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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Heading into the 2024 Election: The Basic Dynamics of the American Election System



Ayşe Azra GILAVCI

The American presidential election system, unlike many other election systems today, leaves questions in mind with its rather complex structure. Elements such as delegate selection, general popular vote, the Electoral College and the importance of contested states make it difficult to understand and interpret this election system. This article will discuss the basic dynamics of the American election system and the explanations of certain terms frequently used during the election period.

American elections are held on the first Tuesday in November, a date set by the constitution. The election process is an extensive journey that usually begins exactly one year before Election Day. During this time, candidates from the two main political parties (Democrats and Republicans) announce their candidacies, form campaign teams, and travel throughout the country. They begin to gain momentum and gather the necessary public and financial support through rallies and fundraisers.[i]

As campaigns gain traction, candidates participate in televised debates. These debates provide a platform for candidates to present their policies, answer tough questions, and defend their positions on key issues. The Biden-Trump, Harris-Trump, and Vance-Walz debates have all occurred this year and have garnered widespread attention from voters. Biden's withdrawal from the debate underscores the importance of these sessions, where candidates have the opportunity to express themselves, to their campaigns. It is crucial for candidates to showcase their platforms and leadership skills to the public in order to build a broad base of support and differentiate themselves from other candidates in their party.

The election process officially begins with the primary and caucus season. These early voting events allow each party to narrow down its candidates to a single candidate who will represent the party in the general election. Primaries and caucuses typically begin in February across the country, with states such as Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina receiving significant attention. These early states play a significant role in shaping the field, as their results often indicate which candidates have the potential to garner broader national support. In caucuses, party members hold debates and rounds of voting to select their candidates. In primaries, party members vote directly for their preferred candidates. These processes result in the election of delegates who pledge to support specific candidates at national conventions.

Each party holds a national convention where delegates formally nominate their presidential candidates. During this convention, the chosen candidate announces their vice presidential candidate. Once the nomination process is complete, candidates begin extensive campaigns to gain popular support leading up to the general election. On Election Day in November, voters cast their votes for a president and vice president. This vote is based on voters choosing electors to represent their preferences in the Electoral College. Each state awards its electoral votes based on a majority of the popular vote in that state; Maine and Nebraska may split their electoral votes proportionally.

In addition to the popular vote, the Electoral College is the cornerstone of the system that is responsible for electing the president. It consists of representatives determined by the votes of each state. Since it is elected based on population, states with higher populations have more representatives. A candidate must receive a half-majority of the Electoral College to be elected president.

Electors cast their votes not during the election, but within a month following the election. For this reason, the official status of the president is not finalized on Election Day. The most recent example of this is the official appointment of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris in December, after they won the US General Election on November 3, 2020. However, the president does not take office until the oath of office in January. This means that the president will take office within two months of Election Day.

If we examine it on a state basis, the candidate who wins in a state gets all the delegates in the state. In this winner-take-all system, a candidate who wins with 51% gets all the delegates and the other candidate does not get any delegates even if they get 49%.^[ii] This is how Donald Trump, who was behind in the popular vote in the 2016 elections, won the election with delegates she received from contested states.

"One of the biggest questions about American elections is how citizens vote. In addition to voting at traditional polling stations, there are many different methods of voting. Many states have developed alternative methods for citizens who cannot go to polling stations on election day or who want to vote outside of the election period. Citizens can send their votes by mail or vote early during periods allowed by their state. Early voting, which is preferred over voting at polling stations, is quite common among citizens. In particular, the posts of citizens who vote electronically via social media or by mail have been observed since October. In addition to those who question the reliability of these voting methods, there are also those who find them useful. Some citizens consider the right to vote in advance rather than on a single election day in terms of participation in the election and democracy.

"Swing States" or "Battleground States" are key issues in elections. These are states that are swinging between the Democratic and Republican parties and whose outcome is unpredictable. The president needs to win at least 270 of the 538-member Electoral College, so he needs to win additional votes in addition to the states he has already won. In 2024, these contested states are North Carolina, Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Wisconsin, Georgia and Pennsylvania.^[iii] Particularly, the Muslim immigrants living in North Carolina, due to their closeness to Israel, may vote for a third candidate who is less likely to win in order to avoid voting for either candidate, which is a potential risk for the Democratic Party that has already won the state. The fact that states with a significant majority in the number of caucuses are contested causes uncertainty in the election result. The uncertainty of the poll results and the fact that they are often based only on the general popular vote often lead to errors, as in the 2016 and 2020 elections. In the 2020 elections, Joe Biden won Georgia and Pennsylvania and secured his presidency with the caucus votes he obtained.

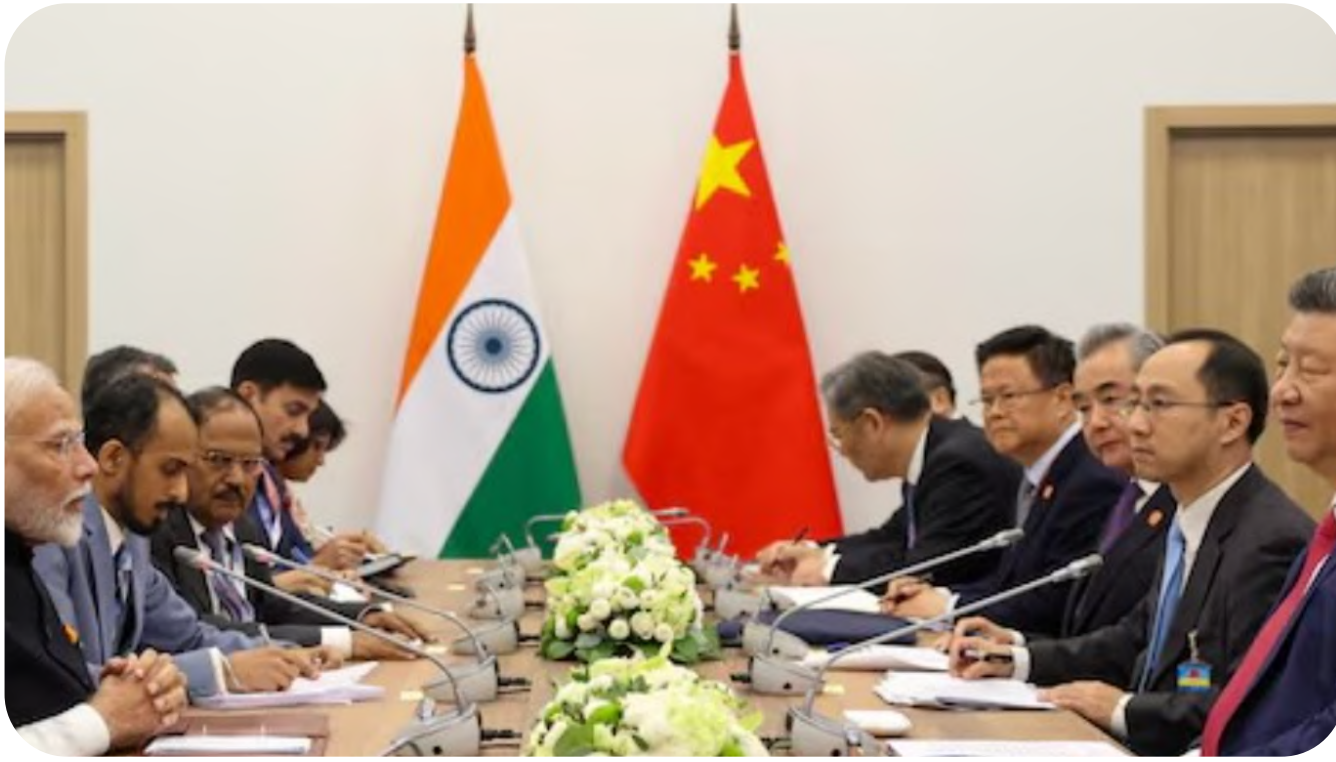
Because contested states are key for both presidential candidates, they are often the focus of candidates' late-term rallies and campaigns. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's assassination in Pennsylvania and his attempt to underestimate his opponents by driving a garbage truck to Wisconsin are notable examples.

