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Central Asia in European Energy Security



03

Towards the “Geopolitical
Competition”: Central Asia-China
Foreign Ministers Meeting

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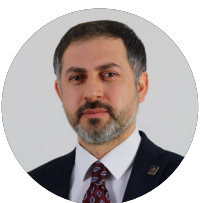


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Towards the “Geopolitical Competition”: Central Asia-China Foreign Ministers Meeting

On June 7, 2022, the third “Central Asia-China” Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Nur-Sultan under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan. Kazakh Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tleuberdı, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Kyrgyzstan Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubaev, Uzbekistan

Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov, Turkmenistan Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov and Tajikistan Transport Minister Azim Ibrahim attended the meeting. The parties agreed to hold the next “Central Asia-China” Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in China.



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These meetings, which were held for the first time in 2020 with the proposal of China, are developing as a part of the geopolitical struggle of Russia and the USA for the region. The main purpose of China is to make Central Asia a bridge between China and Europe and to set a barrier to the USA, which wants to prevent this.

At the meeting on June 8, 2022, the party countries confirmed some of the decisions taken in the meetings held in 2020 and 2021 and added new ones.

“Central Asia–China” Meeting in 2020

At the first “Central Asia–China” Foreign Ministers Meeting held in the form of a video conference on July 17, 2020, the parties declared the following after exchanging views on cooperation in the fight against the pandemic, economic recovery, protection of regional security and strengthening of international cooperation:

The Parties will defend the development, stability and prosperity of China and the Central Asian states and their common interests. The parties appreciate the strategic partnership established between China and the five states of Central Asia and are determined to further develop it in the interests of preserving peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

The Parties cooperate efficiently between China and Central Asian states in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Parties propose to harmonize the ‘Belt and Road Project’ with the national development strategies of the Central Asian countries. It will create partnerships that will encourage this and deepen multifaceted cooperation. It will jointly ensure the successful implementation of major joint projects that will ensure investment efficiency and economic development.

China is ready to build an “express corridor” and a “green corridor” for the smooth movement of business, technical personnel and their uninterrupted transportation with the Central Asian states.

States will support the creation of a comprehensive and multifunctional transport system. It will promote the development of integrated and multifaceted communications, including road and rail lines. It will contribute to the strengthening of a strategic and economic transport and transit potential of Central Asia. It will aim to ensure the creation of the corridor between Europe and Asia.

China is ready to support its Central Asian partners in increasing agricultural productivity and the added value of products. It welcomes and supports the expansion of the supply of high quality, environmentally friendly and organic agricultural prod-

ucts from Central Asian countries to the Chinese market.

The Parties condemn all manifestations of terrorism, extremism and separatism. It once again states that there is a serious threat to security and stability in the region arising from “three evil forces”. It envisages deepening joint, comprehensive cooperation in the field of security.

The Parties strongly support the peace process in Afghanistan and are ready to play a constructive role in promoting inter-Afghan dialogue, establishing peace and stability in this country, restoring the national economy and further incorporating Afghanistan into regional integration processes.

The parties stress that China and the Central Asian states have overlapping or close positions on a number of current issues on the international and regional agenda.

The parties decided to establish a meeting format between the Foreign Ministers of “Central Asia–China” to promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the new conditions and to jointly confront global challenges in defense of common interests.

“Central Asia–China” Meeting in 2021

The second meeting was held in Xi’an on May 12, 2021, on the initiative of China. Issues such as transport, trade, regional security and cooperation against common threats among the participating states were discussed.

It was agreed on issues such as strengthening “twin town” relations between the parties, increasing transportation and connections, revealing the full potential of Central Asian countries in transit transportation, creating a “green corridor” to facilitate the cross-border movement of goods, increasing the capacity of checkpoints, supporting international rail transportation and ensuring the stability of regional production and supply chains.

The documents signed at the end of the meeting are as follows:

- Memorandum on Establishing the Format of the “Central Asia–China” Foreign Ministers Meeting;
- Joint Statement on Cooperation in Combating Covid-19;
- Joint Statement on Afghanistan;
- Joint Statement on Deepening Interregional Cooperation.[1]

2022 Meeting and Approaches of the Countries

At the meeting held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan assumed the term chairmanship and hosted by Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tleuberdi.

Making a statement after the meeting, Yi explained that the most important result of the meeting was the decision to hold

the meeting of heads of state in the format of the China–Central Asia Summit.

