries and building an open economic system in the Asia-Pacific.

The theme of this year's APEC meeting, "Empower, Engage, Grow", clearly reflects the host country's focus on regional unity, development, cooperation and innovation. The three key areas to be discussed under this theme are trade and investment, innovation and digitalization, and sustainable growth. These priorities are in line with the Putrajaya Vision 2040 adopted at the 2020 APEC meeting and demonstrate APEC's pragmatic approach to goal setting and efforts to achieve institutional objectives. Some analyses suggest that the selection of these topics is intended by the host to make APEC cooperation more inclusive and resilient, avoiding unnecessary fragmentation in key areas.[1].

During the course of the meeting, it was noted that the search for dialogue with China increased and many proposals and initiatives received wide attention. This can be seen as a natural reflection of China's increasing contributions to APEC and its influence in the region. Since joining APEC in 1991, China has made a sustained effort to liberalize and facilitate regional trade, reducing the overall tariff level from 39.5% to 7.3%. Today, China is an important trading partner and export market for many APEC members and is open to trade arrangements to promote shared development and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. [2].

China's growing influence in Latin America is analyzed in the international relations literature not only in the context of economic cooperation but also in the context of reshaping geopolitical dynamics in the region. The visit to Peru is considered to be part of China's strategy to strengthen the Latin American pillar of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Moreover, such diplomatic contacts also reflect China's aim to increase its soft power over regional actors and expand multilateral cooperation mechanisms. Latin America's redefined role in great power competition is critical to understanding the impact of China's economic and strategic moves on the balance in the international system.[3]

Inaugurated on the same date under the leadership of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Peruvian President Dina Boluarte, the Chancay Port is considered one of the most important projects in Latin America under the BRI. Strategically located on the Pacific coast and directly connected to the Pan-American Highway, this deep-water port brings Peru one step closer to becoming the trade hub of Latin America and lays the foundations for a strong land-sea trade route between Asia and Latin America. The port's potential to reduce trade times to 23 days and save 20% in logistics costs demonstrates its potential to strengthen the region's role in the global economic system.[4]

The opening of the Chancay Port is also an important milestone for the construction of multipolarity in the international system. China offers an egalitarian partnership model as an alternative to the West's unilateral and imposing approaches. China's principle of "comprehensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits" has been widely accepted in Latin America and has filled the vacuum created by dissatisfaction with the past colonial practices of Western powers.

Former Peruvian Ambassador Juan Carlos Capunay emphasized that the West is not investing enough in Latin America and that countries in the region are turning to China for economic development. According to Capunay, while the West ties its investments to conditions, China respects the priorities and independence of its partners. This shows that China is not only an economic partner but also a strategic actor supporting the development of the global south. Chancay Port stands out as a concrete example of this approach.[5].

The Port of Chancay is expected to play a strategic transformative role for Peru and neighboring countries. As Peruvian Minister of Agriculture Angel Manuel Manero has stated, shorter transportation times will allow agricultural products to maintain freshness and provide a competitive advantage, especially for exports to Asian markets. Similarly, countries such as Brazil are seizing the opportunity to deepen their trade relations by gaining faster access to Asian markets through the Port of Chancay. As Joao Villaverde of the Brazilian Ministry of Planning emphasized, access to the Pacific will accelerate the integration of South American countries with China.[6].

The Chancay Port symbolizes the egalitarian and inclusive nature of China's cooperation with Latin American countries. The land-sea corridor, which Xi underlined with the phrase "from Chancay to Shanghai", represents not only economic ties, but also a model of cooperation that unites the development goals of Asia and Latin America. In this context, China stands out not only as a trading partner but also as a proponent of multipolarity in the international system. Unlike the West, China prefers to cooperate without interfering in political systems and shapes its development goals on common ground.[7].

These projects are a reflection of China's efforts to create a balanced economic order in the international system. Chinese investments in Latin America put the region at the center of global trade and offer an alternative to the West's imposing economic order. China's "equal partnership" perspective aims not only to generate economic growth but also to create a new pole in the global balance of power. In this context, the Chancay Port is not just a port, but a landmark that redefines the place of Asia and Latin America in the global system.