The American presidential election system is notable for its complex structure and numerous variables. The Electoral College, popular vote, and the importance of contested states are elements that make this system difficult to understand. The efforts of candidates throughout their campaigns, from the primaries to the general election, play a critical role for both their own parties and the general public.

[i] "Summary of the U.S. presidential election process", U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan, <https://kz.usembassy.gov/summary-of-the-u-s-presidential-election-process/>, (Date of Access: 01.11.2024).

[ii] "ABD'de başkanlık seçim süreci nasıl ilerliyor?", Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/abd-baskanlik-secimleri-2024/abdde-baskanlik-secim-sureci-nasil-ilerliyor/3378953>, (Date of Access: 01.11.2024).

[iii] "New presidential election polls released in Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina", USA.Today, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/10/31/presidential-election-polls-pennsylvania-michigan-nc/75964694007/>, (Date of Access: 01.11.2024).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

“New Himalayas Border Agreement” between India and China



EKİN GÜLLÜOĞLU

The governments of India and China announced on October 25, 2024, that they had implemented an agreement to end tensions along the disputed border in the Himalayas. The dispute between the two countries came to the fore in 2020 with clashes along the border in the Ladakh region. Since then, tensions have remained high, but after four years, they have made significant progress and entered a period of détente.

To summarize the points of disagreement on the border, the following can be mentioned. The 3488 km long India-China border is divided into three sectors. These are the Western Sector across the State of Jammu and Kashmir; the Eastern Sector across Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh; and the Central-Central Sector across Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. In all three sectors, India has unresolved border disputes with China. While the disputes on the Eastern and Western borders have been a hot topic, the disputes in the central sector are not well known.

The border dispute in the eastern sector is related to China's non-recognition of the McMahon Line. The line was drawn by the British-controlled Indian Government in 1914 in an agreement with the Tibetan Government. China does not recognize this agreement. Because it claims that Tibet has no sovereignty to sign such an agreement. China considers the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, now controlled by India, as part of Southern Tibet and rejects the McMahon Line.

In the West, the border dispute concerns the regions of Ladakh, Aksai Chin, and Demochek in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the 1962 war, China has retained control of Aksai Chin and Demochek. Pakistan has also ceded some of its border territory to China.

The central sector refers to the territories controlled by India and claimed by China. These areas are Chumar, Kaurik, Shipki La, Nelang, and Laptha in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. China claims that these areas are part of Tibet.

Claims to sovereignty over high-altitude areas such as the Tibetan Plateau and the Ladakh region have long been a source of occasional tension in the South Asian region. These disputes have sometimes led to clashes and large-scale military build-ups. Both India and China maintain troops along a 2,100-mile-long de facto border known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is not clearly defined and has remained unclear since the 1962 war between the two countries. [i].

Following the Pangong Lake clash in April 2020, as India's Army Chief General MM Naravane put it, “temporary and short-lived clashes” [ii] were considered a normal process between the countries. However, the deadly border clash in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh in the same year brought this process to an unprecedented level of tension. For the first time in more than four decades, there were known casualties.

At the 2023 BRICS summit in Johannesburg, Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi agreed to “intensify efforts” to reduce the disputed border tension. Accordingly, the 31st round of border talks was held in August by Chinese and Indian negotiators, but with both sides continuing to patrol the area and the buffer zone remaining in place, no definitive conclusion has been reached. [iii]. In addition, the new border agreement, with its more precise judgments and scope, will affect both the regional and global balances between the two countries.

With the new border agreement, is planned to reduce the number of troops in the region, take withdrawal steps, remove structures such as huts and tents, take back vehicles, and maintain the existing border lines in the region. A source in the Indian government announced that the troops facing each other at two points on the border in the Ladakh region of the Western Himalayas have started to withdraw and the tension has ended.

It has also been reported that troops from both sides have begun to withdraw from Depsang and Demchok, the last points of confrontation. [iv]. This process is expected to be completed by the end of the month. The agreement could ease tensions between India and China by maintaining peace in the Himalayas region. It could also contribute to the overall stability of South Asia.

India and China are among the world's largest economies. The easing of border issues could create an opportunity for improved economic relations between the two countries. Platforms such as QUAD, comprising the United States, Japan, Australia, and India, are stepping up efforts to balance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. India's approach to such alliances also depends on its relations with China. The easing of tensions on the border may help India to adopt a more cautious stance in possible new alliances with the West.

[i]. “India and China have struck a deal that could ease border tensions ahead of expected leader meeting”, CNN World, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/22/asia/india-china-border-agreement-intl-hnk/index.html>, (Accessed: 26.10.2024).

[ii]. “A border dispute between India and China is getting more serious”, The Economist, <https://lnq.com/xBxv>, (Accessed: 26.10.2024).

[iii]. Ibid.

[iv]. “India, China begin implementing new border pact, ending Himalayan face-off”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/india-china-start-pulling-back-troops-border-face-off-points-source-says-2024-10-25/>, (Accessed: 26.10.2024).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

South Korea's Perspective on the Russia-Ukraine War



Berra KIZILYAZI

On Tuesday, October 29, 2024, South Korean Vice Minister Kim Soo-kyung said that Russia's long-running war with Ukraine is not a distant conflict but a war that could "directly" affect national security.^[i]

Kim claimed that if Russia transfers advanced military technology, including intercontinental ballistic missile technology, to North Korea in exchange for Pyongyang's troop deployment, this could pose a serious threat to the security of the Korean Peninsula. The Deputy Minister stated that the government will prepare various response scenarios and options through close coordination within the South Korea-United States (US) alliance.^[ii]

The fact that the effects of the Russia-Ukraine War may spread to the Asia-Pacific or pose a threat is also linked to the attitude of the leaders within the framework of the changing political and economic policies of countries with globalization. While North Korea is alleged to be indirectly supporting Russia with various weapons, at the same time providing troops for the war in Ukraine has the potential to change the dynamics of the war.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol stated that North Korea's troop deployment in Russia poses a security threat to both his country and the world.^[iii] It can be said that the developing relations between Russia and North Korea have been mostly in the military field, especially since 2023. As North Korea provided Russia with artillery and ammunition, North Korea also benefited from Russia's technological support such as satellite development, missiles and fighter jets. Moreover, in the same year, Kim Jong-un visited fighter jet factories and naval bases during his visit to Russia. This means that security cooperation between the two countries has taken a step forward.

Considering the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement" signed between Russia and North Korea on June 18, 2024 during the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin, it could be said that Russia, which is trying to be isolated by the West and the US, provides the support it seeks from North Korea on the basis of this agreement.

The Pentagon reported that North Korea has sent nearly 10,000 troops to Russia "over the next few weeks" to train and fight in the war in Ukraine, a move that Western leaders say will exacerbate the nearly three-year war and shake relations in the region. Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh stated that some North Korean troops have approached Ukraine and are believed to be heading to the Kursk border region, where Russia is fighting to repel the Ukrainian offensive. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary General Mark Rutte confirmed Ukrainian intelligence reports that some North Korean military units were already in the Kursk region.^[1]

It can be concluded that North Korea's support for Russia, as opposed to Western actors' support for Ukraine during the war, could weaken the power of the US, which is the hegemonic power in the international arena, and have a significant impact on the transition to a multipolar world. It can also be argued that the US military aid to Ukraine served as a catalyst for Russia's search for allies. Besides, North Korea sees the hegemony of the United States as a threat on the way to world peace and sides with Russia.