Explaining that “we have new agreements”, Wang Yi added that China plans to continue and expand cooperation with Central Asian countries within the framework of the Belt and Road Project, to evaluate the possibility of creating an appropriate financial mechanism, and to further expand the use of national currencies. The Chinese Minister noted that the countries aim to deepen cooperation, ensure the safe and stable functioning of the China–Europe route, promote the simplification of customs procedures, optimize green corridors for cargo transportation, accelerate the restoration of flights, and ensure the integrity and continuity of production chains.

According to the Chinese Minister, the parties will continue to joint forces in the fight against the epidemic, intensify cooperation in vaccine and drug development, establish the “China–Central Asian Health Industry Association” and open traditional medicine centers in Central Asia. The Chinese Foreign Minister also added that they will deepen cooperation in the fields of education, science, technology, art, sport and tourism, jointly respond to climate change, and share experiences and technologies for environmental protection.

According to Wang Yi’s statement, four final documents were generally adopted at the meeting:

- Joint Statement of the China–Central Asian Foreign Ministers Summing up the Meeting and Reviewing Special Proposals;
- Roadmap for the Outcome of the China–Central Asian Heads of State Summit;
- Initiative to Deepen Interconnections between China and Central Asian States;
- Digital Data Security Collaboration Initiative and Creation of a Peaceful, Secure and Open Cyberspace.[2]

The four decisions taken show that although they mostly contain technical items on how the cooperation process will work, they mostly cover geopolitical issues. This can be seen from the statements made by both the Chinese Minister and the Central Asian countries regarding the meeting. Not only China, but also the countries in the region see this meeting and its results as positive.

Making a statement about the meeting, Kazakh Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi said that the said initiative was proposed by Beijing in 2020 and that this format is one of the most effective and promising methods. Tleuberdi said, “Today’s meeting was

very productive and impressive. We are pleased with the exchange of views.” made his assessment.[3]

Tleuberdi continued his words, “Kazakhstan reaffirmed its interest in strengthening comprehensive cooperation and the adoption of the Roadmap for the implementation of the initiatives expressed by the heads of state of the countries participating in the meeting was an important step forward. This document covers strategic areas such as security, transportation and logistics, energy, industrial modernization, combating climate change, green economy, IT industry, health, education, culture, tourism and other important areas. made a statement. [4]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan also published a statement about the meeting on its website. The official statement is as follows:

“The parties discussed their current issues and extensively discussed ways of implementing the initiatives. The Ministers reiterated their willingness to continue mutually beneficial cooperation to further expand relations in the fields of political dialogue, sustainable development, trade and economy, investment, financial, scientific and technical, transport and communication, water and energy, information technology, environment... Central Asia and China The importance of using the potential of the states of the United States to create a security space in the region, it was pointed out that it is a mutually beneficial, sustainable and inclusive partnership... Participants of the meeting, President of Uzbekistan Shevket Mirziyoyev to develop a resolution of the UN General Assembly on the interdependence of Central and South Asia. and supported the initiative to accept it... Views were exchanged on promoting the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan, including cooperation with the international community. A common interest was expressed in overcoming the humanitarian crisis as soon as possible and restoring the participation of Afghanistan’s socio-economic infrastructure in world economic relations in order to promote civil peace and harmony in Afghan society... Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, President of Uzbekistan He called on him to support the initiative of the Coordinating Council of Central Asian and Chinese Countries aimed at providing transport, such as the development of transport links and the development of interregional logistics networks, as well as the practical implementation of transport infrastructure projects.[5]

Speaking to the participants about the meeting in Nur-Sultan, Turkmenistan Foreign Minister Meredov drew attention to the productive course of the political and diplomatic dialogue

aimed at strengthening the strategic partnership between Central Asian countries and China, in line with the agreements reached between the heads of state. In this context, Meredov noted that Turkmenistan is ready to continuously increase its natural gas supply to China through the region, with special emphasis on the prospects for energy, transport and communication cooperation along the Central Asia-China line. In terms of cooperation in the field of transport, Meredov drew attention to the validity and real possibility of establishing multi-directional transport links from China to the west through the territory of Central Asia, noting that in this case it is considered the most reasonable way for Turkmenistan to use the possibilities of port infrastructure in the Caspian Sea.[6]

In his speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Kulubaev emphasized the necessity of deepening the interdependence of mutual interests and economies in a promising way to become an authoritative regional platform for the activities of the “Central Asia-China” format, for the benefit of strengthening and promoting political dialogue.