The 31st APEC Summit marks a critical turning point in the relations between global powers such as China and the US as one of the important platforms where the world economy is shaped. The 2024 APEC Summit is particularly important for the meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping. This summit offers an opportunity for both countries to test their mutual understanding of trade, security and global economic dynamics. It is very important that Biden and Xi come face to face for the last time at this summit. Because with Trump's re-election as president, it is unclear how such high-level meetings will take shape in the coming period.[8].

The meeting between Biden and Xi is a strategic event that will affect many economic and geopolitical issues around the world. The two leaders aim to cooperate on very important issues such as global trade regulation, climate change, security issues. Both countries recognize that economic cooperation is important not only for their own interests but also for maintaining global stability. China's ever-growing economic power poses a challenge to the United States, but it also offers room for cooperation.

The re-election of former US President Donald Trump creates significant uncertainty for China-US relations. Under Trump's administration, the US has implemented an aggressive trade policy and tariffs against China, which has increased tensions in bilateral relations. Trump's re-election as president puts high tariffs and other trade restrictions on Chinese goods back on the agenda. This has the potential to negatively affect not only China but also the global economy. Economists emphasize that such a step would harm the American economy and global trade.<sup>[9]</sup> While Trump's "America First" policies aim to preserve the economic power of the US in the short term, in the long term, they may pose many challenges for international cooperation and trade.

In conclusion, the APEC Summit is a critical juncture that will shape the future of global economic relations. The meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping has the potential to affect not only the economic and geopolitical dynamics between the two countries, but also the world economy. China's active role in multilateral platforms and its free trade and transparency-oriented approaches contribute significantly to regional and global cooperation.

The meetings between Biden and Xi at this summit are of great importance as part of their goal to establish a multipolar world order. However, Trump's re-election to the presidency creates a serious uncertainty for China-US relations. Trump's tougher trade policy towards China could not only increase tensions in bilateral relations but also disrupt the balance of global trade. At this point, while Trump's "America First" policies have the potential to benefit the American economy in the short term, their impact on global cooperation in the long term could have a negative impact on both the national economy and other emerging economies. China's more open, inclusive and egalitarian economic model offers a promising perspective for global cooperation. Therefore, platforms such as APEC create a great opportunity not only for regional trade liberalization but also for global economic stability and sustainable development.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Importance of Traditional Production in Environmental Safety: "Handmade Carpets"



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Environmental concerns are rising as consumer products, particularly in home décor and textiles, contribute significantly to pollution, waste, and resource depletion. Mass-produced items, often made from synthetic materials and manufactured in high-energy facilities, release harmful chemicals into the environment and generate vast amounts of waste. The rapid turnover of these products only adds to the cycle of consumption, leading to more landfill waste and pollution.

Handmade carpets, on the other hand, offer a sustainable alternative to machine made carpets. Crafted using natural fibers like wool, cotton, and silk and dyed with organic materials, these carpets require fewer resources and avoid the chemical-intensive processes typical of synthetic manufacturing. The traditional techniques used in handmade carpets not only ensure durability but also reduce the overall environmental footprint. By choosing handmade carpets, consumers can embrace a more eco-friendly lifestyle, reducing their impact on the planet while supporting artisans and preserving cultural heritage.

Global efforts to restore ecosystems require an estimated \$700 billion annually.<sup>[1]</sup> As stewards of the environment, humans hold a responsibility to choose materials that benefit ecological health. In modern life, home decor and design are of growing importance, with many individuals allocating a significant portion of their income to these areas. However, most consumers remain unaware that machine made carpets commonly used in interior spaces can be detrimental to both human health and environmental sustainability. These products often involve synthetic fibers and chemical dyes, which contribute to pollution and expose households to potentially harmful substances. By selecting environmentally friendly, sustainably produced materials, we can reduce our ecological footprint and support healthier living spaces.

Viscose fibers used in carpets are derived from petroleum-based materials, including common synthetic fibers such as acrylic, nylon, polypropylene, polyester, and viscose. While viscose is a recycled synthetic fiber, it lacks the durability and quality required for carpet production, making it an unsuitable option. In machine carpet manufacturing, three types of yarn are utilized: warp yarn, weft yarn, and pile yarn. The warp yarn, which forms the foundation of the carpet, is typically composed of polyester, cotton, or a blend of both, while the weft yarn that interlaces with the warp is made of jute, polyester, or cotton. Machine carpets are generally classified into four categories based on fiber type: wool, acrylic, polyester, and polypropylene carpets. The production of machine carpets involves the use of various chemicals, including PVC, urethane, vinyl, latex, antistatic sprays, synthetic dyes, antimicrobial agents, and petroleum-based oils in the preparation of synthetic fibers such as polypropylene, nylon, acrylic, and polyester.[2].