Meanwhile, South Korea, an ally of the United States, which characterizes Russia as an "invader", has provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine, but no direct military assistance. North Korea's cooperation with Russia and its move to send troops both raise concerns about South Korea's security and play a critical role in the West's policies towards the Asia-Pacific, as they have the potential to shape the direction of the war.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Polish President Andrzej Duda condemned North Korea's sending troops to Russia for its war against Ukraine as a global security threat. Addressing a joint press conference with Duda, Yoon said that the two leaders held a summit and agreed to sign a new contract for the export of South Korea's K2 tanks to Poland by the end of the year. Yoon noted, "We agreed that North Korea's sending troops to Russia is a direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions, the UN Charter, and a provocation that threatens global security by going beyond the Korean Peninsula and Europe".^[2]

South Korea, which has also joined the Western sanctions against Russia, aims to increase Asia-Europe security cooperation by contacting Poland and mobilizing NATO and the EU in this regard. Seeking diplomatic support, South Korea is trying to limit and prevent North Korea in terms of external support.

Russia's need for manpower and North Korea's need for foreign currency meet each other. North Korea's military support to Russia has the potential to change the direction of the war. On the other hand, South Korea is deepening its security-centered policies in line with its close relations with Western actors.

While there is speculation that the war will potentially end after the US presidential elections, it can also be argued that the recent developments may trigger a world war on a larger scale rather than a war between Russia and Ukraine. In this case, it can be claimed that the hegemony of the United States and the policies of various organizations or institutions that constitute alternative power unions will be clarified with the US elections and that the foreign policy approach of the United States will be the determining factor.

To conclude, it seems inevitable that further escalation of tensions between North Korea, which supports Russia with the goal of pursuing a power struggle against the United States, and South Korea, which will pursue policies in accordance with regional security concerns regarding international law. A Russia-Ukraine war could seriously affect not only Europe but also the security of the Asia-Pacific.

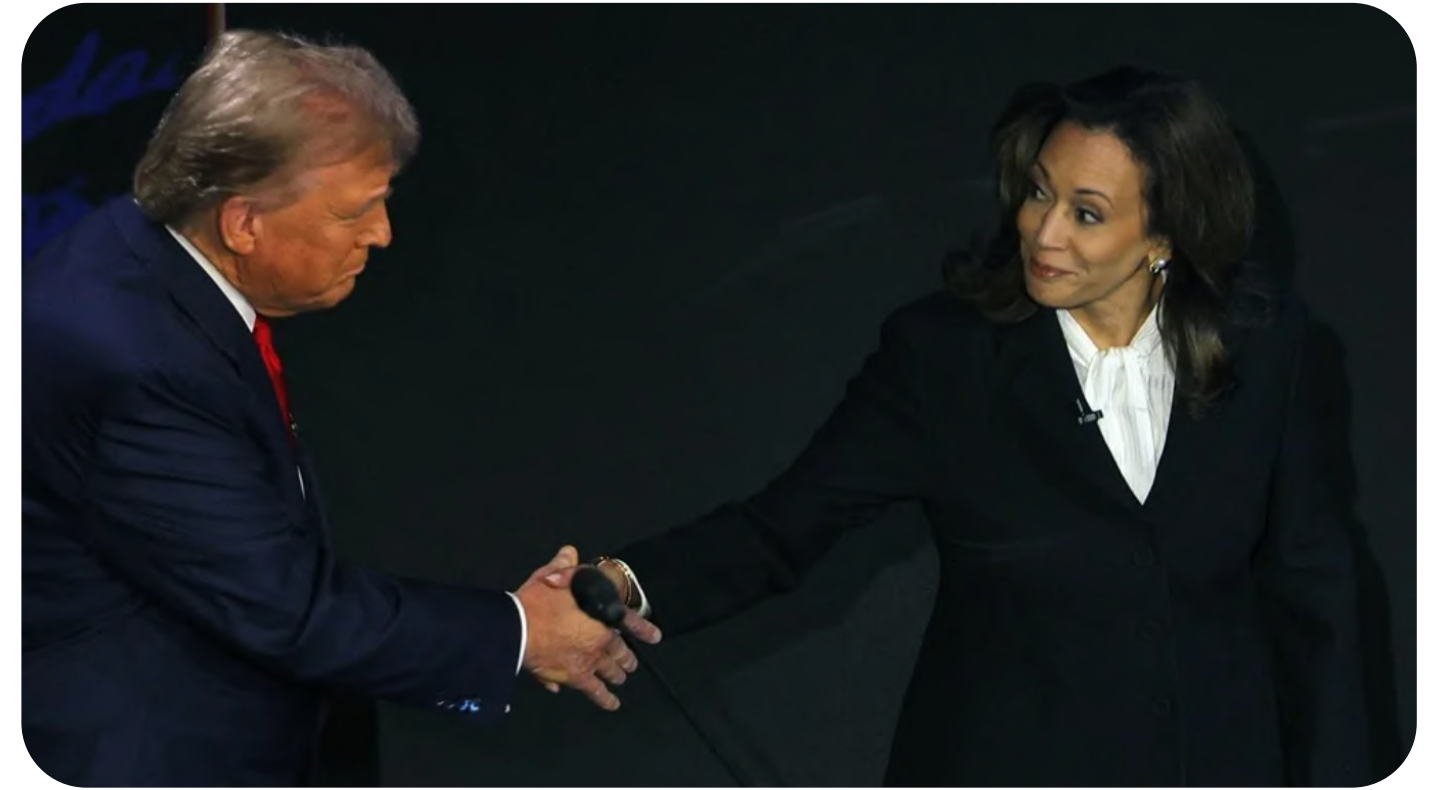
[1] "Russia to deploy 10,000 North Korean troops against Ukraine within 'weeks', Pentagon says", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/29/russia-north-korean-troops-ukraine-war>, (Date of Access: 29.10.2024).

[2] "South Korea's Yoon, Poland's Duda condemn N. Korea troop dispatch to Russia", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/south-koreas-yoon-polands-duda-condemn-nkorea-troop-dispatch-russia-2024-10-24/>, (Date of Access: 29.10.2024).

[i] "Russia-Ukraine war 'directly' affects South Korea's security: vice unification minister", Yonhap News Agency, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20241029007300315?section=national/politics>, (Date of Access: 29.10.2024).

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Can Celebrity Decisions Influence Elections in the U.S.?



Sena BİRİNCİ

The presidential elections in the United States (U.S.) scheduled for November 5, 2024, signify a critical phase with the competition between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. One of the determining factors in this race is considered to be the influence of celebrities on the political scene.

In the U.S., celebrities have the power to shape public perception due to their large follower bases. Particularly through channels like social media and television, endorsements made before elections significantly influence voter behavior. The campaign strategies of Harris and Trump this election cycle highlight the importance of gaining celebrity support, while the direct and indirect effects of this support on voters remain a topic of discussion.

The influence of celebrities in U.S. elections has become increasingly evident over time and is seen as an important factor that can sway voter decisions. Celebrity endorsements had a significant impact during Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008, effectively mobilizing young voters. Current Democratic candidate Kamala Harris is also utilizing this strategy in the 2024 elections to leverage the power of celebrities.

Trump's entry into politics has made this dynamic even more interesting. Trump has demonstrated that the support of celebrities is a two-way street, serving as both a political figure and a pop culture icon. Given celebrities' ability to reach voter demographics and raise awareness on specific issues, the impact of this support is undeniable. However, the 2016 election serves as an example that celebrity endorsements do not always guarantee success. Despite the strong support of celebrities like Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and many others for Hillary Clinton's campaign, the election results turned out unexpectedly. [1]

The U.S. presidential election is shaping up to be a close contest between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, with uncertain outcomes. In this uncertainty, celebrity endorsements are being used as an important tool to add emotional appeal to the campaigns. Harris has garnered support from many high-profile celebrities, including Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, and Oprah, while Trump seems to have a smaller number of supporters.

Celebrity endorsements generally increase public interest and motivate young voters. However, it can be argued that their effect on changing voter decisions is limited. The true impact of celebrities is more pronounced in fundraising and encouraging participation. While these endorsements may not directly alter voter behavior, they are recognized for bringing energy and awareness to campaigns. The impact on election outcomes remains a topic of debate as Election Day approaches.

In the 2024 elections, stars like Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson, Chris Evans, Taylor Swift, and Jennifer Lopez have openly expressed their support for Kamala Harris. These celebrities can quickly reach millions due to their large followings on social media.^[2] In contrast, Donald Trump appeals to a different audience by securing the support of figures such as Elon Musk, Mel Gibson, and Jon Voight. The difference in celebrity supporters between these two candidates is noteworthy in terms of their strategies to appeal to different segments of society and enhance their voting potential.