Stating that this multilateral format promotes the development of bilateral relations between the Central Asian states and China, Kulubaev emphasized that the Kyrgyz-Chinese strategic partnership relations are at a high level and stated that they will contribute to the sustainable development of existing priority areas of interaction and joint bilateral projects. In particular, based on the convenience of establishing transport and communication infrastructure in the region, the Kyrgyz side emphasized the need to actively promote the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway construction project. The Kyrgyz Minister also noted that it is appropriate to work towards increasing the efficiency of “green corridors” for transit cargo transportation, including socially important products.

Kulubaev pointed out that the creation of a favorable business environment for the protection of the interests of foreign investors is one of the priorities of the leadership of the Kyrgyz Republic. To this end, the Kyrgyz side stated that it is actively working to improve the investment environment and ensure the security of foreign investment in the country. In this regard, the Kyrgyz Minister called on investors from China and the countries of the region to participate in major projects and actively invest in the economy of Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz side also proposed mutually beneficial investment cooperation in the hydroelectric complex.[7]

As can be seen, while the countries in the region want to be a transportation/transit bridge between China and Europe, they both invite China to invest in their countries, express that they are strategic partners with China and want to raise their relations in this field to a higher level. They emphasize that it is one of the sources of stability.

Bilateral Talks

On the sidelines of the meeting, Wang Yi met with his counterparts from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In his meeting with Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, the Chinese Minister explained that energy is an important part of China’s strategic cooperation with Turkmenistan, and that China’s intention to expand energy cooperation between the two sides always continues regardless of the changes in the international environment.

Meredov, on the other hand, described the two countries as “close strategic partners” and explained that they aim to strengthen and raise cooperation in various fields, and said that they agreed to increase joint investments for the Belt-Road Project and to create a platform to provide connections in transportation lines. It was promised to deepen cooperation in non-hydrocarbon fields to help Turkmenistan’s economic development.

After the meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Uzbekistan and China, the parties announced that they agreed on the interconnection of the networks between the transportation and transportation lines to be made over the land and railways. Wang noted that he welcomes the entry of Uzbek goods into the Chinese market and encourages more Chinese companies to operate in the Central Asian country. The Chinese Minister also emphasized that the two sides should strengthen traditional energy cooperation and jointly ensure the safe and stable operation of the China-Central Asia gas pipeline, as well as expand new energy cooperation in areas such as civil nuclear, solar and wind. Norov stated that Uzbekistan attaches great importance to its friendship with China and will continue to adhere to the “One China” principle. They also called for strengthening the joint construction of the “Belt and Road Project” and promoting mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation in areas such as trade investment, power generation capacity, green agriculture. Norov said that China values constructive cooper-

ation in the region and that the development and revival of Central Asia is closely related to China.[8]

At the meeting, Tajikistan was represented by the Minister of Transport of the country, Azim Ibrohim. Azim Ibrohim, who met with his Chinese counterpart, described China as Tajikistan’s “great, friendly neighbor”. He also drew attention to the mutual trust and comprehensive strategic partnership between the two presidents, and said that in this context, China has become the most important partner for Tajikistan’s trade and investment. Tajikistan stated that it is ready to actively participate in the “Belt and Road Project” initiative and to deepen its multi-faceted cooperation with China, and promised that its country will facilitate Chinese companies doing business in Tajikistan. The parties promised to deepen their cooperation in law enforcement in the fight against security and terrorism. Azim Ibrohim said that Tajikistan will act together with China in the fight against “three evils (terrorism, extremism and separatism)”. [9]

Wang Yi, in his meeting with Kyrgyz Minister Kulubaev, noted that China will further develop bilateral relations with Kyrgyzstan, that the two countries complement each other economically and that Kyrgyzstan is the most reliable long-term strategic partners. Kulubaev stated that maintaining friendly relations between Kyrgyzstan and China is a priority of Kyrgyzstan’s foreign policy, he hopes to see more bilateral cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, port transport, health, and Kyrgyzstan is against “Taiwan independence” and China’s Xinjiang Uyghur He stated that he firmly supports his legitimate stance on issues related to the Autonomous Region and Hong Kong.[10]

