



# ANKASAM

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Reflections of Yudh Abhyas Exercise on India-US Relations After Taiwan Crisis

The world has been witnessing a chaotic/anarchic order in which geopolitical power shifts are taking place, China and the USA's rivalry is growing, security concerns are emerging as a result of the Ukraine War and the pillars of the international order are being questioned. Among the developments during the transition to this new order, the withdrawal of the USA

troops from Afghanistan, Russia's intervention in Ukraine and finally the visit of the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan stand out as the most noteworthy examples.[1]

Pelosi's trip to Taiwan should be regarded as a development that, in contrast to previous in-



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ternational developments, will directly drive an escalation in Sino-US rivalry and have an impact on how the global system will be constructed as a result. This is due to the fact that the two states, who have been evaluating each other within the context of the “gray zone strategy” and pursuing a policy of acquiring power without engaging in conflict, have finally come face to face. The USA’s action has changed the long-standing status quo in the Indo-Pacific region in its favor and created a new reality.

Beijing’s responses, which had previously signaled a heated dispute with high-pitched statements, fell short of expectations during the visit and caused debates among the domestic public. We might refer to the situation that the US diplomatic action has squeezed China as a lose-lose paradox. Because every reaction to being given will have a reflection that will put Beijing in trouble. A harsh reaction would harm China’s image, while a military response would result in its isolation from international markets. Because of this, China has acted in ways that were previously its usual response, such as violating the Taiwan air identification zone (ADIZ), expanding exercises, and enacting a blockade closer to Taiwan.

When Taiwan is on the table, China’s decisions are shaped by more emotional reactions. For this reason, the USA aspires to strike China from the subject that it is farthest from rationality. Beijing regards Taiwan’s unification with the mainland as a psychological and historical issue. Because of this, the Chinese Communist Party and other state institutions and particularly Xi Jinping, who is getting prepared for his third term and wishes to make a lasting impression on Chinese history, have made unification with Taiwan one of their primary campaign pledges.

Thanks to the Taiwan move, the USA, which took the initiative in the Indo-Pacific, made another move after Taiwan through India. As it is known, based on recent history, relations between India and China have followed a tumultuous background and have generally been shaped around a competitive spirit. The border disputes and mutual military casualties have escalated the already high level of hostility between Beijing and New Delhi, particularly after 2020.[2]

India, one of the most powerful states in South Asia, with its geographical presence and the ability to control the economic and military activity of the Indian Ocean, has been a key actor in the Indo-Pacific policy of the USA for a long time. New Delhi, which remained behind China in the Asian period that started in the 2000s, pursues a multi-vector foreign policy in order to

close this gap and establish a new balance, and in this sense, it strengthens its relations with the West. Likewise, the US seeks to deepen its cooperation with India and use New Delhi’s military, geographic, and demographic power due to contain China.

The coinciding of both countries in a common perspective around the Chinese threat brought along a strategic step. The US and Indian armed forces have decided to conduct a joint military exercise in the Indian state of Uttarakhand. According to CNN, the military exercises announced to be held at an altitude of 10,000 feet in mid-October 2022 will focus on high-altitude warfare training. This exercise, which will be held approximately 95 kilometers from the checkpoint between China and India, should undoubtedly be considered as a step in the containment strategy launched against China.[3] The exercise will have a geopolitical impact in addition to conveying a powerful message, particularly given its time and location.

The USA is making plans to continue its new strategy, which it has activated with its Taiwan visit, by deepening it through India. Washington’s main goal, which wants to add new tension on the India-China border next to the front opened in the South China Sea, is to divide China’s power and concentration in the Indo-Pacific. Because, when India’s population, economic power, military capacity and geographical location are taken into account, it appears to be a vital deterrent against China. As a matter of fact, this point of view was also reflected in the statements of US officials. The Chief of Naval Operations of the US Navy, Admiral Mike Gilday, made the following statement at a seminar organized by the Heritage Foundation in Washington on August 25, 2022:[4]

“You just can’t think of China through the lens of the Indo-Pacific. You have to look at the Indian Ocean, you have to look at their Belt and Road, their economic connective tissue, which is now global...They now force China to not only look east, toward the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, but they now have to be looking over their shoulder at India ... The Indian Ocean battlespace is becoming increasingly more important for us. The fact that India and China currently have a bit of a skirmish along their border. It is strategically important. What the United States and Japan need India to do is to be as strong as possible in South Asia and effectively draw Chinese attention so that they have a major second-front problem.”

In addition to the roles and targets that the USA expects from India within the scope of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy, India also has strategic targets that it expects from Wash-

ington. New Delhi has been disturbed by the recent AUKUS move ignoring India. On the other side, New Delhi has long criticized the US for failing to mention China’s military buildup along the Indian border, despite the US recently keeping the Ukraine Crisis on the agenda. As a matter of fact, Brahma Chellaney, has served adviser to India’s National Security Council, serving as convener of the External Security Group of the National Security Advisory Board and a Member of the Policy Advisory Group headed by the Foreign Minister of India, who conducts geostrategic studies and India-China relations, explained the gap between the USA and India with the following words:[5]

“As if seeking to allay China’s concerns, Biden has also progressively diluted the Quad’s agenda, broadening it, as his Indo-Pacific strategy attests, to everlasting universal challenges like climate change, sustainability, “global health” and “advancing common technology principles.” The Quad, however, was designed as a bulwark against China’s expansionism. Biden has yet to comment on China’s nearly two-year border aggression against India. Nor has the U.S. asked Beijing to pull back the nearly 200,000 Chinese troops it has massed along the Indian frontier. Yet Biden, seeking to co-opt India in his new Cold War with Russia, hosted a special Quad summit by video link on Mar. 3 to discuss the Russian aggression. But the summit, as the unusually short White House statement indicated, achieved little. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi put his foot down over extending the Quad’s sphere to Ukraine, saying the group must remain focused on its core objective in the Indo-Pacific region.”

India, on the one hand, pursues policies to create a wider influence from the regional leadership, on the other hand, it wants to feel more supported by the Atlantic against China. New Delhi is an Asian state outside the Anglo-Saxon club despite being one of the most prominent actors in the Indo-Pacific strategy. For this reason, India requests the United States to take a greater role in China’s military expansion along the Indian border and to draw more attention to the region from the international community. Thus, India will form a strong alliance in its ontological security problem with China and minimize the risks.

It would not be wrong to say that the military exercise scheduled in Uttarakhand on October 2022 will perfectly coincide with the actions that both the USA and India expect from each other when future goals and interests of both countries are taken into account. By conducting this exercise, Washington will draw China’s attention to the region, while India will confirm that its recent neutrality policy does not apply to China and will stand by the United States. Based on the prediction that China will pay more attention to South Asia in the future, saying that regional competition will increase and assuming that China will make a move through its ally countries will provide a correct perspective in seeing the future.

[1] Yimou Lee-Sarah Wu, “Pelosi Arrives in Taiwan Vowing U.S. Commitment; China Enraged”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pelosi-expected-arrive-taiwan-tuesday-sources-say-2022-08-02/>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

[2] “India-China Clash: 20 Indian Troops Killed in Ladakh Fighting”, BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53061476>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

[3] Vedika Sud-Barbara Starr-Sahar Akbarzai-Kathleen Magramo, “US to Take Part in Military Exercise Near India’s Disputed Border with China”, CNN, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/06/india/india-us-military-exercise-line-of-actual-control-china-intl-hnk/index.html>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

[4] “India Presents China with two-front Problem, Says US Navy Chief”, The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-presents-china-with-two-front-problem-says-us-navy-chief/articleshow/93845731.cms>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

[5] Brahma Chellaney, “Ukraine War Puts U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy in Jeopardy”, Nikkei Asia, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Ukraine-war-puts-U.S.-Indo-Pacific-strategy-in-jeopardy>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Nuclear Weapons of Russia-2: Dagger (Kinzhal- Kh-47m2)

While Russia and the United States (US) continue to take steps to accelerate nuclear armament, it has been seen that the parties have increased their momentum in hypersonic weapons studies, and hypersonic missiles have become a trend that will form the basis of world armament studies in the coming period. Due to their very high speed and their capacity to exceed existing defensive weapons, these new weapons systems have further

increased the cost of a nuclear war. This has revealed the need to requestion the concepts of the first hit and the second hit. Time will tell how these weapons will affect the concept of "deterrence." Probably, the "New Cold War" will take shape in the shadow of hypersonic weapons systems.

Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu stated that Russia has used Kinzhal hypersonic mis-



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siles three times in Ukraine, made it clear that Russia has moved from the testing phase to the use phase in hypersonic weapons systems. Shoigu stated that the Kinzhal missiles have achieved great success in hitting high-value targets, are of incomparable effectiveness with other weapons, and it is almost impossible to shoot down these missiles.[1]

Kinzhal missiles, one of the six new generation weapon systems introduced by Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2018 as "next generation weapons", are hypersonic air-launched weapon systems capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads. Designed to be used with MiG-31K fighter jets and TU-22M3 bombers after being designed, these missiles have the ability to reach 10 times the speed of sound (10 mach).[2] It is stated that the missile reaches a range of 2.000 km if used with the MiG-31 fighter jet, and 3.000 km if used with the TU-22M3 bomber (when the flight range is added).[3]

The biggest difference of Kinzhal from the SARMAT and AVANGARD weapon systems is that they are not only weapons at a strategic level and capable of carrying out nuclear missions; but also capable of being used in the form of a conventional weapon at the tactical level. In fact, its use against underground ammunition and weapons depots in Ukraine is the result of this feature. In addition, these missiles have the ability to strike third states through the airspace of their own country or friendly states without entering the airspace of states that they consider to be enemies due to their range advantage.

Although Russian officials, especially Putin, state that this weapon is unstoppable, Western sources comment that the characteristics of the weapon are not extraordinary. Because Westerners, especially by making comments considering the hypersonic cruise missiles developed recently, claim that these weapons do not contain a very superior technology due to the fact that these missiles have a ballistic flight route. It is also claimed that almost all weapon systems studied in the recent period have hypersonic capabilities.

While the study of Western states, especially the US, on hypersonic weapons systems continues, Russia's inclusion of the Kinzhal missile in its inventory indicates that these claims are not very valid. In fact, it has been stated by Russian officials that about 10 MiG-31 K fighter jets have been refurbished with these missiles.[4] In fact, three of these warplanes have been deployed to the Kaliningrad region.[5] The use of these weapons in Ukraine actually shows how much progress Russia has made on hypersonic missiles, especially Kinzhal. As a Result, the new Cold War that we're in has already begun to take shape within the framework of hypersonic weapons.

[1] "Russia Says It Has Deployed Kinzhal Hypersonic Missile There Times Ukraine", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-says-it-has-deployed-kinzhal-hypersonic-missile-three-times-ukraine-2022-08-21/>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[2] Systems that can fly faster than five times the speed of sound are called hypersonic.

[3] "Russian Strategic Bomber to Extend Kinzhal Hypersonic Missile's Range-Source", Tass, <https://tass.com/defense/1013794>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[4] Abraham Ait, "Russia Inducts Its Own Carrier Killer Missile and Its more Dangerous than Chian's", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/russia-inducts-its-own-carrier-killer-missile-and-its-more-dangerous-than-chinas/>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[5] "MiG-31 Jets with Kinzhal Missiles Go on Combat Alert in Russia's Westernmost Region", TASS, <https://tass.com/defense/1495285/>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Russia's Objection to Sweden and Finland's NATO Memberships: Is It Just About the Baltics?