According to a survey, only 11% of Americans stated that celebrity political views influence them, while 7% reported voting for a politician because of a celebrity endorsement. These figures highlight the potential impact of celebrities on elections, yet they also indicate that a significant portion of the public bases their political decisions on other factors.^[3] The same survey revealed that 51% of respondents developed a negative perception of a celebrity due to their political views. Many Americans believe that celebrity involvement in politics harms American democracy, with this view being particularly prevalent among Democrats and individuals under 45. Additionally, 32% think that a celebrity's political participation can harm their careers, while only 10% believe it could be beneficial.^[4]

This data highlights the perception and impact of celebrity political participation on society. For instance, Taylor Swift's support for Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election has led some Americans to believe that the pop star's influence could change the election outcomes. However, most respondents in various surveys argue that celebrities should not involve themselves in politics, with Republicans particularly emphasizing this viewpoint.

A study from Harvard University shows that celebrities not only attract attention but also have the power to increase voter participation and influence polling results.^[1] Artists like Megan Thee Stallion and Beyoncé have performed at political rallies, while figures like Taylor Swift and Kylie Jenner have made a significant impact with calls for voter registration on social media. According to the research, young voters find motivation to vote thanks to the credibility of these celebrities. The presence of celebrities at political events can directly influence election outcomes by increasing voter mobilization and registration.

Thus, celebrity endorsements can be a strong aspect of election campaigns; however, voters' final choices ultimately depend on deeper factors such as policy promises, economic conditions, and the personal characteristics of the candidates. Kamala Harris and Republican campaigns aim to mobilize young and undecided voters by leveraging the influence of major artists and well-known figures.

Considering that younger generations will make up the majority of the voter base by 2028, the role of celebrities in such campaign strategies is becoming an important trend in American democracy. This could herald a new era that shapes election outcomes and promotes civic engagement. In summary, success in elections ultimately depends on the candidates' policies, campaign strategies, and economic conditions. Therefore, while celebrity support can provide a strategic advantage, deeper and more tangible factors still play a decisive role in voters' decision-making processes.

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[2]. Adrian Horton, "From JLo to Beyoncé: the double-edged sword of celebrity endorsements", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2024/nov/02/celebrity-endorsements-impact-harris-trump-election>, (Accessed on: 03.11.2024).

[3]. [Oana Dumitru](https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/50818-celebrity-caused-reconsider-a-political-position), "One in ten Americans say a celebrity has caused them to reconsider a political position", YouGov, <https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/50818-celebrity-caused-reconsider-a-political-position>, (Accessed on: 03.11, 2024).

[4]. Ibid.

[1]. Emily Chang, "Celebrities do have an impact on elections, Harvard study finds", ABD News, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/celebrities-impact-elections-harvard-study-finds/story?id=112806120>, (Accessed on:03.11, 2024).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Germany's European Union Journey and the Issue of Border Controls

Erdem Baran ALKAN

Germany is situated in a critical location for the European Union in Northern Europe. Having completed its unification in 1871, considered late compared to the other nations, Germany became a major power challenging the British Empire in Continental Europe thanks to the policies of the "Iron Chancellor" Otto von Bismarck. However, the balance of power policies Bismarck had tried to put forward was hindered after Wilhelm II became the Emperor in 1888. German Empire, especially as of 1890, when Bismarck was forced to resign, shook the power balance in Europe thanks to Wilhelm II's aggressive and expansionist foreign policy.

It was during Wilhelm II's reign that the German Empire became disputatious in Europe. According to many historians, the Emperor's aggressive foreign policy, the arms race against the British Empire, and the relentless defense of Austria-Hungary's interests in the Balkans elicited the motivations that dragged the Continent into the Great War, namely World War I.

After being defeated in World War I, the Treaty of Versailles was signed, and the Weimar Republic was established. However, the heavy burden of the agreement and the efforts of some sections of society to reestablish a war-wrecked national reputation led to the gradual resurgence of the radical movements. With National Socialists pioneering the movement reached its climax after the appointment of Hitler as the Chancellor by President Paul von Hindenburg in 1933. As of that the period of the Third Reich commenced in Germany, which is known as the Nazi Period as well. Hitler, apart from the aforementioned restoration, pursued a policy of heavy and rapid armament in order to create a living space for the Aryan race who are the descendants of Germans in Northern Europe, which led to the eventual advent of World War II.

Germany, being defeated in this war either, was divided into two West and East. After the experience process, France and England aimed at establishing a supranational organization within the scope of the "European Project" in order to keep the Germans under control who had been the foremost actor during the two world wars, and thus to prevent war from taking place again in the Continent. Following this, the European Coal and Steel Community was formed in 1952, followed by the establishment of the European Atomic Energy Community and European Economic Community six years later, which laid the foundations of the supranational organization, which we today know as the European Union.

At the time West Germany, within the context of European Integration, took part in the communities in question as a founding member. With the West and East Germany merged in 1990, Germany became a member of the European Union as a whole after the Treaty of Maastricht was ratified in 1993.

The fact that Continental Europe has not had a large-scale war after World War I can be seen as a relative success of the organization. Yet, the European Union's objective of seeking to forge a federal structure in the end seems blurred. Eventually, it is troublesome for structures with different political cultures to live together in harmony. The Empty-Chair Crisis in 1966 was one of the first fractures created by such hardships and brought about the dissolution threat to the organization. The veto system formed in the Luxembourg Compromise that put an end to the crisis still persists creating crises in the European Union.

The unilateral inauguration of the stricter border controls of Germany with France, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, and Luxembourg serves as a precedence to understand how far the organization is away from collectivity and achieving its federal structure goal.^[1] Being frustrated by the bloody migrant attacks and the rise of the far-right parties, the government imposed these implementations as the last remedy. Germany, exerting similar border policies against Austria, Switzerland, Czechia, and Poland, aims at deterring numerous migrants with such policies. According to the report from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Germany, almost 30.000 migrants were sent back from the Austrian border.

After the policies of Angela Merkel, the rate of far-right parties in the Parliament reached its highest since the prior period of World War II. Compelled to resolve the migrant issue to stop the rise of far-right parties, the government must impose border control policies that attract adverse reactions from the EU countries straining relations.

When it comes to the Schengen Area which was established in 1985 and integrated into the EU in 1999, which envisages the free movement of more than 400 million people, these border policies are causing controversies. The Premier of Poland Donald Tusk criticized Germany for de facto suspending the Schengen Treaty and cancelled his trip to Germany.^[2] Whereas the Ministry of Internal Affairs defined its policies as plausible as the policies align with the principles of the Treaty which clearly states that the countries may reintroduce border controls when seen necessary.^[3] In an additional statement, it was accentuated that the implementation covers the borders with the neighboring countries, and according to EU Dublin Rules, the asylum applications must be done in the first arrival country.^[4]

Relative peace was established in the Continent after the soothing of the historic tension between Germany and France by keeping Germany under control through their joint integration under the common roof of a supranational entity, the creation of economic cooperation as foreseen by the liberal economic theory. It can be said that the organization has realized a pack of its objectives so far even though there are plenty of people expressing their views about the European Union being only a puppet to keep a tight rein on Germany.