Handmade carpets produced from high-quality cotton and silk exhibit superior durability due to their construction, wherein the fibers are tightly secured through intricate handwoven knots. This method enhances the structural integrity of the carpet, significantly reducing the likelihood of unraveling or fraying over time. As a result, the lifespan of these carpets is extended, minimizing the need for frequent replacements, which is often observed in machine-made carpets that degrade more rapidly and exhibit lower resistance to daily wear and mechanical stress.

The longevity of handmade carpets supports the principles of sustainable consumption by promoting the use of durable products. By investing in long-lasting, high-quality carpets, consumers contribute to reducing their environmental impact by extending the product lifecycle, thereby decreasing the frequency of replacements. This aligns with the concept of a circular economy, where products are designed for durability, repair, and reuse, rather than the traditional linear economy that emphasizes consumption, frequent disposal, and waste generation. The prolonged durability of handmade carpets decreases the demand for new carpet production, thereby conserving raw materials and reducing the associated energy consumption and chemical usage required in the manufacturing of synthetic alternatives.

Handmade carpets play a critical role in supporting small, local artisans and their communities, contributing significantly to economic sustainability. Many handmade carpets are produced in regions where artisan crafts are central to local economies. By purchasing handmade carpets, consumers help sustain livelihoods in these communities, often providing steady income for skilled weavers and artisans.

The connection between sustainable livelihoods and environmental sustainability is crucial, as many traditional artisans prioritize eco-friendly methods to preserve the integrity of their craft. Artisans who work in handmade carpet production often use natural fibers (such as wool, cotton, and silk) and dyes derived from plants, minerals, or insects. These traditional methods are rooted in a deep respect for the environment, as artisans seek to maintain the purity and sustainability of the materials they use.

In conclusion, the environmental concerns associated with consumer products, particularly in textiles and home décor, are growing due to their significant contributions to pollution, waste, and resource depletion. Mass-produced synthetic carpets, often made from petroleum-based materials, worsen these issues by releasing harmful chemicals and generating substantial waste. In contrast, handmade carpets made from natural fibers such as wool, cotton, and silk, dyed with organic materials, have a much lower environmental impact. These traditional production methods require fewer resources and chemicals, enhance durability, and reduce the need for frequent replacements, thus promoting more sustainable consumption.

Moreover, handmade carpets provide economic benefits by supporting local artisans and their communities. These artisans, who rely on their craft for their livelihood, play a vital role in fostering a resilient local economy. This practice aligns with the principles of a circular economy, which prioritizes longevity, reuse, and resource conservation, contrasting with the waste-driven linear economy focused on constant consumption and disposal. By choosing handmade carpets, consumers not only reduce their ecological footprint but also contribute to the preservation of traditional craftsmanship, which is central to cultural heritage and economic stability.

Restoring ecosystems is a costly and complex challenge, with an estimated annual cost of \$700 billion. As stewards of the environment, it is our collective responsibility to adopt sustainable practices that minimize ecological damage. Synthetic products, particularly those containing harmful chemicals, not only pose environmental threats but also jeopardize human health. On the other hand, the use of handmade carpets offers environmental and social advantages, generating employment opportunities, empowering artisans to support their families, and promoting both economic and social well-being. Through these sustainable choices, we can help restore ecosystems and contribute to a more prosperous and healthy future for both the environment and humanity.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Subianto's Visits to China and the United States: A Quest for Strategic Balance



Ezgi KÖKLEN

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, after securing victory in the February 2024 presidential elections, conducted his first international visit to China one month later. Similarly, following his inauguration ceremony on October 20, 2024, he chose China as the destination for his first official overseas trip, undertaking a visit from November 8 to 10, 2024.<sup>[1]</sup> Subianto's decision to prioritize China for his first international visit after assuming the presidency clearly underscores Indonesia's commitment to deepening relations with China and strengthening economic, diplomatic, and strategic cooperation. Advocating for collaboration rather than conflict with China, Subianto engaged with the country's top leaders during his visit, including President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang, and Chairman of the National People's Congress Zhao Leji.