In his speech at the Moscow International Security Conference held on August 16, 2022, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that they would reconsider their country's capabilities in defending its territory in the Baltics and the Arctic.[1] On August 18, 2022, the Moscow administration announced that they had deployed 3 warplanes carrying «Kinjal» hypersonic missiles to Kaliningrad, Russia's only piece

of land in Europe, as part of strategic deterrence measures.[2] Undoubtedly, this indicates that tensions in the Baltics will rise even more.

As it is known, after Russia's intervention in Ukraine, Sweden and Finland abandoned their neutrality policy for many years and applied for membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In this sense, the process



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carried out regarding the NATO membership of the Stockholm and Helsinki administrations causes Russia to deepen its threat perceptions. Because Russia already thinks that NATO is trying to surround itself over the Black Sea.

In this sense, it can be said that the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to NATO in 2007 created a geopolitical trauma for Moscow. As a matter of fact, with the memberships in question, the Kremlin has reached the conclusion that NATO has reached the last limit to which it can advance in the former Eastern Bloc countries. For this reason, the Moscow administration describes NATO's expansion moves in the close vicinity of Russia as «a reason for war». Therefore, Russia intervened in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022.

Although the discussions over the aforementioned countries are mostly related to the wider Black Sea geopolitics, the Kremlin administration is concerned that the siege will be extended to include the Baltic geography, because of the membership of Sweden and Finland. If aforementioned states would be members of NATO, there is the possibility of establishing NATO bases in these countries. This would mean that the West would operate in the Baltic Sea. Undoubtedly, these possibilities are extremely disturbing for Russia.

It should be emphasized that; a security dilemma arises in the region. Because the basis of Sweden and Finland's tendency towards the Atlantic Alliance is the threat perceptions of these states regarding Russia. States that think that Russia may be the next target of attacks after the war in Ukraine, while trying to become a member of NATO; Moscow also considers this membership status as an extension of the siege imposed on it.

Moreover, it is not just about that. Because as a part of the security dilemma, there is a possibility of militarization of the Baltic geography. To open this issue, in response to the bases to be established in the aforementioned countries after NATO membership, the territory of Russia on the coast of the Baltic Sea; that is, the possibility of militarizing by deploying nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad is a scenario that cannot be ignored. As a matter of fact, during the exercise it held in Kaliningrad in May 2022, Russia gave a message about this by using a nuclear attack simulation.[3] Moreover, the Kremlin administration has already deployed warplanes capable of carrying hypersonic missiles to the region. This reveals that an arms race has started in the region and indicates that the race in question may get out of control. In other words, there is a fragile security ground in the Baltic geography. This fragility brings with it the risk of conflict.

Moreover, the Moscow administration considers NATO's warm welcome to Sweden and Finland memberships, with the Arctic dimension, and believes that the United States of America (US) is trying to realize an «Arctic Expansion» through the alliance. Because new waterways are formed in parallel with global warming and due to its rich natural resources, it is not surprising and even expected that the Washington administration makes some moves to increase its influence in the Arctic region. This, in turn, threatens Russia's national interests in the Arctic geopolitics, which is also heavily emphasized in its new naval doctrine.

According to the aforementioned doctrine, Russia defines Arctic geopolitics as one of the priority areas of national maritime policy. Besides the rich underground resources of the region, the Northern Sea Route is also one of the issues that Moscow cares about. Because this route attracts the attention of global actors as it will shorten the transportation costs and time. For this reason, the Moscow administration, which wants to be a great naval power, attaches great importance to the control of waterways.

In the context of the control of waterways, Moscow, which advocates that the influence of the US; therefore, NATO in the Arctic remain at a minimum level, tries to maintain its presence in the region with the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf discussions due to its interests in the region. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that Russia's new naval doctrine emphasizes the aim of increasing naval activities in land areas located close to the Arctic, such as Spitsbergen, Franz Josef Land and the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, and Wrangel Island. Among the mentioned islands, there are places under the sovereignty of Norway such as Spitsbergen, which cannot be ignored. Considering the fact that Norway is a NATO member, the discomfort caused in Russia by the process regarding the membership of Sweden and Finland is much better understood.

In short, the Kremlin administration is concerned about the increase in the influence of NATO and therefore the US in the Arctic geogra-



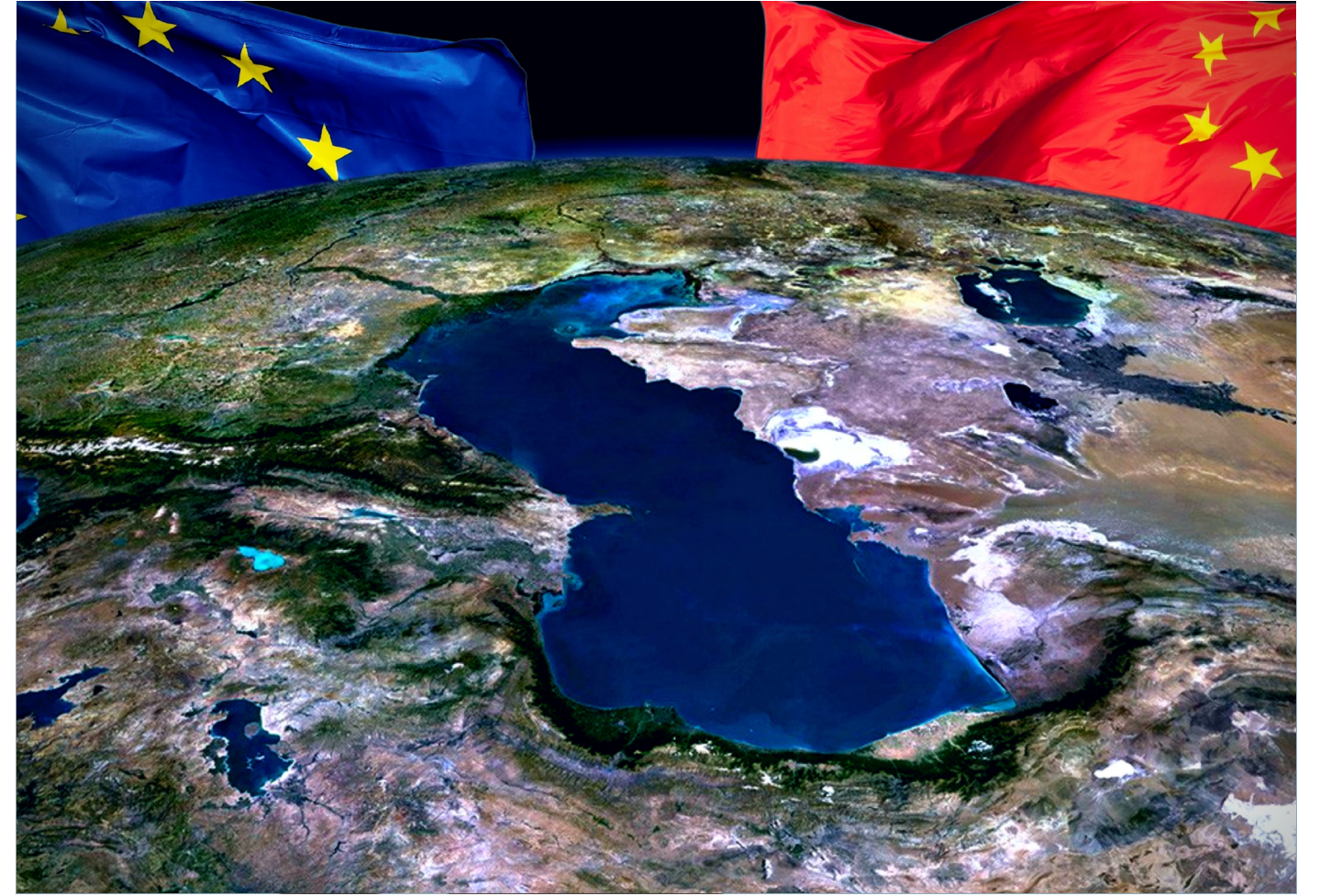
phy through the membership of these countries, and considers it a threat to its own national security.

As a result, the Moscow administration is extremely uncomfortable with the geopolitical choices of Helsinki and Stockholm, since the developments over the process of Sweden and Finland's membership to NATO affect the balance of power in the Arctic geography and include the new waterways dimension, especially the Northern Sea Route. Therefore, as Shoigu pointed out, it is preparing to reconsider the possibility of defending its territory in the Baltics and the Arctic. Considering the emphasis on the North Pole in the statement of the Russian Defense Minister, it can be said that Arctic geopolitics has become the new playground of the global power struggle. In other words, it can be argued that the issue is not limited to the Baltics.

[1]"Россия пересмотрит условия безопасности на Балтике", Lenta, <https://m.lenta.ru/news/2022/08/16/gffgu/amp/>, (Date of Accession: 18.08.2022).

[2] "Rusya, Stratejik Caydırıcılık İçin "Kinjal" Füzelerini Uçaklarla Kaliningrad'a Gönderdi", Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/rusya-stratejik-cay-diricilik-icin-kinjal-fuzelerini-ucaklarla-kaliningrada-gonderdi/2664046>, (Date of Accession: 18.08.2022).

[3] Köksal Akpınar, "Avrupa'nın Ortasında Rus Toprağı: Kaliningrad", TRT Haber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/avrupanin-ortasinda-rus-topragi-kaliningrad-678442.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.08.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Increasing Importance of the Caspian Sea Between Europe and China

The primary purpose of the Belt-Road Project, announced by China, from Kazakhstan to the world in 2013, was the construction of various lines that would make China to reach Europe. China, which acts with a global vision and determines routes, has started implementing the project with investments exceeding billions of dollars. China, which has made infrastructure investments in countries, targeted to maintain trade with the West from the safest regions as

soon as possible, with the least cost. In addition, the Beijing administration seeks to develop economic-based cooperation in various countries within the project's scope.

The most important of the main problems faced by China in reaching the West are the instability, security threats, and conflicts in the countries on the route. This situation jeopardizes the safety of both investments and com-



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mercial goods. On the other hand, the Beijing administration turns to countries with which it is relatively safe and with which it cooperates. It can be said that European countries have a similar attitude to China in terms of maintaining trade away from threats and at the least cost.

At this point, the Middle Line, which also includes the Caspian Sea, is one of the most important routes between China and Europe. The Line from China to Europe is divided into two branches. The route, which we can define as the northern branch, continues as China-Kazakhstan-Caspian Sea-Azerbaijan. The Southern branch proceeds on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Caspian Sea-Azerbaijan route. The lines converging in Azerbaijan are then delivered to Türkiye via Georgia and eventually to Europe. With the implementation of the Zangezur Corridor, this route will be shortened even more.

From this point of view of the Caspian Sea, there has been a rapprochement between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, which are on both sides of the sea, recently; because Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan reached an agreement on the friendship zone in the Caspian Sea in January 2021. Kazakhstan has also made various contacts with both Azerbaijan and Georgia since January 2022.