Wang Yi was also received by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. During the meeting, cooperation within the framework of international and regional organizations for the development of the Kazakh-Chinese long-term comprehensive strategic partnership was discussed. Giving a high value to the level of strategic partnership achieved for more than 30 years, Tokayev emphasized that the interest in deepening the comprehensive cooperation between Kazakhstan and China continues. Expressing that Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Kazakhstan, which is planned to be held in the autumn of 2022, will add a new and powerful momentum to bilateral relations, Tokayev stated that the talks to be held at the highest level will open a new bright page in the history of strategic partnership. In addition, expressing his gratitude to China for the invitation to participate in the “BRICS Plus”, Tokayev emphasized that Kazakhstan supports Xi Jinping’s initiatives in the field of global security and development, and that these steps will contribute to the elimination of the lack of security needed by global security.[11]

In the bilateral meetings, the Central Asian countries seemed very willing to cooperate with China. The countries of the region are looking for ways to cooperate with China in more investment, transportation and trade issues and expressed that they believe these relations will serve the stability of the region. Each country described China as a strategic partner and expressed that this partnership should be taken to a higher level.

As it can be seen from the statements of the countries of the region and in the multilateral meetings as well as the bilateral talks, they have identical interests in China and in China’s Belt and Road Project.

“Geopolitical Competition” Warning From China

After meeting with Tokayev during his visit to Kazakhstan, Wang Yi published a review about his geopolitical forecast for the region.[12] In the statement in question, Wang Yi said, “Beware of interference by foreign powers in the internal affairs of the countries of the region and their attempts to coerce them... China hopes Central Asian countries will steadfastly resist foreign intervention, strengthen coordination, maintain good faith cooperation, and maintain regional peace and stability... Beijing has never pursued geopolitical interests in Central Asia and has never allowed outside powers to create unrest in the region.” has declared.[13] These words show that China has recently been concerned about the increasing interest of the USA in Central Asia.

The fact that the USA brought up its geopolitical goals towards Central Asia in the 2000s seems to disturb China. The USA wants to show a serious military presence in the countries of the region. On the other hand, China accepts Russia’s military presence in Central

Asia and in this sense does not want to enter its military sphere of influence. In terms of trade, investment and transportation, there is a “compromised competition” with Russia. But the USA, on the other hand, is challenging both Russia and China in trade, economy and transportation as well as military and military-technical issues and is looking for ways to get ahead of them.

[1] “В г.Сиань Китайской Народной Республики с участием Министра иностранных дел Кыргызской Республики Руслана Казакбаева состоялась Вторая встреча министров”, mfa.gov.kg, <https://mfa.gov.kg/ru/osnovnoe-menyu/press-sluzhba/novosti/v-gsian-kitayskoy-narodnoy-respubliki-s-uchastiem-ministra-inostrannyh-del-kyrgyzskoy-respubliki-ruslana-kazakbaeva-sostoyalas-vtoraya-vstrecha-ministrov-inostrannyh-del-v-formate-centralnaya-aziya-kitay>, (Date of Accession: 20.06.2022).

[2] “Китай будет расширять с Казахстаном расчеты в нацвалютах”, Zakon, <https://www.zakon.kz/6016562-budem-rasshirit-s-kazakhstanom-raschety-v-natsvaliutakh-ministr-knr-van-i.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[3] “Инициативы по сотрудничеству Центральной Азии и Китая одобрили в Нур-Султане”, Kazinform, https://lenta.inform.kz/ru/iniciativy-po-sotrudnichestvu-central-noy-azii-i-kitaya-odobrili-v-nur-sultane_a3942103, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2022).

[4] Айнагуль Елеубаева, “Центральная Азия – Китай: итоги совещания министров иностранных дел”, Zakon, <https://kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/106173/tsentral-naya-aziya-kitay-itogi-soveshchaniya-ministrov-inostrannykh-del.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[5] “Третья встреча министров иностранных дел в формате «Центральная Азия – Китай»”, mfa.uz, <https://mfa.uz/ru/press/news/2022/tretya-vstrecha-ministrov-inostrannyh-del-v-formate-centralnaya-aziya-kitay—31619>, (Date of Accession: 08.06.2022).