As part of the visit, the parties signed a series of agreements related to an economic cooperation package worth approximately 10 billion dollars, encompassing strategic sectors such as infrastructure, green energy, digital technology, and agriculture.<sup>[2]</sup> These agreements are considered as a critical step in deepening economic relations between the two countries and contributing to sustainable development goals. During the visit, Indonesian President Subianto emphasized Indonesia's interest in drawing upon China's experiences in achieving rapid economic growth and significant poverty alleviation over the past three decades.<sup>[3]</sup> In this context, discussions with Premier Li Qiang highlighted the potential of China's experiences in contributing to Indonesia's developmental objectives.

Another prominent aspect of the visit was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at promoting joint development around the Natuna Islands, one of the contested areas in the South China Sea. The timing of this agreement, coinciding with an ongoing naval exercise between Indonesia and the United States near Batam Island, clearly reflects Indonesia's balancing policy. The agreement covers cooperation in areas such as fisheries, oil exploration, and natural gas research within the overlapping zones of China's "nine-dash line" claim and Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

According to the statement, "Both parties have reached a significant consensus on joint development in areas with overlapping claims and, within this framework, have agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Joint Steering Committee to assess and advance relevant cooperation opportunities."<sup>[4]</sup> However, this statement has been criticized on the grounds that it contradicts Indonesia's official position, which asserts that, as a non-claimant state in the South China Sea, Indonesia has no overlapping jurisdiction with China. In response to the ensuing ambiguities, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on November 11, 2024, clarifying that the agreement signed with China "will have no impact on Indonesia's sovereign rights or its jurisdiction over the North Natuna Sea."<sup>[5]</sup>

Indonesia has long demonstrated its willingness to assume responsibility for regional security. The country's foreign policy approach is constitutionally mandated to adhere to an "independent and active" foreign policy, and successive leaders have shown a firm commitment to upholding this principle. Within this framework, Indonesia has sought to maintain a balance among major powers while striving to strengthen its independent position on the global stage. This strategy clearly reflects Indonesia's aspiration to solidify its role as a credible and neutral regional actor.

Declaring his commitment to pursuing a non-aligned foreign policy, Subianto underscored his determination to maintain strategic balance by visiting Washington following his trip to Beijing, where he held a meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden. During these engagements, Subianto also had the opportunity to connect with Donald Trump, the newly elected President of the United States, extending his congratulations on this significant achievement.<sup>[6]</sup>

Prior to the bilateral meeting, Biden congratulated Subianto on his electoral victory in February and expressed his hopes for the two countries to work together toward advancing a vision of a "free and open Indo-Pacific with ASEAN at its center."<sup>[7]</sup> During Subianto's visit to the United States, the two countries issued a joint statement commemorating the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. The statement emphasized their "steadfast support for the preservation of maritime and airspace freedom, the sovereign rights and jurisdiction of coastal states within their exclusive economic zones, and adherence to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)." Additionally, Biden expressed the goal of deepening the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" agreement signed between the United States and Indonesia in 2023.<sup>[8]</sup>

During Subianto's visit to the White House, U.S. President Biden conveyed significant messages indicating strong support for Indonesia's accession process to the Western-centered Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>[9]</sup> On the other hand, Trump's rhetoric concerning plans to impose high tariffs on imported goods has been a contributing factor in boosting Indonesia's motivation to join the BRICS bloc, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Notably, shortly after taking office, Subianto sent his newly appointed foreign minister to the BRICS meeting held in Kazan, Russia, to express Indonesia's interest in joining this non-Western economic bloc. The formal declaration of intent to join BRICS marks a departure from the policies of Subianto's predecessor, Joko Widodo, who, despite securing substantial infrastructure investments from China, maintained a largely neutral geopolitical stance.

In conclusion, Subianto's decision to make his first official overseas visits to China and the United States underscores Indonesia's commitment to maintaining a strategic balance in its foreign policy. The economic cooperation agreements signed with China and the memorandum targeting joint development around the Natuna Islands demonstrate that Indonesia views China as a key partner in its regional development strategies. Simultaneously, interactions with the United States and efforts to deepen the strategic partnership highlight Indonesia's continued support for the vision of a "free and open Indo-Pacific." Indonesia's motivation to join BRICS and the concrete steps taken in this direction emphasize the country's interest in non-Western economic partnerships, marking a clear departure from the more neutral policies of Subianto's predecessor, Joko Widodo. Subianto's approach to foreign policy reflects a more proactive and direct stance compared to Widodo. This strategy underscores Indonesia's ambition to play a more active role in the competitive environment among major powers, highlighting a pragmatic foreign policy that balances economic development, diplomatic relations, and geopolitical equilibrium.