The primary purpose of these contacts is to build a safe and functional route with solid ties between Central Asia and the Caucasus. It can be said that the states of the region set an essential vision in the eyes of Eurasia to make the Middle Line more active and profitable. Because Kazakhstan has called for China to use the Middle Line.[1]

It can be said that the rapprochement between countries in the Caspian Sea allows for a secure connection between China and Europe. At this point, the Caspian policies of China and European countries and their relations with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan are of great importance. First of all, it is known that China has essential relations with all three countries. For example, Azerbaijan is the country with which China has the most intense relations in the Caucasus. Kazakhstan is of vital geopolitical and geoeconomic importance for the Beijing administration. Because a significant part of the most stable and short-distance routes to reach the West passes through the territory of Kazakhstan. On the other hand, Turkmenistan has intense relations with China in many fields, especially in energy.

On the other hand, Europe has been developing its ties with Central Asia and the Caucasus for a while. In particular, the strategic location of Azerbaijan in the Caspian Sea makes this a necessity. The stability of the order established in the Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War enabled Europe to develop healthy relations with the region's countries. It is known that European countries want to improve their relations with Caspian countries in terms of energy, transportation, and transportation. For this purpose, it is known to support pipeline projects such as Nabucco, TANAP, and TAP. In addition, visits are organized to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan at various levels to establish healthy relations with the east of the Caspian.

As a result, activating the Middle Line means building ties shaped by strong and win-win logic in Eurasia. In particular, transforming the strategic positions of Central Asia and the Caucasus into a profit will enable the sustainable development of countries. This will strengthen the cooperation between regions and countries. It will also pave the way for countries that have stabilized economically in the heart of Eurasia to fight terrorist organizations, radical elements, and separatist groups. In this context, ensuring the security and stability of Central Asia and the Caucasus will directly contribute to the security of Eurasia. Because when Afghanistan-centered problems continue and social movements are experienced due to economic reasons, the most crucial need of Eurasia is strong nation-states that are in solidarity and can confront various issues on their own.

[1] "Kazakh Prime Minister Calls To Intensify Cooperation Through Trans-Caspian International Transport Route At Boao Forum For Asia", The Central Asia, <https://thecentralasia.com/neighbors/china/22/04/2022/kazakh-prime-minister-calls-to-intensify-cooperation-through-trans-caspian-international-transport-route-at-boao-forum-for-asia/> (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Reflection of Strong Cooperation in the Turkic World: The Visit of the President of Kazakhstan to Baku

The President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Qasim-Jumart Tokayev, visited Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on August 24, 2022. This visit is extremely remarkable as it took place shortly after Mr. Tokayev's meeting with the Russian President Vladimir Putin on the occasion of his visit to Sochi on August 19, 2022. This is highly significant

in terms of demonstrating the constructive role that Mr. Tokayev has undertaken within the regional cooperation processes.

It can be stated that the main substance of the agenda of Mr. Tokayev's visit to Azerbaijan is the Middle Corridor centered projects over



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cooperation. As it is known, the Middle Corridor is the name of the energy and transit transportation route that starts from China, passes through Central Asia, reaches the Caucasus via the Caspian Sea, and then opens to Europe via Turkey. The significance of this route is related to the fact that it obtains a much lower cost and is much safer compared to the projects considered to be equivalent. Therefore, the Middle Corridor is the key route in connecting Asia and Europe, or in other words, in East-West axis cooperation. Mr. Tokayev's visit to Baku once again revealed the importance of the Middle Corridor.

As will be remembered, on August 18, 2022, Kazakhstan's Chairman of the Board of KazMunayGas, Mr. Magzum Mirzagaliyev and SOCAR's Chairman Mr. Rovshan Najaf met in Baku and elaborated on ways to develop bilateral cooperation in Caspian-based infrastructure projects.[1] In fact, it is possible to characterize Mr. Mirzagaliyev's meeting with Mr. Najaf as a preliminary preparation for Mr. Tokayev's visit to Baku. Because, on the agenda of Mr. Tokayev, cooperation processes centered on the Caspian Sea, which is the most important connection point of the Middle Corridor, possessed a great place.

During the visit, a bilateral meeting was held between the President of Azerbaijan Mr. Aliyev and Mr. Tokayev. According to the Presidential Press Service of Azerbaijan, Mr. Aliyev stated the following at the meeting:[2]

"Mr. President, welcome to Azerbaijan. I am so glad to see you. I am sure that your visit will be very successful and friendly, the fraternal relations between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan will reach to a new level."

These words, which reflect the search for strong cooperation between the two brotherly countries of the Turkish World, are extremely important as they define that the relations between the parties will be relocated to a new level. This new level, on the other hand, indicates the relations are to be deepened through the Middle Corridor. However, the scope of relations within Nur-Sultan and Baku is not limited to this point. Because the parties came up with three more issues upon the occasion of Tokayev's visit. These can be listed as follows:

Developing economic-commercial relations shaped by the win-win strategy, in a way that gives priority to mutual interests, Strengthening ties of brotherhood by increasing cultural interaction, Maintaining and strengthening the common stance before

international organizations, which can evolve into a "Strategic Partnership."

To address these, the desire to develop economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan should be mentioned primarily. As a matter of fact, during the visit of Mr. Tokayev, Baku hosted the first meeting of the Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan Business Council. Since it was the first meeting, it can be stated that Baku witnessed a historical moment. A large number of documents were signed at the meeting and the will to develop economic relations was concretely demonstrated. As a matter of fact, in his speech during the meeting, Kazakhstan Chamber of Foreign Trade Chairman of the Board Ayan Erenov claimed that the commercial and economic relations between the two countries should be developed and that there happens to be a great potential before them. In addition, Erenov stated that his greatest hopes are in the fields of logistics, energy and construction.[3] The fact that Erenov includes logistics and energy cooperation in the fields he defines as "the greatest hope" happens to be no such thing but a reference to the Middle Corridor.

During the visit of Mr. Tokayev, efforts to develop cultural interaction in the means of strengthening the bond of brotherhood between the two countries also came into prominence. As a matter of fact, among the documents signed at the Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan Business Council Meeting, there is an agreement that allows the cities of Shusha, the cultural capital of the Turkish World, and Turkestan, the spiritual capital of the Turkish World, to be accepted as sister cities.[4]

In fact, looking at the characteristics of these cities, it must be emphasized that it would be incomplete to say that only the development of the brotherhood law was aimed between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. The fact that the city of Shusha in Azerbaijan and the city of Turkestan in Kazakhstan became brother cities is perhaps one of the most meaningful moves of the efforts to build a strong Turkic World. Therefore, Mr. Tokayev's visit to Baku is profoundly valuable in terms of both strengthening the integration processes of the Turkic World and presenting the importance of the Middle Corridor, which is the joint project of the Turkic World, to the whole world.

On the other hand, another development that reflects the brotherhood law between Nur-Sultan and Baku is the announcement that Kazakhstan will establish a "Creative Development Center" for children in Karabakh, upon the occasion of this visit.[5] It is understood that this center, which will provide education to 600 students, will basically serve as a technology

school.[6] This reflects the significance that the Turkish World attaches to scientific developments in accordance with the requirements of our age. At this point, the choice of Karabakh for the mentioned center in question displays the sensitivity of Kazakhstan upon the Karabakh issue, which the Turkish World is also sensitive towards.

On the occasion of this visit, a decision was taken that could be foreseen as to bring the relations between the two countries to a level of strategic partnership. This means that the parties continue to support each other within international organizations and create an environment that will perform their stance in a much powerful manner. As a matter of fact, in his statement on the subject, Mr. Aliyev said, "Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are actively cooperating within the framework of international organizations." [7] In addition, Mr. Aliyev stated that he believes this will proceed in the future.[8]

As a result, Mr. Tokayev's visit to Baku and his meeting with Mr. Aliyev in this context can be interpreted as the embracing of two brotherly countries. These two states, which share a common culture based on thousands of years of ancient past, pursue their search for a common future. In this context, these relations, which are shaped by respect for each other's sovereignty, independence, unitary structures, territorial integrity and are based upon cooperation-based mutual interests, once again clearly demonstrate the strong cooperation that exists within the powerful Turkish World.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] "Ильхам Алиев: Азербайджан и Казахстан продолжат поддерживать друг друга в рамках международных организаций", Vesti, <https://vesti.az/politika/ilxam-aliev-azerbaidzan-i-kazaxstan-prodolzat-podderzivat-drug-druga-v-ramkax-mezdunarodnyx-organizacii-470467>, (Date of Accession: 25.08.2022).

[8] Ibid.





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# “Alliances” Built Through “Exercises” in the Pacific

Military exercises are one of the most important tools used by states to intimidate and deter their rivals in international relations. Multinational military maneuvers are considered important tools in armies develop their combat capabilities in land, air and naval with allied states, be prepared for conflict at any time, and test new military technologies. These maneuvers are also valuable in that they show the

geopolitical axes in which states are involved or tend to do so.

It is seen that the exercises in the Pacific region have increased in recent years, especially that the European states have started to increase their military presence there by giving weight to naval exercises and patrols carried out for navigational security. The reason for this, the



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West claims, is that China has expanded its military activities in the region and jeopardized the security of strategic maritime trade routes, which are of great importance for world trade. In this context, China's construction of artificial islands, ports, radar stations and air bases, especially in the South China Sea surrounding Taiwan, causes Western powers to increase their military presence in the Pacific. In this context, Western states, especially the United States of America (US), are holding a series of military exercises with their allies in the Indo-Pacific in order to limit and deter the “Chinese threat”. China's response to this with various military actions leads to an increase in polarization in the Pacific and the emergence of some alliances.

After the visit of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives to Taiwan, China carried out “Live Fire Drills” around the island. After that, the US and Indonesia organized the “Super Garuda Shield” exercises, which they have been regularly conducting every year since 2009. The highest participation in the multinational exercise was experienced this year with 14 countries. While Japan, Canada, South Korea, Australia and England directly participated in the maneuvers hosted by Indonesia and the US; France, Germany, India, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and East Timor sent observers. In response, China conducted a joint air force exercise called “Fal-con Strike 2022” with Thailand.[1] Thailand, which has improved its relations with the US for the last two years, was one of the countries that benefited from Quadrilateral Dialogue's (QUAD) Covid-19 vaccine aid. Thailand, which has also improved its military cooperation with the US, participated in military exercises called “Hanuman Guardian” in March 2022. Again, in this process, there was an increase in military exercises between the US, South Korea and Japan. For example, in July 2022, the US and South Korea held air exercises. Apache attack helicopters, real weapons and rockets were used for the first time since 2019 in the maneuvers, which is the first joint exercise in which F-35 jets participate. In mid-August of the same year, the US, South Korea and Japan conducted missile defense and ballistic missile search exercises within the scope of the multinational “Pacific Dragon” exercise off Hawaii. Between August 22 and September 1, 2022, the US and South Korea conducted military exercises under the name of “Ulchi Freedom Shield.” Airplanes, warships, tanks and tens of thousands of soldiers from the two countries participated in the summer exercises.

In the same period, a large air warfare exercise called “Pitch Black 22” was started to be organized by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The exercise, which is held every two years, was canceled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Approximately 100 aircraft and 2,500 military personnel from NATO countries, Asia and Oceania are participating in the exercise, which is currently being carried out and will last until September 8, 2022. Countries that directly participate in aerial maneuvers hosted by Australia are France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the US.

The remarkable point here is that Japan, Germany and South Korea participated in this air exercise for the first time. In addition, Canada, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) participate at the military personnel level.[2] In this context, Malaysia from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries only sends personnel; Indonesia also sent warplanes. Apart from this, it is also important that Thailand and the UAE are included here. It is seen that the US has expanded the anti-Chinese axis in the Pacific. Newcomers to this axis can be listed as Germany and Thailand.