[6] “В Нур-Султане завершилось третье совещание Министров иностранных дел формата «Центральная Азия – Китай»”, Turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/63911/v-nur-sultane-zavershilos-trete-soveshchanie-ministrov-inostrannyh-del-formata-centralnaya-aziya-kitaj, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[7] “В Нур-Султане прошла очередная встреча глав МИД формата «Центральная Азия – Китай»”, Kabar, <https://kabar.kg/news/v-nur-sultane-proshla-ocherednaia-vstrecha-glav-mid-formata-tcentral-naia-aziia-kitaj/>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[8] “Выступление и.о.министра иностранных дел Республики Узбекистан Владимира Норова на третьей встрече министров иностранных дел в формате «Центральная Азия», mfa.uz, <https://mfa.uz/ru/press/news/2022/vystuplenie-iomministra-inostrannyh-del-respubliki-uzbekistan-vladimira-norova-na-tretye-vs-treche-ministrov-inostrannyh-del-v-formate-centralnaya-aziya-kitay—31624>, (Date of Accession: 21.06.2022).

[9] “China, Tajikistan vow to increase trade, boost new energy cooperation”, CGTN, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2022-06-09/China-Tajikistan-vow-to-increase-trade-boost-new-energy-cooperation-1aluMUgqw1i/index.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[10] “Wang Yi meets with Central Asian counterparts, vows to boost ties”, CGTN, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2022-06-08/Wang-Yi-meets-with-Central-Asian-counterparts-vows-to-boost-ties-1aGYuqimnRu/index.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[11] “Казахстан заинтересован в углублении комплексного взаимодействия с Китаем”, Zakon, <https://kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/106150/kazakhstan-zainteresovan-v-uglublenii-kompleksnogo-vzaimodeystviya-s-kitayem.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2022).

[12] “Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Meets with Wang Yi”, fmprc.gov.cn, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/202206/t20220608_10700214.html, (Date of Access: 09.06.2022).

[13] Ibid.



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Central Asia in European Energy Security

The developments in the world energy balances after the Russia-Ukraine War brought forward the evaluation of European energy security in the axis of Central Asia and Türkiye. At this point, it should be remembered that Europe, acting together with the United States of America (USA), to impose an oil embargo on Russia and at the same time take decisions regarding new options against Russian imports, which is around 40%.

The most important of Europe's decisions is that the decision to impose an embargo against oil

was taken first. Europe was planning that Russia, one of Europe's largest suppliers of oil, natural gas and coal, would experience a great loss of income with the bans it imposed on Russian oil. The conflicts during the Ukraine War left even European Union (EU) countries such as Germany, France and Italy, the biggest supporters of the Russians in Europe, in a difficult situation. Russia, as the first reaction to the embargo on its oil, shifted its sales to Asian markets, making China and India its biggest customers. Russian oil was sold to these countries at a discount of 25-30 dollars from the market price, even un-



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der 35 dollars in some places. In addition, Russian oil was sold at lower prices and medium-term contracts, especially for the needs of refineries in China and India. Both countries are quite satisfied with this situation. Because, with the effect of the increase in the price of Brent oil in their economy up to 120 dollars, the current account deficit caused by imports decreased, the people began to buy cheaper gasoline and the refineries began to buy oil at lower prices. Oil prices, which turned into a disaster for the European economies, were at much more reasonable prices in the two big markets in Asia.

According to the newly formed bloc, the two largest buyers of Russia were India and China. In particular, India has become a country that buys 40% of Russian oil. 20% of Russian oil sold by sea transport goes to India. Although this situation does not please the USA, the result is clear.

As a result of the war and sanctions, a much more complicated situation has emerged in the EU energy markets. Because EU member states such as Hungary, Slovakia and Czechia, which are close to Russia and receive oil through the Druzhba Pipeline, have suggested that they cannot immediately implement the Russian oil embargo due to their high dependence on Russia, they need a period of at least 6 months, and they should be granted an exemption at the point of sanctions. As a result of this, the EU has granted an exemption to Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic so that they can continue to receive oil through the pipeline, which is open-endedly coming from Russia. This exemption decision is important because it reveals the division of the EU on the point of joint decision making. Countries provide energy security one by one, and as long as the EU cannot negotiate on the point of all member states, Russia has gained an advantage by using the aforementioned countries close to itself in the EU. It is possible to add Serbia to these countries, although it is not yet an EU member. In short, the EU, which aims to zero the imports of oil and refined petroleum products by the end of 2022, has taken an important decision, although it has not succeeded in making a joint decision on energy security.