Yet, aside from the accumulation of the problems in the organization, despite the continuing legitimization of the border controls, this issue leads to the emergence of irredeemable fractures. After the high politicization of the migration issue, it is not perplexing to see governments drawing their policies aligned with the migration problem and exerting their propaganda accordingly. However, the viability and the plausibility of the expected result, in the end, seem vague and are still debated through implementations such as border controls. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned issues and the policies overlapping with the interests of the issues that are free of collectivity will continue to be mentioned in the years to come and procrastinate the main goal of forming a federal entity.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Hungary's Georgia Gambit Orbán's Strategy and the EU's Reaction



Ergün MAMEDOV

The South Caucasus attracts attention as an important geography where geopolitical balances are constantly changing and the influence of great powers is felt. In this context, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's recent visit to Georgia has added a new dimension to the long-standing political and economic tensions in the region. The debates following the parliamentary elections in Georgia have deepened with criticism from the West regarding the transparency and legitimacy of the elections. While European Union (EU) member states have directed serious criticism against the Georgian government, Orbán's support for the Georgian Dream government by defending the elections has reignited discussions questioning Hungary's political stance both within the EU and in the region.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's visit to Georgia stood out as an important diplomatic move that has the potential to create deeper cracks within the EU by providing open support to the Georgian Dream government, which was subjected to harsh criticism from the West after the election. The timing and content of Orbán's visit attracted attention as a strong support for the Georgian government despite criticism from the West. Hungary, a member of the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), not only weakened the EU's stance on common foreign policy and democratic reforms with this visit, but also created a serious tension in Georgia's relations with the West. Orbán's early victory congratulations to the Georgian Dream government revealed his anti-Western attitude and Hungary's strategic calculations in the South Caucasus. This support is considered as a step that may have complex long-term effects on Georgia's relationship with the West and change the balance in international relations.^[1]

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson's criticism of Orbán's visit to Georgia turned into a diplomatic tension when he summoned Hungary's Ambassador to Sweden. While Kristersson described Orbán's visit as "representing Russia", Hungary reacted strongly to these criticisms. Orbán's description of the elections in Georgia as "fair and democratic" and Hungary's disregard for Western criticism of the elections created discomfort among its other partners within the EU and NATO.

While Georgian opposition parties claimed that the elections were fraudulent, prosecutors announced that they were investigating these allegations. However, in his statements in Georgia, Orbán defended that the election process took place in a democratic manner and stood by the Georgian Dream government against the criticism of the West. The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the meeting in Hungary and emphasized the importance of continuing bilateral relations. This tension has reignited discussions questioning Hungary's position in the Western alliance and has once again revealed how Orbán's foreign policy is perceived by the international community.[2].

The European Commission's enlargement report has revealed the significant challenges Georgia faces in its relations with the EU. EU Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczyński stated that the Georgian government is insufficient to fulfill its commitments to democratic reforms and European criteria. It has been claimed that the lack of transparency in the electoral process and the failure to withdraw laws regarding the transparency of foreign influences have hindered Georgia's efforts to comply with EU standards. Herczyński underlined that democratic principles and the rule of law are the basic criteria in the EU enlargement process, and reminded that Georgia's progress directly depends on democratic values. Hungary, on the other hand, continues to remain insensitive to these criticisms in response to the Georgian Dream, with the support of Orbán and his government. This situation makes Hungary's position in Georgia controversial and isolated within the EU.[3].

Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó announced that they support projects of strategic importance in terms of energy security in the South Caucasus. Describing the Black Sea submarine cable project developed between Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Hungary as a "game changer", Szijjártó emphasized that this initiative is a key step that will ensure the transfer of green energy to Europe. Stating that the project has a great potential in terms of green transformation and energy diversification, Szijjártó stated that Hungary has deepened its cooperation with Georgia to increase energy security in the region. Drawing attention to Wizz Air's leading role in economic relations in Georgia, Szijjártó stated that the airline is the market leader in the civil aviation sector and this strengthens the economic ties between the two countries. Praising Georgia's economic growth, Szijjártó evaluated the low budget deficit and high growth rate as a "remarkable" development. [4].

In Hungary's South Caucasus policy, political support as well as economic cooperation attract attention. While Szijjártó described Brussels' decision to freeze Georgia's integration process as "political and shameful", he claimed that the EU wanted to see a different government in Georgia. Stating that Georgia has the potential to contribute to the EU, Szijjártó argued that Western countries' criticism of the elections harmed Georgia's development and integration process. The Investment Protection Agreement, signed in Budapest in July, provided a legal framework for Hungarian companies to invest in Georgia and aimed to further deepen economic relations between the two countries. Hungary continues to cooperate with Georgia in areas such as tourism, infrastructure and water management.[5].

Orbán's praise for Georgia's avoidance of becoming a "second Ukraine" at the press conference he held with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze in Tbilisi reflects Hungary's aim to maintain the geopolitical balance in the region. Orbán congratulated the Georgian people for choosing the path of peace and the EU, and stated that he supported Georgia's determination to avoid the devastating effects of war. Describing Georgia and Hungary as "fighters for freedom and sovereignty", Orbán said that Western discussions about the election results should not be taken seriously. While the Georgian opposition did not accept the election results and threatened to boycott the parliament, President Salome Zurbishvili described the elections as fraudulent and accused Russia of intervention. Despite this, Orbán's support for the Georgian Dream government emerges as a strategy to strengthen Hungary's position in Georgia.[6].

Hungary-Georgia relations show that the Budapest government led by Viktor Orbán is pursuing an independent strategy that contradicts the main EU policies and prioritizes its own national interests. Orbán's open support for the Georgian Dream government during his visit to Georgia reveals that Hungary takes a different position from the EU and pursues its own geopolitical and economic interests in the South Caucasus. This support came to the fore with Hungary's effort to strengthen its relations with Georgia, despite the criticism from the West, especially after the elections.

This policy of Hungary demonstrates an approach that prioritizes energy security and economic cooperation. Budapest, which aims to increase its influence in the region with strategic initiatives such as the Black Sea submarine cable project, sees Georgia as an important partner in energy transfer. The Orbán government continues to support Georgia as a strategic partner while being critical of the EU's emphasis on democratic reforms.

This attitude of Hungary shows that the EU is moving away from expansion policies and towards a more pragmatic and national interest-oriented line. While this agreement has the potential to maintain Brussels' democratic standards, it also maintains the geopolitical balances in the region. Hungary's independent action in the South Caucasus both deepens the cracks within the EU and reduces the violence in these regions of the West.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Protest in Bangladesh and UN Call



Ekin GÜLLÜOĞLU

Increasing political tensions in Bangladesh in recent months have inflicted deep social wounds on the country and attracted the attention of the international community. The violence during the large-scale protests that resulted in the fall of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from power has highlighted the inadequacies of protecting minority groups and protesters. During his visit to Bangladesh, Volker Türk, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for an investigation into the killings and human rights violations during the protests and called for a national truth and healing process in the country. This call is seen as an important step not only for the reparation of the suffering and loss of life but also for the future stability of Bangladesh.[1].

Bangladesh has experienced economic growth in recent years, but this growth is facing some challenges. Food prices and inflation rates have risen in the country. There are also financial challenges internationally, such as declining foreign exchange reserves and rising external debt. In particular, global economic uncertainties (e.g. energy crises and supply chain issues) affect the Bangladesh economy. Moreover, although the textile industry remains the country's largest export item, topics such as international competition and environmental sustainability can also affect the sector. Factors such as increased competition in the global market, demands for ecological sustainability, and rising labor costs may limit the future growth potential of this sector. In addition, factors such as the digitalization of international trade and automation may also negatively affect this sector.

Bangladesh's youth population offers great potential in terms of the labor force, but their access to education and employment opportunities is limited. Gaps in the education system can create mismatches in the labor market and increase unemployment rates. In addition, rapid population growth can increase the demand for social services, complicating the country's development. Bangladesh's health, education, infrastructure, and social security systems are still developing. While the poverty rate is declining, income inequality and class disparities remain a major challenge. Inequalities in health and education can lead to social unrest.

Bangladesh has experienced increasing political polarization and tension in recent years. The country's democratic institutions and the functioning of the rule of law pose great uncertainty in the long term. The weakening of key elements such as the rule of law, an independent judiciary and freedom of the press could undermine the country's confidence in democracy. Bangladesh is trying to balance between the regional powers of India and China. While relations with India can pose challenges in areas such as border issues, water resource sharing and trade, economic ties with China (especially the Belt and Road Initiative) offer opportunities for infrastructure projects in the country. However, these relations can at times lead to geopolitical tensions.