India, which has traditionally participated in the exercises of the US and its allies recently, has decided to participate in the Vostok 2022 exercises hosted by Russia between 1-7 September 2022; however, QUAD did not take part in the naval part of the exercises to avoid the reaction of its ally Japan. India's participation in Vostok-2022 exercises has been limited to strategic command and personnel exercises. While India is considered an ally of the US at sea, it has no particular ally in Asia and often cooperates with Russia.

Before the start of Vostok-22 exercises in the Sea of Japan by Chinese navy ships, the Australian, Canadian, Japanese, South Korean and US navies completed the “Pacific Vanguard 2022” exercise in Guam, hosted by the US, between 21-29 August 2022.[3]

In the same period, it is seen that those who took part in the “Pitch Black 22” air exercise organized by Australia differed from those who participated in the naval exercise of the US, and some of them did not particularly participate or were excluded. For example, Japan, Singapore and Germany participated in Australia's air exercises for the first time. France is also here. In addition, India also participated in the exercise in question. However, it should be emphasized that countries such as England, France, Germany, New Zealand and India were not involved in the US naval exercise. Each has its own reasons. For example, England was not included here because it

competed with the US despite being a Pacific power. France participates in exercises with the US, mostly in the Indian Ocean, the Strait of Malacca or the South China Sea. In the Pacific region, it is in competition with the US.

Germany has not permanent naval presence in the region. Even the German air force went to Australia after 48 hours of flight. That's why Berlin is trying to establish a permanent presence in the Pacific. New Zealand, on the other hand, sent only personnel to Australia's air exercise, not aircraft. Again, Wellington did not participate in the naval exercise organized by the US in Guam. This is because New Zealand does not want to anger Beijing by engaging in military activities in distant seas, especially in areas close to China. Similarly, India is careful to participate in exercises only in the seas to its south, namely in the Indian Ocean. It does not want to provoke or provoke China by interfering with its near seas.

Shows of power in the Indo-Pacific are exhibited through military exercises. In other words, exercises are used as a «retaliation tool» in the US-China competition. It is also important that European states and regional actors that are interested in the Indo-Pacific take part in any exercise or send observers to it, in terms of showing the axis in which they are close or involved. Based on the exercises in the Pacific, it is possible to comment on which countries are on which side in the US-China rivalry. Because no state will want to participate in the same exercise with any state that it sees potential for conflict in the short or long term. In other words, it is not possible to allow an enemy country to participate in the same exercises.

As a result, we are moving towards a process in which alliances are built through exercises in the Pacific.

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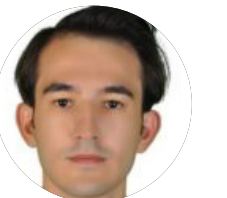
# Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Bob Menendez's visit to Greece

Chairman of the United States (US) Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Bob Menendez, has made a private visit to Greece on August, 17, 2022. Visit of the Senator Menendez is very important both in terms of the length of this trip and the contacts he has made.

Menendez is known as a prominent person in the US Senate with the identity of a support-

er of Greece. The fact that Menendez's visit to Greece lasted about two weeks shows the importance he attaches to the US-Greece relations.

In addition to being a US Senator, Menendez is the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This identity is another point that increases the importance of his visit to Greece.



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Because this committee has a critical importance in shaping US foreign policy. The following statements on the official website of the US Senate are important in terms of revealing the function of the committee in foreign policy: [1]

“Throughout its history, the committee has been instrumental in developing and influencing United States foreign policy, at different times supporting and opposing the policies of presidents and secretaries of state.”

The US Senator started his visit from the Greek port of Alexandroupolis.[2] This is also a remarkable development. Because the Port of Alexandroupolis, where the US has spent significant military expenditures in recent years, is expected to become operational in the coming weeks.[3] Therefore, it is not coincidence that Menendez visited Alexandroupolis as part of his visit to Greece. This port is considered extremely critical in the defense of US interests at the regional level. In this respect, Menendez’s visit to Alexandroupolis is a conscious choice and is intended to sending a message to various countries.

Considering the increasing tension in relations between Türkiye and Greece in the recent period, Menendez’s visit can be interpreted as a concrete indication that the US is siding with Athens against Ankara.

Also thanks to the Port of Alexandroupolis, the US is both surrounding Russia and trying to prevent China, which the latter has invested heavily in the Port of Piraeus, by piling up in Greece, which is an important route within the framework of China’s Belt-Road Project.[4] Therefore, Menendez wanted to send message to Beijing with the visit.

After Alexandroupolis, the US Senator went to Athens, the capital of Greece, where he continued his contacts. Within this scope, he made statements to the Greek press and met with important representatives of the Greek Government.

In an interview with the Greek newspaper Kathimerini on August 21, 2022, Menendez called for greater investment in defense and security, emerging technologies, the digital economy and maritime industry with the aim of deepening what he described as multidimensional, Greece-US relations. Apart from this, he drew attention to the strategic location of the Alexandroupolis Port that he visited and made it clear that he would not support the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye.[5]

In recent months, Greek Prime Minister Kriakos Mitsotakis addressed the US Congress as part of his visit to the US and called for the risk of instability on the south-east wing of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) not to be ignored while making decisions on the supply of military equipment in the region. [6] In fact, Mitsotakis tried to imply that they expect the US to reject Ankara’s F-16 request. In this context, the emphasis on the F-16 by Senator Menendez, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, can be interpreted as a sign that the messages given by Mitsotakis during his visit to the US are understood by Washington.

Menendez met with Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis on August, 26 2022. On the one hand, the two focused on the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean; on the other hand, focused on cooperation in the fields of energy and economy. In the meeting, Mitsotakis stated that relations between the two countries are at their highest point. Menendez, on the other hand, praised Greece’s support for the Ukraine occupied by Russia. In addition, he emphasized the Port of Alexandroupolis, stating that he believed it will be a geostrategic center for “Greece, the region and the alliance” (NATO).[7] As can be seen, since the starting of Menendez’s visit to Greece, attention has been drawn to the base acquired by the US in the Port of Alexandroupolis.

In his speech here, Menendez, who suggested that Türkiye represents the most “persistent threat” in the Eastern Mediterranean, described Türkiye as one of the major challenges the global community is confronting, as well as China, Russia and climate change.

Another place where Menendez had contacts was the University of Athens. The US Senator was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by University of Athens.[8] In his speech here, Menendez, who suggested that Türkiye represents the most “persistent threat” in the Eastern Mediterranean,[9] described Türkiye as one of the major challenges the global community is confronting, as well as China, Russia and climate change.[10] As can be understood from the words of the US Senator, Türkiye formed the focal point of his visit to Greece. In other words, Menendez decisively demonstrated the support of the US for Greece in an environment where tensions between Ankara and Athens are rising. In other words, Menendez has strongly demonstrated the US support for Greece in an environment where the tension between Ankara and Athens are rising.

Consequently, Menendez’s visit was fruitful in terms of improving the relations between the US and Greece. It is possible to say that Menendez’s visit was shaped by a content centered on the Alexandroupolis base. One of the most important details of the visit is the understanding that the role of the base in Alexandroupolis will gradually increase in the relations between the two countries. Thus, it has been confirmed that relations between Athens and Washington are at a quite high level.

It can be said that Menendez wanted to send a message to the three countries with his visit to Greece. The first of these is Türkiye. Because Türkiye formed an important part of the statements made by Menendez in Greece and he wanted to send a message that he was on the side of Athens against Ankara. The second message is directed at Russia. Due to the invasion operation launched by Russia in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the ropes on the Moscow-Washington line have reached the breaking point. Considering the role of the base located in Alexandroupolis in surrounding Russia, it would not be wrong to say that Menendez’s visit contains a message aimed at Russia. The third message is given to the China. Tensions between Beijing and Washington have risen to the highest level in recent years following visit of the Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. The US is also threatening China, which the latter has invested in the Port of Piraeus in the region thanks to the Alexandroupolis Base. Therefore, considering the timing of Menendez’s visit, it can be said that another country he wanted to send a message to is China.

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[4] Cemal Ege Özkan, “Yunanistan ve Çin Dışişleri Bakanları’nın ASEAN Toplantısı Çerçevesinde Görüşmeleri”, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/yunanistan-ve-cin-disisleri-bakanlarinin-asean-toplantisi-cercevesinde-gorusmeleri/>, (Date of Accession: 26.08.2022).

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Towards a “Strategic Partnership” in India–Russia Relations

In an interview that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov gave on August 28, 2022, he stated that relations with India were at the highest level, with the proposal of New Delhi, these relations began to be called «Privileged Strategic Partnership,» and Moscow would not have a relationship with any other country to be defined in this way.[1] The visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to New Delhi at the end of 2021 has been the most important symbol of this partnership. In addition, the cooperation carried out on the axis of multipolarity within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS and the Russia–In-

dia–China troika has started to go beyond the alliance relationship today.

India’s participation in the multinational military exercises Vostok-2022, held in Russia and in which China will also take part, shows that Moscow–New Delhi relations are at a much higher level than expected. India, which regularly participates in the exercises of the United States of America (USA) and its allies as a member of QUAD, participated in the Zapad-2021 exercises of Russia in 2021, together with China. This has signaled that India’s foreign policy has become increasingly multi-vectored. Coming out of the



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USA–Russia rivalry stronger, India is drawing its own path as a non-aligned country instead of being on the axis of the West or the East.

These sensitivities have also drawn attention in their relations with Russia. For example, despite participating in Vostok-2022, New Delhi did not take part in exercises in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan, taking into account the sensitivity of its ally Tokyo in QUAD.[2] Similarly, India may have conveyed to Russia that it does not want to participate in the sections involving China in the exercises in question. It can be said that New Delhi’s role in the exercises is limited to strategic command levels and personnel participation, and it does not participate in the maritime division and parts of China. The most practical benefit that India will gain from this is that it will see China’s military capabilities very close.

Many countries, from Syria to Nicaragua, from Azerbaijan to Laos and Belarus, participated in this exercises hosted by Russia. Therefore, it is important for India to take part in the same exercises with the former Soviet countries Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan within the scope of Vostok-2022. In this way, New Delhi, which aims to turn its face to Asia with the help of Russia. In other words, New Delhi may need Moscow’s help to reassert itself as a Eurasian power.

### Response of the US

The Washington administration has said that New Delhi has historical ties to Moscow and that it will take long-term preparation to move its foreign policy away from it.[3] As a matter of fact, although the USA supports India to develop its military capacity and war capabilities, this is not enough when compared to Russia. Because, Russia’s biggest market in military equipment is India with 42%. France comes in second place with a share of 27% and the USA comes in third with 12%.

As for combat capabilities, the USA has been providing mountain warfare training since 2020 to help India in border conflicts with China. Despite this, the Washington administration partially

understood that India would participate in Russia’s military exercises. Because it is aware that it does not give enough support to India in this regard. India, just like in the case of Turkey, has been demanding warplanes and other military equipment from the USA for years; however, India says that it could not get enough support in this regard and that’s why it turned to Russia. US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price noted the following:[4]

“Diverting a country’s foreign policy or a country’s security order or defense procurement practices from a country like Russia is not something we can do overnight. It’s not something we can do for weeks or even months. We see this as a long-term challenge.”