Due to the environment created by the oil embargoes, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) turned this situation into an opportunity and kept the amount of additional production low as if there was a cut in Russian oil supply. Under the market conditions in question, OPEC was expected to increase oil production by 2.5 million barrels, while an increase of only 658 thousand barrels was realized in OPEC. This situa-

tion caused the oil prices in the world markets to see the 120-125 dollar band. The USA is extremely uncomfortable with the fact that both its own producers and OPEC do not increase oil production, and indirectly allowed Venezuela at the point of oil sales. Venezuela traded oil to Italy after a long time. In this context, Iran has started to supply oil to the market gradually and has supplied approximately 60 million barrels of oil to the market. During the entire Russia-Ukraine War, two unexpected countries, Iran and Venezuela, have started selling oil.

Oil prices, which are not expected to be so high, are closely related to energy security around the world, including in Europe and Türkiye. Since oil prices in Türkiye are also dependent on international pricing, they have increased to approximately 30-33 Turkish liras per liter. Therefore, in order to extinguish the fire in the energy markets, the US producers, the Arab producers of Venezuela and the Gulf Region, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) need to increase production. In addition, US President Joe Biden visits these places, putting pressure on them to produce oil.

The Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline can be used actively and this is important in terms of transporting more Turkmen and Kazakh oil. Because, BTC cannot operate at full capacity due to the production declines in the Azer-Chirag-Guneshli Oil Field, which is the main source of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline (BTC) Line. Therefore, with Kazakh and Turkmen oil feeding this pipeline, it will be able to carry 1 million 2502 thousand barrels per day, and this situation may relieve world markets in terms of balancing oil prices. However, the focus is on increasing OPEC members. Venezuela, on the other hand, has serious reserves and is trying to get back into the energy game, comes to the fore. However, the plan designed by the USA is not based on the trust of Venezuela and Iran alone. Therefore, movements started in Iraq as well, and two separate regional government-affiliated companies were established for oil production and trade from the Kurdish region, even though Baghdad did not like it. These companies aim to sell oil to world markets through their own exploration and commercial ventures. Besides having the largest oil reserves, Iraq also has the least production costs. For this reason, it can be the leading actor in balancing oil prices. In this context, the Iraq-Türkiye Oil Pipeline with a capacity of 1.7 million barrels/day is the most critical infrastructure. Therefore, although these production levels have not been reached in Iraq yet for BTC to reach full capacity, at least it is possible to transport oil in the Kurdish region through this pipeline. Moreover, the said supply can be realized in a short time and it can be

in a position to sell Iraqi oil by the end of 2022. In this context, this solution, which will be provided as soon as possible in terms of EU energy supply security, will be realized through Türkiye.

On the other hand, another aspect of the EU's energy security is natural gas. European countries are aware that they cannot get rid of dependence on Russian natural gas overnight. In this context, the EU started to buy liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the USA and Qatar as the first step to get rid of Russian natural gas. With the additional capacities on hand and their redirection, it was in a position to meet about 15-20% of the EU's Russian gas demand. The EU had to make medium and long-term plans and move on to a new period after these plans.

From the 175 billion cubic meters of pipelines that carry Russian gas to Europe, gas cuts were experienced first in Poland, then in Germany, Italy and France. On the other hand, there has been a decrease in natural gas supply, such as the problems experienced in other alternative sources and Algeria's problems with Spain. The price of sufficient LNG cargo had to exceed the European price of TTF and the Asian pricing of JKM. Therefore, it has been seen that Qatar and Arab countries withdraw LNGs from Asian markets and send them to Europe. At this point, the decrease in the demands of Asian markets due to the high temperature is also important. However, although the USA wants to send the 50 billion cubic meters of LNG that it has put into itself to Europe, there are facilities only in Spain and on a limited basis in the Adriatic. American LNG is not expected to arrive in Europe, both in terms of facilities that will accept this natural gas and due to the inability to make a capacity expansion decision regarding US LNG production. For this reason, the USA is working with Qatar and trying to manage with Qatar until LNG comes from US companies by putting Qatar into action.