Bangladesh has become a country of increasing political tensions in recent years. During Sheikh Hasina's long rule, the crackdown on the opposition and allegations against her have created a great discontent among the people. This discontent manifested itself in massive protests in July and August, forcing Hasina to flee to India. Although the interim government led by Nobel Peace Prize winner and economist Muhammad Yunus took over and the country entered a new era, the violence and deaths during this process left deep scars on the society. In particular, the excessive use of force against protesters and the deaths of many people, including children, led to the reaction of human rights organizations and the United Nations.[2].

At the end of his visit to Bangladesh, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk emphasized the need to investigate human rights violations in the country. He called on the international community to take action to ensure justice for the victims of violence, while also emphasizing the importance of a truth and healing process for Bangladesh. Such a process would not only account for the events of the past, but also provide a basis for society to achieve peace and stability. Turk's call can be interpreted as a strong message to the current interim administration to initiate and support this process.

The violence and deaths during the protests have once again highlighted the fragility of Bangladesh's political structure. Minority groups in particular are among the most affected groups during such crises. Hindu, Buddhist and other religious minorities in the country have been targeted and left unprotected in different political crises since the past. At this juncture, Turk emphasized the importance of protecting minorities and called on the interim government and the international community to develop protection mechanisms for minorities. Ensuring the safety of minorities is essential not only for human rights but also for the long-term social peace of Bangladesh.

Such processes, which have been used in the past in countries such as South Africa and Chile, aim to enable societies to confront human rights violations in their history and ensure that similar events do not recur in the future. If Bangladesh embarks on a similar process, it will not only respond to the victims' quest for justice, but will also allow society as a whole to learn from these events. However, the success of such a process will depend on the commitment of the interim government and all political actors to support it.

Bangladesh's political future remains uncertain. The commitment of the interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, to restore democratic order and justice in the country is crucial. However, without pressure from the international community and the United Nations, it is unclear whether this process will proceed as intended. The situation in Bangladesh is being closely monitored by international observers and human rights organizations and continued international support is crucial to ensure political stability in the country.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The West-Georgia Crisis After the Elections



Ergün MAMEDOV

The 2024 parliamentary elections in Georgia have produced results that have had deep repercussions in both domestic and foreign policy, and have paved the way for important discussions about the country's future direction. The announcement of the election results showed that the ruling Georgian Dream Party (GDP) was strongly ahead, but this was met with harsh criticism from opposition parties. President Salome Zurbishvili's description of the elections as "completely fraudulent" and her call for people to join the protests has increased political tensions and deepened political polarization in the country. While international observers noted that the elections were generally peaceful, they also revealed the existence of some structural and systemic problems.

The preliminary results of the parliamentary elections announced by the Central Election Commission of Georgia showed that the GDP was ahead with 53.028 percent of the votes. This can be interpreted as a development that strengthens the GDP's position and strengthens its potential to maintain its power. On the other hand, according to the current data, where more than 70 percent of the votes have been counted, it is striking that the opposition is scattered across different blocs. The Alliance to Save Georgia coalition, which includes groups such as the United National Movement and Strategy Agmashenebeli, only received 9.852 percent of the votes. The For Georgia Party led by Giorgi Gakharia received 8.224 percent of the votes, the Coalition for Change 11.185 percent of the votes and Strong Georgia 9.011 percent of the votes, showing that the opposition is fragmented and unable to consolidate broad popular support. These results point to the weakness of the opposition against the GDP due to its lack of unity.[1]

Zurbishvili's response expressed concerns that the election results could deeply affect Georgia's integration with the West, and made claims to that effect. Zurbishvili stated that the elections were "completely fraudulent," and underlined Russia's influence and efforts to distance Georgia from Europe through a "special operation." These statements reflect the serious polarization in Georgia's domestic political atmosphere and suggest that political tensions in the country could deepen further. The president's decision to join the protests with the opposition and call on the public to "defend your votes" marks a turning point between Georgia's pro-Western and Russian-influenced political orientations. This suggests that the mass demonstrations in Tbilisi could lead to new political turmoil in the South Caucasus.[2]

The reactions of international observers to the election process are also noteworthy. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament representatives stated that the elections were "largely peaceful" and noted that this demonstrated the existence of an adequate legal framework for democratic elections. Despite the effectiveness of the organization of the elections, it was emphasized that recent changes to the candidate selection and decision-making processes had damaged the public perception of the impartiality of the election administration.

Observers stated that although the election day was generally orderly, reports of violations of the secrecy of the vote and pressure on voters indicated a tense atmosphere. It was noted that despite the competitive nature of the campaigns, the language and visuals used were highly polarizing, further adding to the political tension.[3]

Following the elections, different attitudes were also displayed on the EU front. While Brussels closely monitored the balancing policy pursued by the GRP, the failure of radical pro-Western candidates was viewed negatively by many EU members. However, Hungary, as the only member state to support Georgia, displayed a different attitude and supported the country's policies that prioritized its national interests. This situation was an indication that Georgia had to maintain a balanced and pragmatic approach in its relations with the West. The EU's demands for reform and its insistence on adherence to democratic values indicate that external pressure on Georgia will continue for some time. The European Commission's enlargement report, in particular, pointed to the difficulties Georgia faced on its path to EU integration, stressing the need to withdraw controversial bills and implement democratic reforms. The European Commission's criticism of the GDP's enactment of laws similar to Russia's influence and its practices restricting freedom of expression was an indication that the West's pressure on Georgia will continue. Paweł Herczyński noted that Georgia's future European perspective is based on its leaders' commitment to democratic values and the rule of law, and stressed that the EU accession process will proceed on the basis of merit. In particular, the lack of transparency in the electoral process and the concerns of international observers have highlighted the challenges Georgia faces on its path to EU integration.[4]

The Georgian economy has followed a positive course during the GDP government. Growth was recorded at 8.3 percent in September and 9.8 percent in the January-September period. This growth was supported by sectors such as construction, finance, insurance, transportation and trade. Despite the decline in the energy sector, international financial institutions have increased Georgia's economic growth expectations. The IMF predicts growth of 7.6 percent in 2024 and 6 percent in 2025. It is understood that the GDP's economic policy will focus on continuing growth while taking into account national interests. During this period, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Development Bank have also made positive revisions emphasizing the potential of the Georgian economy.[5]

Georgia's current political atmosphere and election results show that the country is determined to continue its policy of balance. The GRP's preservation of power indicates Georgia's efforts to both maintain its relations with the West and to continue its geopolitically based policy of balance. Zurabishvili's and the opposition's reactions in particular confirm the existence of a pro-EU and anti-Russian stance within society, and in this context, show that the desire for European integration continues among the people. However, despite the pressure from the West, the GRP will pursue a more autonomous foreign policy by taking into account national interests. Policies focused on energy, trade and economic growth in particular show that Georgia will continue its efforts to limit its dependence on Europe with its independent economic development strategy. This scenario predicts that Georgia will pursue a balanced policy based on its will to make independent decisions, even if it experiences disagreements at certain points in its relations with the EU.

On the other hand, the EU may have to adopt a more flexible stance in order to prevent Georgia from falling completely under Russian influence. While the election results and the public's participation in the protests demonstrate Georgia's deep commitment to its relations with Europe, the EU may need to partially revise its demands for democratic reform and human rights and find common ground. In order not to lose Georgia completely and to maintain a strategic partnership in the Caucasus, the EU may adopt a more flexible approach and be more sensitive to Georgia's internal balances in the future. In this case, the EU may reduce its pressure on Georgia's balancing policies and seek to preserve opportunities for cooperation. In this way, it may adopt a diplomatic approach based on mutual understanding in order to ensure that Georgia takes more positive steps in its EU integration process in the long term.

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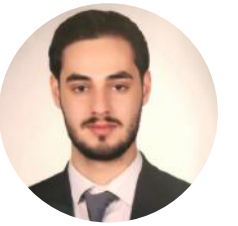
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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Collapse of Nations: Energy Poverty and Its Impact on Global Policies



Ömer Faruk PEKGÖZ

As worldwide 770 million people are still deprived of access to electricity and 2.6 billion people meet their fundamental life necessities like cooking with unhealthy and inefficient fuels.[1]. Although energy poverty is concentrated in low-income countries generally, this problem is observed to be common in developing countries, either. This situation is dependent on various reasons, such as low infrastructure investments, insufficient resources, geopolitical problems and high energy prices.[2].