From the above statement, we can conclude that the USA needs 5–10 years ahead of itself in order to militarily draw India to its side. During this period, it seems inevitable that India will deepen its partnership with Russia. Therefore, the USA looks at these developments from a broader perspective. For example, US President Joe Biden stated that they have concerns about every country participating in military exercises with Russia, and that this is not limited to India.[5] Because while there is a war with Ukraine; participating in Russia’s military exercises can also mean appreciating its military power and thus supporting the war in Ukraine.

In addition to China and India, the participation of countries such as Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Syria, Belarus, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in the exercises is interpreted as positioning on the opposite side of the USA and supporting Russia’s war. Moscow, on the other hand, does this rather than building an axis around itself; it sees it as an effort to destroy the hegemony of the West and to establish multipolarity.

### Geopolitical Consequences

While India’s relations with the USA are defined with pacts which take place between these countries; raising its relations with Russia to the level of strategic partnership at all levels may lead to serious breaks in regional and global geopolitics. Because in the alliance relationship, the parties respect each other’s national interests and some differences of opinion in bilateral relations and foreign policy can be tolerated. However, strate-



gic partnership means absolute cooperation in both bilateral relations and foreign policy issues. This level of cooperation is often described as an “alliance.”

At this point, it is necessary to draw attention once again to a point that Lavrov emphasized, as a result of the insistent demands of New Delhi, that the bilateral relations were raised to the level of «Privileged Strategic Partnership». Normally, Russia does not accept this kind of relationship with any country. Here, it can be said that India has made a special effort to take its relations with Russia to the next level.

The most important result of this rapprochement will be felt on China’s foreign policy. As a matter of fact, China-Russia relations are also considered at the level of strategic partnership. New Delhi offered Moscow a «privileged and priority strategic partnership» in order to rise above this level in China-Russian relations. In short, New Delhi wants to be closer to Moscow than Beijing. Because Russia-India rapprochement may alienate China in the global system and lead to its isolation. For this reason, the Moscow administration advocates cooperation within the framework of the troika in order to keep good relations with both actors.

The most important effect of the «Priority and Privileged Strategic Partnership» between India and Russia can be seen on the Indo-Pacific policy of the USA. Washington may reduce the areas it cooperates with New Delhi, which has long been unwilling to cooperate within the framework of QUAD, and may completely exclude India from its new alliances in the Pacific. This situation will also hit the US strategy to contain China. On the other hand, it will bring the US-China rapprochement with it. Because of the Russia-India alliance, Beijing may fall into the «other» situation. Despite this, it can be predicted that China will never move away from Russia and will continue its dialogue with India within the framework of the troika.

In any case, China acts as a barrier to India’s rapprochement with Russia. It is in Washington’s interests that New Delhi cannot cooperate closely with Moscow due to Sino-Indian rivalry. Therefore, the Indo-Chinese hostility and the Russian-Chinese alliance; In other words, the current status quo allows the USA to improve its relations with India. Despite this, India intends to form an alliance with Russia by breaking the current status quo. It is the USA itself that marginalizes India. Therefore, it is he who will suffer the consequences.

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[2] “India to Join Russia’s Vostok 2022 Wargames, But Stay Away from Naval Drill to Avoid Hurting Japan’s Sensitivity”, Deccan Herald, <https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-to-join-russia-s-vostok-2022-wargames-but-stay-away-from-naval-drill-to-avoid-hurting-japan-s-sensitivity-1140572.html>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).

[3] “India, China to Send Troops to Russia for Military Exercise”, Economic Times, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-china-to-send-troops-to-russia-for-military-exercise/articleshow/93647132.cms?from=mdr>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).

[4] Ibid.

[5] “US Concerned About India’s Participation in Russia Military Exercises”, Al Arabiya, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2022/08/30/US-concerned-about-India-s-participation-in-Russia-military-exercises>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Early Presidential Election: The New Phase of Strong Reforms in Kazakhstan

Mr. Qasim-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan, proposed early presidential elections in the autumn in his statement on September 1, 2022. The proposal draws attention as a development that confirms that the “New Kazakhstan” construction process, carried out under the leadership of Mr. Tokayev, continues with strong reforms, beyond being an ordinary election call.

As it is known, Mr. Tokayev managed the “Tragic January Incidents” that broke out in Kazakhstan in the first days of 2022 with great democratic maturity and while demonstrating a determined will in the fight against terrorism. On the other hand, it has accelerated the democratization and liberalization processes by taking into account the legitimate demands of the people. In this context, Kazakhstan sets an ex-



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ample for the region with its reforms and shines like a rising star in the middle of the “Great Steppe.”

It can be said that the main issue that Mr. Tokayev focused on after the “Tragic January Events” was the strengthening of relations between the center and the periphery. This essentially means strengthening the state-nation unity. In line with this aim, Mr. Tokayev has taken steps to eliminate the injustice in income distribution in order to present a prosperous future to the Kazakh people.

In this context, it can be said that one of the most important priorities of Kazakhstan is to transform the multi-vector/directional diplomacy understanding based on balance, which serves to make its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national security sustainable, into economic income. In other words, Mr. Tokayev plans to have a constructive and peaceful foreign policy understanding that serves regional and global peace, resulting in attracting investment to the country. This will increase the employment rate in Kazakhstan and naturally reduce inflation.

At this point, it can be stated that the reforms carried out in the direction of democratization are of great importance both in order to be the most important prerequisite for a safe market environment for investors and to strengthen the state-nation unity in Kazakhstan. For this reason, Mr. Tokayev, in his address to the nation on March 16, 2022, announced that steps would be taken such as reducing the powers of the President, modernizing the electoral system, improving the representation capacity of the opposition, making reforms in the field of human rights, and reshaping the administrative and regional structures of the country.[1]

As it can be understood, Mr. Tokayev revealed the road map to increase social harmony on March 16, 2022. The President of Kazakhstan has also demonstrated his sincerity regarding reforms by resigning from his position as the Chairman of the ruling Amanat Party on April 26, 2022. While explaining this decision, “I find it right that the President does not prefer any party. In other words, he should be politically neutral.”[2] The Kazakh leader also ensured that important constitutional reforms were made on the occasion of the referendum held on June 5, 2022. As a matter of fact, with the constitutional referendum, which is one of the most important steps in the construction process of New Kazakhstan, 56 amendments were made to 33 articles of the constitution and democracy was strengthened.[3]

However, not rejecting Mr. Tokayev’s accumulation of the past, it is possible to state that it acts in line with the ideal of creating a modern state with its approach that prepares for the dynamism of the future. As a matter of fact, the support of the Kazakh people in the constitutional referendum has also revealed that there is a serious consensus between the state and the nation in terms of strengthening the center-periphery relations.

From the first day he became the President, “The State is for the Nation” understanding within the framework of the “State Hearing the Voice of the People” model is applied. Acting with a new motto, Mr. Tokayev opened the door to a new breakthrough in terms of democratization processes in the country with his proposal for an early presidential election on September 1, 2022. In order to understand this situation, it is necessary to draw attention to the following expressions used by Tokayev:[4]

“I propose that early presidential elections be held this autumn... For me, the interests of the state are paramount. For this reason, I am ready to participate in the new presidential elections by shortening my presidential mandate... I propose limiting the presidential mandate to a period of 7 years, however, without a re-election.”

At the first stage, the Kazakh leader, who took a step that would integrate the Kazakh people with an impartial presidential move and not cause political polarization, suggested that the President’s term of office be limited to seven years at this point, showing his belief in democratization. Therefore, Mr. Tokayev seems determined to have his name written in the history of the democratization of Kazakhstan. In this regard, the fact that he emphasized that the interests of the state were more important than anything else during his speeches also indicated that the President of Kazakhstan did not act like an ordinary politician; it reveals that he was a great statesman who struggled to create a prosperous future for the Kazakh people. It is possible to understand this situation from the following words of Tokayev:[5]

“First of all, 7 years is enough time to implement any ambitious program. On the other hand, limiting the presidency to a single term will allow the President to focus on solving the strategic tasks of national development to the maximum extent.”

The statement above by the Kazakh leader is important in two respects. First, it states that a seven-year period is sufficient for an ambitious political program. This means that the President

will only serve one term, thus ensuring continuity in the renewal and modernization processes. In other words, Mr. Tokayev aims to preserve the dynamism in the state administration and the excitement of presenting new achievements to the public. Of course, it can be said that this will mean a great democratic revolution, as it will normalize the election for change of leadership.

Secondly, Mr. Tokayev thinks that the President should focus on strategic tasks. This is a non-partisan identity; that is, it points to a country that will be ruled by powerful statesmen. Of course, the most important outcomes will be the establishment of a merit-based order and the redirection of the country’s energy away from pointless political debates.

In addition to all these, the President of Kazakhstan’s call for early elections is a harbinger of the continuation of the reform process in the country. Because the Kazakh leader reminded that all the political institutions of the state will be renewed in 2023, by saying “Key state institutions need to be comprehensively updated within the scope of the new strategy.”[6] This means that the reforms will continue.

In fact, it can be said that Mr. Tokayev’s desire is to confront the problems in the country and to find solutions to these issues. As a matter of fact, the President of Kazakhstan said, “It is extremely important to protect the reform process and to solve all political problems without putting them on the shelf.”[7] He clearly demonstrated this approach. This can be interpreted as the Kazakh state’s determination to overcome many of the country’s problems.

As a result, Kazakhstan spent the first thirty years of its independence working to ensure the sustainability of its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. The establishment phase of an independent Kazakhstan has concluded, and the country’s ascent has begun. This brings along modernization processes and democratization breakthroughs. In this sense, Mr. Tokayev successfully carries out the New Kazakhstan construction process and implements strong reforms prepared for this purpose. The main priority of the reforms is to create a prosperous future for the Kazakh people and, in this context, to strengthen the center-periphery relationship in the country. The steps taken by Mr. Tokayev also serve this purpose. The new phase of these reforms is the regulation of the President’s term of office to be limited to seven years and the early presidential election. This shows that Mr. Tokayev is a great statesman who puts the interests of the country far above his own expectations. These reforms, on the other hand, do not only make New Kazakhstan a developing country; at the same time, it is a role model for the entire region.

[1] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, “Yeni Kazakistan: Yenilenme ve Modernizasyon Yolu”, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/yeni-kazakistan-yenilenme-ve-modernizasyon-yolu/>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[2] “Kazakistan Cumhurbaşkanı Tokayev, İktidar Partisi Amanat’ın Genel Başkanlığından Çekildi”, AA, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/kazakistan-cumhurbaskani-tokayev-iktidar-partisi-amanatin-genel-baskanligindan-cekildi/2573574>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[3] “Токаев объявил о проведении референдума по поправкам в Конституцию”, Forbes KZ, [https://forbes.kz/process/tokaev-obyavil-o-provedenii-referenduma\\_v\\_kazahstane\\_po\\_popravkam\\_v\\_konstitutsiyu/](https://forbes.kz/process/tokaev-obyavil-o-provedenii-referenduma_v_kazahstane_po_popravkam_v_konstitutsiyu/), (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[4] “Kazakistan Cumhurbaşkanı’ndan Kritik Hamle: Erken Seçim Kararı Aldı”, Milli Gazete, <https://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/11903013/kazakistan-cumhurbaskanindan-kritik-hamle-erken-secim-karari-aldi>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[5] “Kazakistan’da 2023’te Devletin Tüm Siyasi Kilit Kurumları Yenilenecek”, Star, <https://www.star.com.tr/dunya/kazakistanda-2023te-devletin-tum-siyasi-kilit-kurumlari-yenilenecek-haber-1734175/>, (Date of Accession 02.09.2022).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Is India-China Rivalry Moving to Indo-Pacific?