Türkiye stands out in terms of LNG, including the new Floating LNG Storage and Gasification Unit (FSRU) to be built in Saros Bay, and the LNG terminal in Marmara Ereğlisi and other facilities. The LNG to be brought to these facilities of Türkiye can be delivered directly to Greece via the Turkish pipeline and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline-Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TANAP-TAP) and from there to Europe or Bulgaria via the currently empty 14 billion cubic meters capacity from Western Line project to Ukraine and Poland. Türkiye has very important roles to play and assume here. Türkiye not only offers Azeri natural gas over the TANAP-TAP system as part of the Southern Gas Corridor, but also claims that Turkmen natural gas can be added to this system. In this context, dialogues began to take place between Azerbaijan and Turkmeni-

stan. If the EU signs an agreement with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan can pave the way for Turkmen natural gas. At least 8-10 billion cubic meters of Turkmen natural gas can reach Türkiye with the rapid increase of TANAP's capacity to 31 billion cubic meters, and it can be transported to European countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Italy via TAP via Türkiye. Secondly, BOTAŞ has a serious idle capacity within the pipeline system in its own country. In order for this idle capacity to be used in transit transportation, technic studies are required such as some construction works, investments and relocation of compressors. But all this can be accomplished in a very short time. Türkiye, with its infrastructure investments and small construction projects, is the only country that can produce a solution by using Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan gas in a period of 6-8 months for the EU.

The EU was planning to buy Algerian gas in order to replace Russian gas. However, due to the disagreement between Algeria and Spain, Algeria tries to sell natural gas directly to Italy by passing through Tunisia. In this context, North African countries also come to the fore. Algeria has natural gas reserves, Tunisia is becoming a transit country and also before the oil shocks in Libya, it is an advantageous country with its proximity to Italy for the EU. Therefore, Libya needs to get back into the energy game. On the other hand, there is also Egypt, which produces natural gas and has full facilities. It is unclear which pipeline Egypt's resources will be transported. There are two sea pipelines going from the Mediterranean to Europe, and by increasing the capacity of these, Egyptian natural gas can be transported to Europe. In addition, Algeria can simultaneously supply Europe with its own natural gas by purchasing Egyptian natural gas. However, in this case, it creates the need for a larger capacity pipeline. By adding to the existing pipelines, a maximum of 20 billion cubic meters can be transported. Europe's need, on the other hand, is 170 billion cubic meters. Although 20-30 of this need comes from America and 20 from Libya-Algeria, there is still a deficit. For this reason, they still need natural gas supply to be transported through Türkiye.

The EU made a strategic mistake and signed a memorandum of understanding on the purchase of natural gas from Israel and Egypt on 12 June 2022. It is an agreement made with two countries that it is not clear whether these resources will even be able to provide 20-25 billion cubic meters of resources even after 5 years. In order for this agreement to be valid and rapid intervention to be achieved, 300 km of Israeli gas must be delivered to Egypt by pipelines, and from Egypt it must also be produced and sold to Europe in the form of pipelines or, allegedly, LNG. However, the LNG tanks are already filled by Egypt and there is no capacity

to be allocated to Israel. At this point, the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA) remained empty-handed due to the said agreement. Because no one has talked about the GCA and the pipeline they have built that crosses the sea. The reason why the Greeks have come to the fore and attacked Türkiye is that they are trying to cover up the fact that Türkiye is the most reliable country that can bring the most important alternative resources with its ready infrastructure in this critical day of the EU. In this context, Athens reflects the situation as “There are large reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean and we have the potential to produce gas for Europe within 1 year with these reserves”.

Egyptian and Israeli natural gas has the capacity to fill Europe’s natural gas deficit in 3-5 years. On the other hand, Türkiye has 31 billion cubic meters of TANAP, 15 billion cubic meters of BOTAS system and an empty Western line that can be used as a transit. In addition, due to LNG facilities, facilities can be used by making a SWAP Agreement with Türkiye. With all these infrastructures, Türkiye can urgently and quickly transport natural gas to the European borders.

In addition, Türkiye has discovered natural gas in the Black Sea region. Working together with Romania in the Black Sea means that Türkiye makes a significant contribution to European energy supply security. At this point, it is a more reasonable option for Europe to evaluate the Black Sea gas before the Eastern Mediterranean gas. By developing cooperation with both the Black Sea gas and the Romanians and Bulgarians in this context, Türkiye can both ensure the European supply security by connecting the Black Sea gas to the Western line and make a serious contribution to the European energy with the ready TANAP-TAP system.