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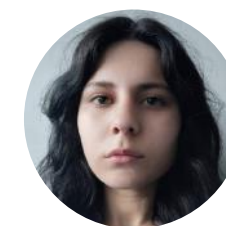
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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Nile River Problem Between Egypt and Ethiopia



Itir BOZDAĞ

The Nile River, one of Africa's most vital water sources for centuries, has historically been synonymous with Egypt. Enabling agriculture and driving numerous economic developments, the river flows through the borders of many countries on the continent and is utilized as a resource by these nations. In recent years, and with water scarcity projected to become a significant issue in the future, Africa is expected to be one of the regions most affected. This underscores the critical importance of the Nile River.

In recent years, tensions and disputes have arisen between Egypt and Ethiopia, through which the Nile River flows, occasionally heightening regional tensions. This conflict, largely stemming from Ethiopia's activities and future plans regarding the river, has at times drawn Sudan into the fray, leading to significant challenges in sharing the Nile's resources.

The tensions between Egypt and Ethiopia can be traced back to 2011, the year construction began on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. This dam is described as a hydroelectric project not intended for consumption. Egypt has claimed that the dam poses a threat to both Egypt's and the region's stability, particularly emphasizing that it jeopardizes Egypt's water security. However, Ethiopia argues that the dam is a development project rather than a security-focused political initiative.[1]

Having held a historical advantage over the Nile River for many years, Egypt views this project as a development that could impact its current position in the region. This suggests that Egypt has adopted a more cautious approach regarding the use of the Nile River. From this perspective, the dam may be seen as a project capable of utilizing the river's potential more efficiently than Egypt's own infrastructure. Upon the dam's completion, positive developments in Ethiopia's economic activities may emerge, which could pose a challenge to Egypt's economic dominance in the region.

Although the dam has begun producing hydroelectric power, tensions between the two countries have not diminished. Egypt and Sudan have expressed concerns that their vital water resources are under threat. Ethiopia, on the other hand, has stated that Egypt is primarily interested in maintaining its regional monopoly. This tension has recently escalated to a military dimension, as Egypt and Somalia have signed a military agreement, while disputes between Ethiopia and Somalia are also intensifying.[5]

Egypt's move in Somalia could push Ethiopia to form a similar military alliance, potentially escalating tensions in the region. With the involvement of external countries in various ways, the dam issue could transform into a more regional problem. The other African countries through which the Nile River flows play a less visible role in the tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt. When the effects of the dam become more apparent in the region, it is likely that bilateral alignments, led by Ethiopia and Egypt, will emerge.

The struggle over the Nile River is also related to efforts to minimize the effects of drought. The importance and potential of the Nile, which has symbolized fertility and prosperity for Egypt for years, are increasingly understood by other countries as well. With the worsening of droughts, it is foreseeable that the Grand Dam will be just one of the issues concerning the Nile, and various problems involving other countries will emerge.

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Malaysia's Balance Policy in the South China Sea



Simay GÜZEL

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2024, China and Malaysia continue to develop their bilateral relations in every opportunity and in every field. On November 7, 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, emphasizing that they are friends with a common vision, announced that they would contribute to regional stability and prosperity. [1] While there is almost a new development every day in the South China Sea, where both sides claim rights, their friendship has been further strengthened through joint statements. Despite the long-standing territorial claims and conflicts in the South China Sea, it can be observed that the China-Malaysia friendship has been steadily strengthening and mutual support has been increasing.

Malaysia's stance in the context of the South China Sea has been lower-profile compared to Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Malaysia has pursued a quiet diplomacy in the South China Sea issues, in contrast to the reactions shown by other countries over the years. Due to its continuously open channels of dialogue with China and its inclination towards reconciliation, it has managed its relations quite successfully and has largely prevented tensions in the region. At the point of resolving a possible dispute, both sides avoid conflict and resort to diplomatic means. In this context, despite the overlap of some of Malaysia's maritime jurisdiction areas east of the South China Sea with China's "Nine-Dash Line," it has not engaged in any military conflict.