After the visit of the military research ship "Yuan Wang 5" of the People's Republic of China to Sri Lanka, India-China relations began to deteriorate beyond repair. Finally, New Delhi accused Beijing of "militarizing the Taiwan Strait." India, which is currently experiencing border tensions with China and therefore does not get involved in Taiwan-related issues, has made such a statement for the first time, openly criticizing China's military presence in the seas.[1] The most important reason for this is the recent

arrival of the Chinese military research ship, which directly threatens India's national security, in Sri Lanka.

In this incident in July 2022, New Delhi put pressure on Sri Lanka to prevent this visit, which threatened its national interests in the southern seas but could not prevent it. At this point, India has raised its voice against China on the issue of the security of the Indo-Pacific region, which the US has long wanted to attract. Because the



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Chinese ship visiting Sri Lanka is equipped with large radar systems to conduct space exploration and is thought to have the capacity to monitor India's military bases. On the other hand, China claimed that the ship was conducting scientific research. In short, India suspected that the Chinese ship was watching its military bases.

Similar tensions are experienced in the Ladakh border region. In this context, China agrees to withdraw 20 km due to negotiations with India after entering 40 km from the border. As a result, it gains 20 km of land.[2] Feeling surrounded by the Indian Ocean after its northern border, New Delhi felt obliged to warn about the "Chinese threat" in the Indo-Pacific. India would not have made such a statement if it had not interested her. However, when she saw that the "Chinese threat" had reached the Indian Ocean, she had to do this. The situation has been an indication that the India-China rivalry has begun to spread from land to sea.

In the background of this tension in the seas lies India's failure to express its commitment to the "One China" principle after the tensions regarding Taiwan; because India has not confirmed its commitment to this principle in the eyes of the world public for many years. However, after the visit of Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, many European states, including the G-7 and ASEAN countries, and even the US, reiterated their commitment to the "one China" principle. Beijing then asked New Delhi to reaffirm its commitment to the 'one China' principle.[3] Beijing expected a statement in this direction from India in the first days of the visit, but New Delhi remained silent during this process.

Due to India objection to confirm its commitment to the "one China" principle, the Beijing administration began to think that the neighborhood's security was under threat. As India remained silent on this issue, China sought "ultimacy" in it. But New Delhi has many reasons to remain silent. At the beginning of this is the border disputes with China. India should not be expected to support the "one China" principle while the Beijing administration claims Indian territory, for example, Arunachal Pradesh.

In short, there is mistrust between the two countries regarding respect for their territorial integrity and sovereignty. Suppose China renounces its claims on disputed territories such as Kashmir, Ladakh, and Arunachal Pradesh and gives some assurances in this regard in return. In that case, India can make peace with China and reaffirm its adherence to its principles.

In a statement on 18 August 2022, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that relations with China are at a "challenging stage" and that there are "many reasons" for the two countries to work together.[4] Responding to the comments, the Beijing Government said, "We hope India decides to work in the same direction as us to get relations back on track at an 'early date.'" found in the statement.[5] Based on these words, India needs to "correct itself" in bilateral relations. Because this statement says, "I hope they will work in the same direction as us and cooperate." However, India claims that China acts aggressively at the border. As a result, the two countries have a trust problem arising from the border issue.

India, in general, has a reactive approach to China. New Delhi refuses to cooperate with Beijing in Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific. For example, the two countries have developed competing projects in the maritime economy corridors stretching from the Indian Ocean to the West. While China put forward the Blue Economy Corridor, which forms the sea leg of the Belt-Road Project, India focused on developing the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor with Japan. Sri Lanka a strategic stop-and-replenishment point at the center of the economic rivalry at sea. As the political and economic competition in this country gradually evolved into military dimensions, India started to take an open front against China on the seas.

In military-security exercises in the Indo-Pacific and missions performed for maritime security, India has refrained from approaching China's near seas and, in this context, has generally refused to conduct exercises with the US and its allies in the South and the East China Sea. For example, in this process, while India participated in the "Pitch Black 22" air exercise hosted by Australia, it did not participate in the "Pacific Vanguard 2022" naval exercises hosted by the US in Guam. This is because it does not want to provoke Beijing by engaging in military activities in regions close to China.

In general, India takes care only to participate in exercises in the near seas, in other words, in the Indian Ocean, and maneuvers in the far seas, in the Pacific or Oceania. Although India participated in Russia's Vostok-2022 exercises, it did not participate in the naval divisions in the Sea of Japan. The reason for this was interpreted as observing the sensitivity of its ally in QUAD, Tokyo. However, the real reason may be that India does not want to have such a presence with China and its immediate seas. In this context, India may have conveyed to Russia that it does not wish to participate in the sections where China takes part in the military exercises.

Similarly, China may have opposed India's participation in exercises in the Sea of Japan. In other words, China does not want to invite India to its near seas. On the other hand, Beijing can send a research vessel to the near seas of India. This situation causes China to carry its tension with India to the Indo-Pacific. From this point on, if India becomes more involved in the affairs of China's near seas, for example, if it starts operating in and around the Taiwan Strait, there is a high probability that the conflict between the two countries will carry over to the seas.

[1] "India Accuses China of 'Militarisation of The Taiwan Strait' As Row Over Navy Vessel Grows", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/29/india-accuses-china-of-militarisation-of-the-taiwan-strait-as-row-over-navy-vessel-grows>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[2] "Chinese Assault on India Remains Relentless", Tribune India, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/chinese-assault-on-india-remains-relentless-424625>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[3] "Beijing Asks New Delhi to Reiterate 'One China' Principle", Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-14/beijing-asks-new-delhi-to-reiterate-one-china-principle#xj4y7vzkg>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[4] "China Calls for India to Work 'In Same Direction' To Restore Ties", The Hindu, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-calls-for-india-to-work-in-same-direction-to-restore-relations-at-an-early-date/article65787177.ece>, (Date of Accession: 01.09.2022).

[5] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Two Caspian Countries Bound by Common Interests: Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan

One of the most important events of August 2022 is the first official visit of the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Qasim-Jomart Tokayev to Baku at the invitation of the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev. On the occasion of Mr. Tokayev's visit to Baku, a multi-faceted perspective was determined for the development of Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan relations in the fields of

economy, trade, transportation and cultural relations and for further strengthening of alliance ties.

Important documents signed by the country's leaders point out the positive implications of the visit. In particular, the Declaration on Strengthening Strategic Relations and Deep-



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ening Allied Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan and the Comprehensive Program for the Development of Cooperation for 2022–2026 are quite crucial for the future of the relations.

Other documents were also signed, setting out the guidelines for cooperation between the two states. Therefore, it can be said that through the agreements between the two sides, the relationship, strategic partnership, and alliance interaction between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan has reached a new and a better level.

During the meeting between Mr. Aliyev and Mr. Tokayev, the leaders of the two countries focused on the development of commercial and economic relations between Baku and Nur-Sultan. At this point, it should be emphasized that there is a great potential in the context of bilateral economic cooperation. For example, there has been a steady increase in trade volume in the last few years. For example, in the first half of 2022, the trade volume between the two countries increased more than six times compared to the same period in 2021 and reached 326.6 million dollars.

Another important event in the commercial and economic relations between the two countries was the Kazakhstan Trade and Economic Mission held in Baku in June 2022. As a result of the negotiations, Kazakhstani exporters signed contracts with Azerbaijani partners, amounting to more than \$38 million. In addition, great hopes are placed on the Kazakhstan–Azerbaijan Business Council, which was established to serve as a platform for the dialogue between the business circles of the two countries.[1]

In addition to all these, the agro-industrial complex is very prominent due to the countries’ need to strengthen their food security. For example, Azerbaijan, which is dependent on wheat imports, is considering diversifying its supply. On the other hand, Kazakhstan, which has a suitable geographical location and deep-rooted transportation infrastructure, has become a critical grain supply source for Azerbaijan. According to statistics, in the period covering January and May of 2022, Azerbaijan increased its grain imports from Kazakhstan to 50.7 million dollars, increasing approximately five times compared to the same period of the previous year.[2]

All these are minor indicators of the relations between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. However, new challenges emerging today push both Caspian states to act together and establish such a close cooperation. The difficult situation and the economic crisis in the neighboring regions have marked the development of relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. But there are also new issues that need to be discussed and resolved. High-level contacts are necessary as it will allow to resolve the most pressing issues within a joint framework. In this context, both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have common interests in developing the non-primary sector of the economy and expanding the transport and communication potential, which creates good opportunities for cooperation.

Another important link in bilateral cooperation is the Middle Corridor, which is a joint project of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, crossing the Caspian Sea and connecting China and Europe. This route creates an alternative to the Northern Corridor, which was isolated and destabilized by the Russo–Ukrainian War. For this reason, the parties are working for the active use of the Middle Corridor.

Apart from this, the Middle Corridor between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan is not only in terms of diversification of transportation routes; it is also important in terms of removing economic and political obstacles to Kazakhstan’s export of energy resources.

As it is known, Russia plays a complex role by putting pressure on the European oil market in order to increase the impact of sanctions on unfriendly countries. The announcement that the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), to which 80% of Kazakh oil is exported, was suspended on the eve of Mr. Tokayev’s visit to Baku also shows Moscow’s approach.[3]

As can be understood, Kazakhstan wants to diversify the routes being used while exporting oil to world markets. Nur-Sultan considers delivery via the Middle Corridor as an alternative infrastructure, especially for raw material exports. In this regard, it is quite remarkable that during Mr. Tokayev’s visit to Baku, a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of joint gas projects was signed between QazaqGaz, the state oil company of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, and SOCAR. The signed document provides:

Research and development of hydrocarbon deposits in Kazakhstan

Development of gas and chemical industries, modernization of gas transport

Introducing innovative technologies in this sector and exploring the opportunities for cooperation in other key areas

The memorandum may serve to develop close energy relations between the two countries and to ease the pressure on Kazakhstan. In addition, coal exports from Kazakhstan to the European Union (EU) are expected to increase in the near future due to the sanctions on Russia’s coal supply. Kazakhstan is looking for ways to develop the Port of Aktau in the Caspian and to import more into the EU by rail and sea via Azerbaijan and Georgia. It can also be said that Kazakhstan is interested in supplying some of its energy resources, especially coal, through Kazakhstan.

As a result, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, which established good relations for 30 years after gaining their independence and succeeded in bringing these relations to the level of strategic partnership, have a strong will to further develop bilateral relations. For this reason, Mr. Tokayev’s visit to Baku is such a remarkable improvement. Moreover, it is possible to say that this visit serves to strengthen the Middle Corridor, centered on the Caspian Sea, and thus is a step towards meeting the energy needs of Europe.

[1] “СМИ: Азербайджан является, прежде всего, стратегически важным партнером для Казахстана”, Report, <https://report.az/ru/vneshnyaya-politika/smi-azerbajdzhan-yavlyaetsya-prezhde-vsego-strategicheski-vazhnym-partnerom-dlya-kazahstana/>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).

[2] “Как Казахстан и Азербайджан формируют новый вектор сотрудничества”, Internet Portal SNG, <https://e-cis.info/news/568/102742/>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).