It is not an understandable situation to ignore Turkmenistan’s natural gas, which has 20 trillion cubic meters of reserves. Currently, Turkmenistan has 40 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves that can be produced and transported immediately. In this context, the EU should sign an agreement with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijanis should commit to the Turkmen to transport this natural gas. Currently, there is a SWAP Agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. Within the scope of this agreement, there is a trade provided by a SWAP Agreement of 2 billion cubic meters within the scope of Turkmenistan-Iran-Azerbaijan on the Iran-Azerbaijan border. However, it should be evaluated that Turkmen natural gas is connected to the TANAP system and sent to Europe by making additions to the pipelines crossing the Caspian Sea.

As a result, Egypt and Israel, which Europe is trying to get something by hoping for help, are not a short-term or even a medi-

um-term option. It will take a minimum of 3-5 years to complete this project and supply natural gas to the EU. As LNG, the USA can quickly access investment decisions, and Qatar can support it. However, with Türkiye’s in-house pipeline systems, LNG facilities and the use of the empty Western line, Türkiye is the real short-term medicine for EU energy supply security. If the EU is still persistently trying to reach an agreement with Egypt and Israel, this situation should be seen as a game of the Greeks and the Greek Cypriot Administration, who seem to have lost the war in the Eastern Mediterranean. Otherwise, Türkiye will become a critically important actor for the EU. Because Türkiye is in a position to contribute to European energy immediately via LNG facilities and in 6 months via pipelines. This contribution can be doubled in 1 year. No country and no resource will be of such critical importance for the EU. Because Türkiye’s are realistic projects that can implement existing systems with less cost. It consists of adding Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan natural gas to existing infrastructure systems. Therefore, it is as if there is a section that does not want Türkiye’s importance for the EU to increase, and Türkiye is prevented from carrying alternative supply sources (such as Turkmen, Iraq, Black Sea) to Europe in these difficult times of the EU. In this direction, it can be predicted that the EU has turned to Egypt and Israel due to the thought that “EU may suppress the demand for membership” as Türkiye has come to a critical position for European energy. Is the real purpose of the EU to ensure energy supply security by closing the natural gas deficit? Not known. On the other hand, the logic of bypassing nearby actors such as Türkiye, Central Asia and the Middle East is not understood, while it should keep the security of natural gas supply ahead and reduce prices by finding new gas sources and substituting Russian natural gas, especially in the short term. This means that the EU seems to have accepted to live with high prices. If the EU does not cooperate with Türkiye, energy prices will rise and their economy will explode. It can be said that we will live with very high natural gas and oil prices until 2025.

In this context, it is possible to reach the following conclusion: The real aim of the EU may also be to try to use this as a trump card against Türkiye, as well as to get rid of dependence on Russia for natural gas while relieving their own economy. Because otherwise, it is not an understandable situation for them to ignore Türkiye. When the Nabuko Project was proposed in 2022, all these were foreseen and the importance of Türkiye, Iran and Central Asian countries was explained. However, since the EU had good relations with Russia at that time, it did not take these stories seriously. The same mistake is repeated today. The fact that Türkiye is a country that deserves to be a member of the EU has been demonstrated once again with this Russian crisis.

ANKASAM IN PRESS

20 June 2022

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Kazakh Writer and Poet Ahmet Baytursunali on June 15, 2022, the Kazakhstan Embassy in Ankara organized a roundtable event with the theme “Educator of the Century Ahmet Baytursunali.” The event was attended by Kazakhstan Ankara Ambassador Yerkebulan Sapiev, President of the Eurasian Writers Union Yakup Ömeroğlu, and many guests, including Presidency and Organization Coordinator Mustafa Cem Koyuncu, representing Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM), also took part.

20 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Chief Energy Advisor Dr. Cenk Pala evaluated the natural gas agreement signed by the EU with Israel and Egypt to Cumhuriyet Newspaper.

21 June 2022

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

22 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated Turkey’s possible operation against Syria in The Epoch Times, one of the leading newspapers of the USA.

23 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the visit of the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to Uzbekistan to Dunyo News Agency.

23 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the possible operation of Turkey against Syria in The Epoch Times, one of the leading newspapers of the USA.

24 June 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the visit of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to Uzbekistan on Axar News Portal.



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

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

JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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

ANKASAM JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I.