While energy poverty restricts economic growth and social development, causes a major inequality in education, health and overall quality of life. For instance households which are lack of electricity survive with limited lighting sources in education of their children while hospitals cannot provide services in a sustainable way because they cannot use their necessary medical devices.[3]. This situation undermines economic equality of opportunity and social stability.

According to the studies conducted, when the total energy spendings of a household exceeds 25 percent of its monthly or yearly budget, can be described as 'energy poor'. In terms of the electricity sector we can have the same description for households which consume less electricity than 100 kWh monthly-1200 kWh yearly or allocate more than 10 percent of the total budget for electricity expenses. In accordance with the boundaries of status of being 'water poor', the poverty line is 3 percent in developed countries, while the evaluation criterion for developing and poor countries is that more than 5-6% of the total budget is allocated for water.

A specific study on natural gas hasn't been conducted. But taking the total poverty evaluation into account can mean that a household must allocate more than 10% of its disposable income for natural gas consumption to be classified as 'natural gas poor.' These percentiles can range in accordance with economies and level of development of countries.[4]

Energy poverty which challenges achieving the goals of sustainable development and climate change having potential to transform into a global crisis in the future. Especially, dependency on fossil fuel in regions with energy poverty accelerates climate change increasing carbon emissions. According to the IEA's 2022 report, developing countries turn towards fossil fuels which are cheap but dangerous for environment because they cannot access sufficient renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions. That causes intensification in global warming and triggers environmental crises.

At the same time, energy poverty can result in social and economic instability and so, migration crises. People may have to migrate for better living conditions in places where access to energy is limited or doesn't exist at all. This kind of internal migrations can be examined common in regions such as Africa and South Asia, particularly, in where access to energy is limited. [5] This condition can cause social tensions in large cities facing resource scarcity and increase economic inequalities between countries.

In terms of health, dangers of energy poverty is significant, too. In households which cannot access to clean cooking, in particular, 3.8 million people lost their lives due to indoor air pollution.[6] This number imposes a heavy burden on healthcare systems and it is expected that these causalities will increase as energy poverty continues.

Developed countries have an important role in decrease of energy poverty. Countries of European Union are working to decrease energy poverty with its energy subventions for low-income households, projects on energy efficiency and investments for renewable energy. To the data of Eurostat, (Eurostat, 2021), households in European Union which hasn't access to energy or face with energy poverty due to high energy costs are around 7 percent. EU adopts directives for energy efficiency and policies aimed at increasing energy consumption to reduce this ratio.

Additionally, USA is also taking various precautions against energy poverty. It conducts projects in favour of increasing the energy efficiency especially in low-income regions and invested approximately 6 billion dollars for energy efficiency programmes in 2020 (EIA, 2021). These investments aim low-income households to increase their access to energy by reducing energy costs.

Nevertheless, approach of developed countries to energy poverty is not sufficient to achieve sustainable development goals. The regions where are challenged by deeper energy poverty, in specific, need more international aid. International institutions like World Bank and United Nations ensure financial support to developing countries via cooperating on this subject. According to the 2021 report of World Bank, the need to increase of renewable energy financing and resources to reduce energy poverty for low-income countries are emphasized.

Conducted academic studies and international reports highlight how a serious problem the energy poverty is in a global scale. To the 2021 report of IEA, when the number of people which has not an access to the energy in 2019 was 770 million, this number is estimated will increase after COVID-19 pandemic even further. For Sustainable Development Goals of United Nations, the access of overall world population to modern energy services until 2030 is aimed, but it seems hard to reach this target considering the current rate of progress (UN, 2022).

Also, examining the data of 2022 presented by World Bank we can say that more than 40% of the population in Africa still lacks access to electricity and this situation forms a great obstacle against economic development of the continent. Development of energy infrastructure and investment for renewable energy resources needs to be done. World Bank notifies that a minimum investment of 30 billion dollars yearly has to be done to decrease the energy poverty.

Energy poverty causes dependency of countries which lack of energy infrastructure on energy suppliers in both economic and political senses. For that reason, influence of countries which are already developed in global balance of power will increase and countries which have limited access to energy will be remained vulnerable. For example, to the data ensured by International Energy Agency,[7] ratio of access to energy in the Sub-Saharan Africa region is under the 50 percent. This situation restricts the growth potential of region and increases its dependency on foreign aids. So, access to energy becomes one of the essential factors to determine countries' economic dependencies. China's Belt and Road Initiative empowers the country's influence ensuring to invest huge amounts on energy infrastructure projects in energy poor countries of Asia and Africa.

Energy poverty is making it difficult for countries to combat climate change, leading to the preference for low-cost fossil fuels, which increases global carbon emissions. Countries without or with limited access to energy are forced to use cheap but environmentally harmful fossil fuels, contributing to the intensification of global warming. These countries are struggling to meet their international commitments, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, because they require financial and technical support for this transition.[8]

Poverty impacts the social structure of developed countries by causing social unrest and migration. People in regions with no or limited access to energy are migrating in search of better living conditions. According to a report by the International Organization for Migration, migration caused by energy poverty has rapidly increased in recent years. Therefore, migration policies in many countries, particularly in Europe, need to be restructured.[9]

A portion of the migration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe originates from regions facing energy access issues. This leads to social problems such as anti-immigrant sentiment in developed countries, creating pressures in domestic politics.

Consequently, energy poverty creates numerous issues in global politics, including economic dependency, security threats, social instability, climate change, and migration, all of which are factors that threaten global peace and security. To mitigate the impact of energy poverty on global politics, developed countries must provide the necessary financial and technological support for the transition to renewable energy in developing countries. Addressing the issue of energy poverty will promote peace, stability, and sustainable development worldwide.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

European Union's Trump Concerns



Prof. Dr. Murat ERCAN

The European Union (EU) is concerned about the possibility of Trump returning to presidency, halting aid to Ukraine and a new "trade war." Because of this possible scenario, the EU has already begun making preparations.

Trump's return to the presidency after winning the elections on November 5, 2024 has raised various security and foreign policy concerns for the EU. This concern of the EU stems from the problems experienced during Trump's presidency in 2017-2021. Because during the first term of his presidency, Trump described the EU as a "hellhole" and described it as "anti-US" and especially "a commercial enemy". In this context, Trump has halted negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement (TTIP), which envisages the removal of trade barriers between the US and the EU across economic sectors. In addition, during his first term as president, Trump has questioned NATO's existence by announcing that he would encourage Russia to attack member states that owe money to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and fail to pay. In light of these facts, Trump's victory in the presidential election held on November 5, 2024, has increased concerns in EU countries.

In his second election campaign, Trump criticized EU countries for not fulfilling their financial responsibilities within NATO and stated that he could withdraw the US from NATO, which he described as "no longer functional" when he was re-elected as president. Trump also described Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "the greatest salesman in history" and claimed that he would end the Russia-Ukraine War in a short time. These statements indicate that if Trump is elected, he could end the billions of dollars of military support the US provides to Ukraine.

Trump's statements and the EU's concerns have forced the Union to take certain measures. Trump's past criticism of the financial and military aid provided by the US to Ukraine and his questioning of the long-term benefits of this support in terms of the interests of the American people pose significant risks to the sustainability of the EU's support for Ukraine and the security of the European continent. As is known, the US has been one of the largest providers of military and financial support to Ukraine. If the aid is cut, the EU will need to increase its support for Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War, the EU and its member states have provided military aid to Ukraine worth 33 billion euros. With the US withdrawing its support from Ukraine under Trump, this figure is expected to increase even more. However, there is no full harmony among EU countries regarding burden sharing in this regard. While some countries are unwilling to provide more aid and find limited aid sufficient, others do not want to increase aid and take a greater risk. For example, Hungary is the country with the most open reservations about arms aid and sanctions to Ukraine. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has distanced himself from the EU's economic sanctions against Russia and military support to Ukraine. Hungary has abstained from decisions about support due to its desire to maintain energy ties with Russia and economic concerns.