[3] “КТК приостановил эксплуатацию двух из трех нефтеналивных причалов”, Interfax, <https://www.interfax.ru/business/857647>, (Date of Accession: 31.08.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Belarus' SCO Agenda and Possible Scenarios

Western countries found it questionable that Aleksandr Lukashenko had won the presidential elections held in Belarus in 2020. Thus, the elections were not considered legitimate and the country was asked to turn away from this mistake. Lukashenko's clear stance deriving from the support he received from Russia led Belarus to be subjected to some sanctions. The Minsk administration, which aimed at reversing the negative effects caused by the sanctions, has entered a serious integration process with Russia. During this period, they signed many economic agreements

and showed the West a picture of unity by organizing joint exercises.

Moreover, the Minsk administration, which gave support messages to Moscow in the war against Ukraine and opened its territory for the deployment of Russian soldiers, faced the addition of another to the sanctions it was subjected to due to its choices. Thus, a great decrease in the country's economy has been observed.[1] According to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data, it can be said that it has entered a deep eco-



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nomie recession. As a matter of fact, after the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War, GDP of the country decreased by 4.2%.[2]

In order to reverse the negative picture in question, it is seen that Belarus prioritizes economic pursuits and tries to improve its commercial relations with Russia and China. The statement of Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko that his country and the Russian economy successfully adapted to the pressure of sanctions and managed the situation well sets an example in this regard. For instance, between January and June 2022, the trade volume in Belarus-Russia relations increased by 12.2% compared to the first half of 2021 and approached 20 billion dollars. It was observed that exports to Russia increased by 23.1% to 9.1 billion dollars.[3] Moreover, Belarusian Deputy Minister of Economy Alesia Abramenko announced that Belarus' trade relations with China have grown at a record rate and Beijing has become Minsk's second largest trading partner.[4] At this point, Belarus wants to crown its pursuit with the membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

### Towards Full Membership in the Belarus-SCO Relations

Founded in 1996 by Russia, China, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the Shanghai Five took the name SCO in 2001 with the participation of Uzbekistan. The organization has become important in the international system as a rapidly growing power center with the participation of India and Pakistan in 2017 and Iran in 2021.

The continuation of the international system under the hegemony of the United States (US) after the end of the Cold War enabled SCO to reinforce the unity of China and Russia against the unipolar system.

Belarus, on the other hand, has been trying to develop political, diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with SCO for years. The country contacted the SCO with the "dialogue partner" status in 2010, and obtained the "observer" status in 2015.

In June 2022, the Russian Administration announced that the Special Representative for SCO Affairs, Bakhtiar Hakimov had applied for full membership in the organization.[5] Based on this, it can be argued that Belarus' SCO orientation is primarily due to economic reasons. The country aims to find new mar-

kets against the sanctions imposed by Western countries and pursues a policy of balance of power. In this context, Belarusian Minister of Defence Viktor Khrenin stated that Belarus intends to expand its multifaceted cooperation with the members of the SCO and therefore applied for full membership. [6]

After Belarus's membership application, it was seen that Russia and China, which are the two most important actors of the SCO, has supported the process. Indeed, while Belarusian Ambassador to China Yuri Senko stated that he expects Belarus' participation in the SCO to allow the country to participate in "multiple projects," Senko claimed that the Minsk administration's application for full membership would be finalized at the summit to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on 15-16 September 2022.[7] Moreover, there is a serious support for the full membership of Belarus from the member countries of the SCO.[8]

### Possible Scenarios After Full Membership

It is observed that the international system dominated by the US hegemony gradually evolved into a multipolar order following the end of the Cold War. Actors who want to take part in the new system are trying to establish a multipolar world order. For this reason, Eurasian countries are looking for ways to strengthen their cooperation among themselves. It is noteworthy that Belarus also became a full member after Iran's SCO membership. It is understood from here that at a time when NATO's expansion towards the east is at an impasse with the Ukrainian Crisis, SCO is pursuing a growth-oriented policy.

The present obstacles regarding the formation of a new international system and the growing effectiveness of the SCO as an international association is parallel to the alignment of interests of the main actors that determine the internal dynamics of the organization. In this context, Belarus is expected to continue its integration process with Russia and improve its relations with Central Asian countries. Therefore, there is a search for a balance in Belarusian foreign policy.

As can be understood, for the Minsk administration, the SCO Leaders Summit, which will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 15-16 September 2022, is critical. It is anticipated that the full membership application of Belarus will be addressed and accepted at the summit, which is expected to bring up the full



membership of Belarus. This situation will bring up some scenarios. It is possible to list possible scenarios as follows:

Coordinated steps taken by the SCO member countries will strengthen cooperation within the organization and make national economies more competitive.

Belarus' membership, which has recently been striving to integrate with Russia, will increase Moscow's influence in the SCO.

Beijing can accelerate its relations with Moscow by anticipating that Russia's influence within the SCO will increase. Or rather, China may also seek to stabilize Russia.

It can be argued that Belarus' problems with the West will increase even more if it becomes a SCO member. It can be said that the country will face the risk of completely losing the Western market, especially due to economic sanctions.

Belarus's possible membership can be perceived as a new achievement in the context of breaking Western hegemony and lifting sanctions.

This membership will be of great importance for Minsk in terms of easing the isolation policy of the West. Reaching a new market, Belarus will expand its economic relations with the member countries of the SCO.

As a result, the SCO Leaders' Summit to be held on 15-16 September 2022 will witness critical developments not only for Belarus but also for Russia, China and the countries of the region. Because, membership of Belarus to SCO will mean a new declaration of will about the search for a multipolar world.

[1] "Economic Security of Belarus (April-June 2022)", Belarus Security Blog, <https://bsblog.info/economic-security-of-belarus-april-june-2022/>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "PM: Economies of Belarus and Russia Have Adapted to the Pressure of Sanctions", Belta, <https://eng.belta.by/economics/view/pm-economies-of-belarus-and-russia-have-adapted-to-the-pressure-of-sanctions-152704-2022/>, (Date of Accession: 30.08.2022).

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Central Asia-South Caucasia Platform for an Active Line

In the summit of Organization Turkish States, that took place on November 12th, 2021, in Istanbul, the President of Kyrgyzstan Mr. Sadyr Japarov has suggested that, to strengthen the stability in Midline and to use the whole potential of the line, there should a platform built between the Central Asia and South Caucasia. It can be understood better while time passes, that the given suggestion is needed.

As it is known, terrorism, radicalism, and separation movements are increasing around the globe. This situation affects Central Asia directly, where is close to Afghanistan-based threats. Yet the 'Tragic January Events' that Kazakhstan had to live through has shown the possible risks. Moreover, even though there has been a significant consensus in Karabakh; the provocative actions on system of the third actors and



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some off-system factors, with the Karabakh Clan in the front line, has been observed, especially on Azerbaijan and Armenia.

It is important to state that; it would be a misconception to see the given occasions as a problem of only two states. For example, the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia not only affected them, but also all of the states in the area of South Caucasus, the people of the geography, and the transit route. Therefore, it is obvious that the various trade and transportation corridors are few of the important areas of competition in contemporary era. In this view, the occasions in Sri Lanka, the collapse of the government and the rising instability, is the most concrete evidence of the discussed struggle.

It is correct to refer Middle Line as one of the most important corridors between the East and the West. Because Middle Line is both shorter, cheaper and provides the safest route, compared to other lines. Central Asian states, the Caspian Sea, and South Caucasus are the key points of the Middle Line that reaches through China to Europe. Thus, strong bridges and cooperations are required. States of this region would be able to provide the security of both theirs and the Caspian Sea, with those cooperations. Furthermore, regional and between-regions cooperations complicates the acts of destabilization of the imperial actors.

Based on all these information, it can be said that a platform that will be built between would be critical on solving the regional problems. Because even though there may be various occasions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Midline has to be finished in the shortest time period to provide benefit to Baku and Erivan. This would make possible the Zangezur Corridor to become a reality, and to reach its fully potential.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are appearing as the actors that strengthening the cooperation in the region, with their constructive role in regional problems. At this point, it can be referred that both states provide experience in mediation. Hence, in the platform that will be built between Central Asia and South Caucasus, it is apparent that Nur-Sultan and Tashkent would be the most important supporters of the dialogue and cooperation.

It is a fact that Central Asian states are experienced in taking joint actions, solving problems constructively and strengthening cooperation through the structures and organisations such

as Central Asian Heads of State Consultation Meetings. Meaning that, on occasion of platform that Mr. Japarov suggested, it will be easier to pass the experience through South Caucasus. Because there is not a dialogue platform to provide a common roof to solve the problems and joint action opportunity for Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in South Caucasus.

The discussed situation makes states of the region more open to threats and interventions. For an example, while the convergence between Azerbaijan and Georgia helps both states to economically develop; the exclusion of Armenia, harms the economical appearance of South Caucasus. Furthermore, economically excluded Armenia witnesses the birth of groups that driven with ethnically nationalist expressions, and organisations tend to terrorism. For sure, this is not only limited with the given state, but threatens the security and development of the whole South Caucasus.

In short, the urgency of a '5+3' platform between Central Asia and South Caucasus increases each passing day. The peace environment in South Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War enabled the elimination of the biggest obstacle to the establishment of regional security, stability, and prosperity.

As it is known, significant part of the various problems between Central Asian states has been solved rapidly. Important developments are also occurring on solving the conflicts between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It can be observed that both states show a determined will on solving the conflicts with dialogue.

To sum up, the actions of foreign actors and various terrorist groups on destabilization the routes can be prevented by convergence and cooperation between regions. There are no doubts that; building a cooperation platform between the two regions will provide the development of an important defence mechanism; and strengthen the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and uniter structure of those states who takes part in.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Why Russia Passes the Buck to the SCO in the Afghan Problem?

Although Afghanistan maintains its importance in international politics, both the Ukraine War and the Taiwan Crisis have caused the country's place in the agenda of the international public to remain in the background. However, due to the security problems caused by the attacks of the terrorist organization Devlet al-Iraq and al-Sham (DEASH) and the fact that the Taliban is not recognized by any state, problems in investments and aid continue. For this reason, the economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is getting deeper day by day.

Undoubtedly, Russia is one of the actors showing interest in the Afghan Question. However, it is seen that there have been some changes in Russia's Afghanistan policy recently.