Malaysia pursues its claims in the South China Sea within the framework of international maritime law, the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). [2] When examining Malaysia's regional strategy, which seeks a solution through diplomatic and legal means and follows a strategy that can be described as almost diametrically opposed to that of Vietnam and the Philippines, it can be said that Malaysia adopts a pragmatic policy.



There are many reasons why Malaysia is not as reactive to China's territorial claims as other countries. First of all, the fact that China and Malaysia are engaged in economic cooperation on many major projects, including the Belt and Road Initiative, can be put forward. In addition to being aware of China's increasing economic capacity, Malaysia has not engaged in any military conflict with China in the South China Sea recently, unlike other countries. [3] For this reason, there may be a perception that Malaysia remains unresponsive compared to other countries that frequently engage in conflicts. However, Malaysia's avoidance of conflict with China, despite frequently expressing that military interventions would negatively impact the process, indicates that it is following a successful policy in this regard.

Malaysia, which also has strong cultural ties with China, expresses its support for this country at every opportunity and pursues a very balanced policy in the international arena. Considering the benefits the US gains from its freedom of navigation in this region and its military power projection, its relations with Malaysia are of great importance. Malaysia, on the other hand, sees the U.S. presence in the South China Sea as a balancing power element and places great importance on bilateral relations from this perspective. Indeed, given that Malaysia maintains good relations with both the United States and China, it is inevitable that it believes no other parties should be involved in South China Sea issues. The Malaysian Foreign Minister's statement that "it would be better for the countries within ASEAN and the Southeast Asia region to resolve issues among themselves through negotiation and dialogue, as external powers would lead to 'uncertainty' in the region" can be interpreted as a reaction to the increasing military activities in the region. [4]

Although the reason for Malaysia's stance against third parties' involvement in this matter is thought to be its friendly relations with China, other reasons can also be put forward. Especially in the past year, the events in Gaza have led Malaysia to adopt a more cautious stance towards the US, and it can even be said that this was followed by its application to join BRICS. Following the Philippines' joint patrols in the South China Sea with the USA, Japan, and Australia, Malaysia's call for only the relevant countries to be involved in this matter can also be interpreted as avoiding being caught between the USA and China, with whom it maintains good relations. [5]

It is possible that Malaysia's pragmatic attitude will draw reactions from ASEAN countries in the upcoming period. Indeed, ASEAN countries have not reached a consensus on this issue for years. The thought that Malaysia, which will chair ASEAN in 2025, will continue its representation and leadership in accordance with its own policy on this issue may concern ASEAN members like the Philippines and Vietnam, who frequently clash with China in the South China Sea. However, considering that ASEAN has not reached a consensus on many issues on the agenda, the question of how effective it is in resolving the main issue of the South China Sea disputes arises as a question mark.

Today in Malaysia, it is observed that the Mahathir Doctrine, which is reinterpreted with a more pragmatic approach and emphasizes the peaceful resolution of disputes, continues with a softer tone compared to previous periods and avoids direct targeting. The former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, who the doctrine is named after, not only strengthened the ties with China but also frequently emphasized independence, neutrality, and peaceful resolution in the context of the South China Sea. [6] It can be said that Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has been continuing his policies based on the constructive foundations of this doctrine, and in this direction, the China-Malaysia friendship has been increasingly strengthened, which provides advantages to both sides in the South China Sea. Considering the presence of AUKUS, the Quad Security Dialogue (QUAD), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the South China Sea, it can be said that this friendship, which is highly valuable for China, will continue to strengthen.

Malaysia emphasizes the necessity of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which is jointly recognized and accepted by the countries involved in the South China Sea issue. Malaysia will promote a peaceful path by reiterating its calls for the resolution of conflicts based on the rules accepted by the relevant countries.

As a developing country located in a strategic region like the Strait of Malacca, which is one of the important points of the world economy, Malaysia has a very low risk of direct conflict with China. However, it is considered that Malaysia should maintain its own national interests while preserving the economic, political, and military balances between the US and China. Additionally, Malaysia's continued defense of its regional claims on legal grounds is considered the most appropriate strategy in the South China Sea. [7] In this context, it can be said that Malaysia has pursued a balanced policy in the South China Sea disputes by combining China's developing economy and friendly relations, the military and economic support of the United States, and ASEAN's authority to resolve regional issues.

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ANKASAM President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL is on TRT Ankara Radio!

**23 November , 2024**

ANKASAM President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL is on Habertürk TV!



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