Bulgaria, which had a reserved approach to providing military support at the beginning of the war, initially hesitated to support Ukraine due to political internal conflicts and its energy ties with Russia. However, it has recently agreed to provide limited support. Austria, which is not a NATO member but maintains a policy of neutrality within the EU, has refrained from providing arms support to Ukraine, instead providing limited humanitarian aid and diplomatic support. Austria is inclined to provide indirect support to the war due to its trade relations with Russia and its commitment to neutrality. In particular, the limitations in the EU's defense budgets and the economic imbalances among some members make it difficult for Europe to fully provide aid.

Trump's questioning of NATO's commitment and his past rhetoric about reducing the US's role in the European security architecture have the potential to create a serious security gap for Europe. NATO's goal of establishing a deterrent force against Russia on its eastern flank will be difficult without US support. In this case, the EU may have to take more serious steps to strengthen its own defense capabilities, and the concept of "strategic autonomy" may come back to the agenda. However, there are also different views on this issue among EU countries. Trump's tendency to establish closer relations with Russia is causing concern in Europe. Trump has expressed his relations with Putin in positive terms in the past and expressed his desire to establish a more pragmatic dialogue with Russia. This situation makes it difficult for the EU to take a common stance against Russia and may cause European countries to reshape their own security policies. Russia's strengthened position against a Ukraine that has lost the support of the US under Trump could present the EU with a challenging situation in terms of both security and diplomacy.

Trump's scenario of cutting aid to Ukraine could lead to divisions within the EU. Eastern European countries in particular may advocate a tougher stance against the "Russian threat," while Western European countries may tend to seek diplomatic solutions. This will complicate efforts to ensure policy coherence within the EU and test the union's internal solidarity. In this scenario, the EU will be forced to develop a common strategy on Ukraine, preventing divisions. Furthermore, the reshaping of relations with Russia will directly affect the EU's energy policies and energy security. If relations with Russia ease under Trump's presidency, some European countries may reconsider re-engaging with Russia on energy. This could further highlight the different approaches to energy independence and security within the EU. At the same time, cutting off US aid to Ukraine could force Europe to increase its own defense spending, which could put additional pressure on European economies.

As a result, the EU will have to reconsider its strategy of supporting Ukraine during Trump's new presidency. The EU needs to take on a greater role in supporting Ukraine and strengthen its own security architecture. In addition, possible changes in US policy towards Ukraine will increase the difficulties of strategic alignment within the EU and make regional differences more apparent. In this process, the EU will need to develop an effective diplomatic strategy that will both maintain internal solidarity and provide balance between Russia and Ukraine.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Possible Effects of a Second Trump Term on Europe



Sena BİRİNCİ

Donald Trump's return to the presidency has sparked widespread reactions in Europe and raised significant questions about the future of the continent. His "America First" policy during his previous term created deep cracks in transatlantic relations and led the European Union (EU) to reassess its own security and economic strategies. In this context, Trump's second term could have a significant impact on Europe, requiring the continent to develop new approaches across various areas, from security and trade to environmental policies and diplomacy.

Trump's new term is seen as a turning point for the EU, holding both threats and opportunities. Existing issues in Europe, such as weak leadership, slow economic growth, and the growing migrant crisis, have intensified a sense of directionlessness and uncertainty across the continent. Particularly the weak ties between Germany and France have made it difficult for the EU to set common goals. While Trump's re-election poses serious security and trade threats to Europe, it is also believed that such external pressure could lead to further steps toward greater integration within Europe. Trump's risk of withdrawing from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could force Europe to develop common policies on security and defense, potentially accelerating the EU's pursuit of strategic autonomy.

This scenario could trigger the changes needed to overcome Europe's current economic and political stagnation. For example, a potential trade war with the United States under Trump's presidency could push the EU to develop more common funding mechanisms. The idea of a joint defense budget, supported by Macron and Germany but yet to be implemented, would likely be taken more seriously in the face of security threats posed by Trump. Trump's efforts to forge bilateral relationships with European countries and the possibility of withdrawing from NATO could jeopardize the EU's integration process. In this context, Trump's presidency may present an opportunity for the EU to strengthen in the face of challenges, but it also carries the risk of fragmentation across the continent.

Donald Trump's victory in the presidential election has brought significant changes to US-EU relations, spanning a wide range of issues from security and Ukraine aid to trade and NATO. Trump has previously criticized the EU and threatened to disrupt existing relations, which has raised concerns in Europe, particularly regarding support for Ukraine. With Trump's win, there is speculation that the US may reduce its military aid to Ukraine or shift the burden onto Europe.^[1] It is also anticipated that Trump may increase pressure on NATO regarding burden-sharing, demanding that EU countries take on greater responsibility for their own security and defense. Additionally, Trump's likely pursuit of protectionist policies in foreign trade and potential increases in import tariffs on the EU could create new tensions in transatlantic trade relations. This situation might not only lead to fresh strains but could also accelerate Europe's efforts to protect its internal market and pursue greater strategic autonomy.^[2]

As a result, the U.S. elections held on November 5, 2024, have emerged as a critical turning point that will deeply impact relations between the United States and the European Union. Should Donald Trump regain the presidency, Europe's security strategies, trade relations, and political balance could be reshaped. Trump's criticism of NATO and his demand for Europe to increase its defense spending have brought the risk of the U.S. withdrawing from European security into focus. This trend, which began in 2016, has led to an increase in NATO member states meeting the 2% defense spending target, with the number rising to 23 by 2024, thereby increasing Europe's responsibility for its own security.^[3] The possibility of Trump reducing U.S. support for Ukraine may compel Europe to reassess its security position. Additionally, the potential exclusion of the EU from any peace talks between Ukraine and Russia could deepen security concerns across the continent.

Under Trump's "America First" approach, his promised harsh sanctions against China have the potential to drag the EU into this trade war.^[4] While Trump has pledged to increase import tariffs on China, he may expect the EU to adopt a similar stance. On the other hand, his promise to repeal the Inflation Reduction Act was viewed positively in the EU.^[5] However, Trump's protectionist trade policies and his tendency to withdraw from environmental agreements could lead to commercial and environmental mismatches with the EU. Additionally, Trump's right-wing populist ideology has the potential to empower far-right parties in Europe. His close relationships with right-wing leaders, such as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, could contribute to the acceleration of far-right movements across Europe. Trump's close ties with leaders like Orbán, Meloni, and Fico could potentially weaken the EU's influence in negotiations and provide far-right movements with a greater voice on the political stage.

If Trump returns to the presidency, the EU will have to reposition itself across various areas, from NATO and trade to security and ideological domains. The outcome of the U.S. election will deeply impact not only Europe's security strategies but also its political climate. This situation underscores the need for the continent to strengthen its own defense policies and develop more resilient strategies against the rise of the far-right. Trade wars, disputes within NATO, and differences in climate policies could constitute the key dimensions of the impact of Trump's administration on Europe. In this context, it is likely that the EU will accelerate its efforts toward strategic autonomy and take steps to reduce its dependence on U.S. support. Trump's victory in this election could mark a critical turning point for Europe, offering an opportunity to strengthen its internal unity and position itself as a more powerful actor on the global stage.

[1] Mujtaba Rahman, "Europe should hope for a Trump victory", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-hope-donald-trump-victory-nato-defense-security-debt/>, (Accessed: 06.11.2024).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Amandine Hess, "Why would a US election win for Trump cause concern in Europe?", Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/11/05/why-would-a-us-election-win-for-trump-cause-concern-in-europe>, (Accessed:06.11.2024).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Joan Villoslada, "What would Donald Trump's victory mean for the EU?", Do Better by esade, <https://dobetter.esade.edu/en/donald-trump-victory-EU>, (Accessed: 06.11.2024).

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The Future of the EU in the Process of Building a New World Order



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

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