In 2021 August, in the days when the Taliban reigned over Afghanistan after a twenty-year hiatus, announcing that it would continue its diplomatic activities at the Kabul Embassy and making constructive contributions to the conference diplomacy carried out by the regional states to resolve the issue; Russia, which even



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gave some signals about recognizing the Taliban, tried from the very beginning to keep the initiative in the Afghan Problem in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

In August of 2021; that is, in the days when the Taliban reigned over Afghanistan after a twenty-year gap, announcing that it would continue its diplomatic activities at the Kabul Embassy and making constructive contributions to the conference diplomacy carried out by the regional states to resolve the issue; Russia, which even gave some signals about recognizing the Taliban, tried from the very beginning to keep the initiative in the Afghan Problem in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

In this context, the Moscow administration, which attaches importance to the handling of Afghanistan-based developments in the context of regional security in the CSTO meetings, strives to attract the Taliban to the ground of international cooperation; also benefited from the CSTO in terms of security policies. As a matter of fact, after the Taliban came to power, Russia increased the number of personnel in its military base in Tajikistan and organized various exercises with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. At the time of the exercises, the Kremlin again brought the participation of Tashkent to the CSTO on the agenda. In addition, during that period, the Moscow administration called for the CSTO countries to be prepared against possible infiltration attempts by terrorist organizations in Afghanistan.[1]

Although Russia is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the effort to bring the CSTO to the forefront in the face of Afghanistan-based developments is basically an aim of Russia of preventing China's desire to gaining influence in this country. In other words, Moscow evaluated Afghanistan as an area of struggle for influence where its interests are conflicting with Beijing. However, at this stage, it is observed that there is a paradigm shift in Russia's Afghanistan policy. As a matter of fact, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that Moscow, Beijing, New Delhi, Tehran and Islamabad not only contribute to the stability of the region; he said that they can also contribute to the prevention of the spread of threats beyond regional borders and said, "It is very important to keep the Afghanistan Problem on the agenda of the SCO." [2]

There is no doubt that; the statements of Russian Defense Minister Shoigu on the Afghan Question are very important. Because, on the occasion of these words, Shoigu made it clear that they want to turn the crisis in Afghanistan into an opportunity as a process that will serve regional cooperation. However, it should be noted that; Russia, China, India, Iran, and Pakistan, which Shoigu mentions in his statement, have vastly different, if not completely different, interests and threat perceptions. Therefore, considering the fact that the expectations of these states are extremely different, it does not seem rational to expect them to develop a common policy in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, despite this situation, if the mentioned states develop a common policy for the solution of the Afghan Problem, it will be easier to overcome the crisis in the country in question. More importantly, the SCO will gain great prestige for its role in resolving regional security issues. So, what is Moscow trying to do by throwing the ball to the SCO?

First of all, Shoigu's statements clearly reveal the reality that Russia has suffered a serious loss of energy due to the Ukraine War and cannot focus on Afghanistan sufficiently. This leads Moscow to agree to a role-sharing with Beijing in Afghanistan. In particular, due to the sanctions pressure of the West, Russia is not only in Afghanistan; parallel to its claim to a multipolar world, it also feels the need to work closely with China in global politics. However, Russia's opening up space for China in Afghanistan also carries some risks for Moscow. As a matter of fact, Russia may have to accept the increasing influence of China in a geography that it sees as its "backyard" within the framework of the doctrine of the close environment. So, the issue may not be just about Afghanistan. However, despite the cyclical cooperation processes in regional equations, the interests of Russia and China in Afghanistan and Central Asia conflict. This

poses significant risks for Moscow.

It is precisely for this reason that Shoigu also mentioned the name of India during his statement. In other words, Russia is of the opinion that it can use the conflicts between China and India for its own interests. In other words, while the Kremlin was throwing the ball to the SCO in the Afghan Question; it desires to balance China through India. So, the question to be asked is: does the account at home fit the market?

It should be emphasized that; this balance may not be achieved as easily as thought in the Kremlin. Because Pakistan and Iran factors are also at a size that cannot be ignored. First of all, Pakistan is a country that has traditionally had hostile relations with India. In particular, the existence of the Kashmir Issue makes it difficult to establish a permanent peace environment between the parties. More importantly, Pakistan is China's most reliable ally within the SCO. It also hosts the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is intended to be implemented within the framework of the Belt-Road Project. Therefore, the Islamabad administration is at the forefront of the actors that are likely to take sides with Beijing in the power struggle within the SCO.

Although Iran has deep-rooted ties with Russia, it attaches special importance to its relations with China, since it is located on the southern route of the Belt-Road Project. Moreover, in the cooperation agreement, which is expected to be signed between Russia and Iran and which is expected to cover a period of 20 years, a concrete agreement has not been reached on the final text yet. The failure to reach a final agreement on the agreement, which has been on the agenda for nearly a year, indicates that there are some problems on the Moscow-Tehran line. In response, a "25-Year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement" was signed between Iran and China. Therefore, although the Tehran administration cares about its relations with Moscow in foreign policy, it has turned the steering wheel to Beijing. This can be interpreted as if Iran has to make a choice within the SCO, it will position itself in a line close to China.

Although other SCO member states are close to Russia in terms of military-security, they develop very strong economic relations with China. Of course, the Belt-Road Project has an undeniable effect on this situation. Therefore, the states in question will be careful about not being close to one side and not staying away from other side and also they will not want to make a choice between actors.

To summarize briefly, an equation in which the China-Pakistan-Iran trio can be formed against the Russia-India duo among the states that Shoigu mentioned. Other SCO members may choose to stay out of this polarization and object to being forced to make a choice. In other words, from the Kremlin's point of view, the account at home may not fit the market. Despite everything, Russia's pointing out to the SCO instead of the CSTO as the solution address of the Afghan Problem clearly shows that things are not going as planned in Ukraine from Moscow's point of view and that the Kremlin does not want to divert its focus to other geographies. As a result, even if Russia sees the risks posed by the SCO move for its own interests, it lacks the power to focus its attention on Afghanistan.

[1]"Şoygu: KGAÖ Ülkeleri Afganistan'daki Militaların Topraklarına Sızma İhtimaline Karşı Hazır Olmalı", Sputnik Türkçe, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/20210811/soygu-kgao-ulkeleri-afganistandaki-militanlarin-topraklarina-sizma-ihimaline-karsi-hazir-olmalı-1047919692.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.08.2022).

[2] "Russia Says India can Make a Significant Contribution to Stabilise Afghanistan", India Narrative, <https://www.indianarrative.com/world-news/russia-says-india-can-make-a-significant-contribution-to-stabilise-afghanistan-191154.html>, (Date of Accession:18.08.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Internal and External Reactions to the Wiretapping Scandal in Greece

The fact that Member of Parliament Nikos An-drulakis, the leader of the opposition Panhel-lenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in Greece, was secretly wiretapped by the Greek National Intelligence Agency (EYP) has caused a ma-jor scandal. Although EYP President Panagiotis Kontoleon resigned on August 5, 2022 following the scandal,[1] the opposition parties in Greece tried to put pressure on Prime Minister Kriakos Mitsotakis, thinking that there was a political re-sponsible for this.

Since the day scandal emerged, Mitsotakis has been following a policy of avoiding taking po-

litical responsibility, claiming that the wiretaps were made without his knowledge. However, the point to consider is that the EYP is affiliated to the Prime Ministry.

If Mitsotakis is telling the truth on the fact that the scandal took place without his knowledge, this shows that the EYP does not hesitate to take actions without the knowledge of the in-stitution to which it is affiliated. From the fact that Greek intelligence can resort to ways that can put the Prime Ministry in a difficult situation without the knowledge of the Prime Minister, to which it is affiliated, it is understood how strong



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the intelligence is within the country. This eavesdropping was carried out using Israeli spyware “predator”[2] is also notewor-thy in that it reflects the close cooperation between Tel-Aviv and Athens in the field of intelligence.

The fact that the Greek MP, who was subjected to eavesdrop-ping, was also a member of the European Parliament (EP) caused the EP to be closely interested with the scandal. The Socialists and Democrats, the second largest political group of the EP, have made various criticisms on the subject, empha-sizing the need for a political change in Greece and drawing parallels between this scandal and the Watergate Scandal in the United States (US).[3]

It is seen that the European People’s Party (EPP), to which Mitso-takis’ party is affiliated and has the largest number of seats in the EP, has remained silent on the scandal that emerged after the Greek opposition leader was eavesdropped. The fact that the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Ley-en, who is a member of the EPP, maintains her silence on this issue is a matter that needs to be focused on. Because if such a scandal had taken place in other European Union (EU) coun-tries such as Hungary and Poland, it would have been unthink-able for von der Leyen and other EU top executives to remain silent. This points to two outcomes.

First, the EPP and von der Leyen have deliberately remained si-lent, as they are in alliance with Mitsotakis’ party. Second, the scandal shows that the democratic values that the EU claims to defend are applied selectively and only as a tool on coun-tries. Therefore, the fact that the Mitsotakis Government is in harmony with the EU top management has prevented him from receiving harsh criticism from the bloc and putting pres-sure on him.

The meeting of the Greek Parliament which convened on Au-gust 26, 2022 marked by discussions on this scandal. In his speech to parliament, Mitsotakis defended the workings of the EYP by saying, “Nothing must bring into question this valuable operational branch of the the state.”[4] In response, Alexis Tsi-pras, the leader of the main opposition Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) and former Prime Minister, called Mitsotakis to re-sign.[5]

Whether the Greek opposition is capable of forcing Mitsotakis to resign is a question mark. Because the support of the EU top

management for Mitsotakis strengthens the Prime Minister’s hand. In addition, it is understood from the words of Mitsotakis that radical decisions will not be taken on the EYP.

Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis recently expressed that the Russian President Vladimir Putin wants a new government in Greece[6] and tried to justify himself in this way and draw at-tention to another point in the midst of the wiretapping scandal. He tried to take advantage of the war conjuncture in Europe by linking the Greek opposition’s desire to resign with the fact that Russia does not want him. The fact that Mitsotakis made such a statement stems from his desperation in the face of the scandal.

As a result, although this scandal that broke out in Greece is associated by some circles with the Watergate Scandal in the US, it seems unlikely that it will be similar, at least in terms of its consequences. As it will be remembered, in 1974, after the Watergate Scandal, US President Richard Nixon was forced to resign. However, the American public and the media had quite an impact on Nixon’s resignation. Therefore, there are serious differences between a society such as the US, where public opinion and the media are the guiding and sometimes the de-cider, and the Greek society. Therefore, the resignation of Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis should not be expected.

[1] “Greek Intelligence Chief Resigns over Alleged Spying Scan-dal”, Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/08/05/greek-intelligence-chief-resigns-over-alleged-spying-scan-dal>, (Date of Accession:05.09.2022).

[2] Agnes Szucs , “EU Commission ‘Monitors Closely’ Develop-ments on Greek Wiretapping Scandal”, Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/eu-commission-monitors-close-ly-developments-on-greek-wiretapping-scan-dal/2669219>, (Date of Accession:05.09.2022).

[3] Sarantis Michalopoulos, “EU Socialist Chief: Greece Needs Political Change After ‘Watergate’ Scandal”, Eurac-tiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/eu-so-cialist-chief-greece-needs-political-change-after-water-gate-scan-dal/>, (Date of Accession:05.09.2022).

[4] Elena Becatoros, “Greek PM Defends Workings of Intelligence Service”, Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/elec-tions-greece-c0988889167bdb147522991662c427ce> , (Date of Accession:05.09.2022).



# ANKASAM IN PRESS

## 5 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's analysis titled "The other name of the power struggle: 'Corridors' and 'Edge Belt'" was shared in M5 Magazine.

## 5 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's analysis titled "The other name of the power struggle: 'Corridors' and 'Edge Belt'" was shared in the Kırmızılar.

## 6 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the energy crisis in Europe as a guest on the Günlük (Daily) program broadcast on the National Channel.

## 6 September 2022

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, evaluated the latest developments in foreign policy at TRT Arabi.

## 6 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations on the energy crisis in the National Channel were shared on the Ulak News news portal.

## 6 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Eurasia Expert Dr. Sabir Askeroğlu evaluated the allegations that Russia received artillery shells and rockets from North Korea to Haber Global.

## 8 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations on the energy crisis in the National Channel were shared on the Com news portal.

## 8 September 2022

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, evaluated the death of Queen Elizabeth II on CNN Türk.

## 9 September 2022

ANKASAM International Relations Consultant Dr. Kadir Ertaç Çelik evaluated the latest developments in foreign policy in the Bengütürk TV Report of the Week program.

## 9 September 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) Chief Energy Advisor Dr. Cenk Pala evaluated the energy crisis to Sputnik.



*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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# JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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