



ANKASAM **bulletin**

27 November 2022

ISSUE: 2022/47

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Impact of the West's Rising Energy Demand on Africa

Western countries aiming to restrict Russian natural gas and oil supply as a result of sanctions imposed on Russia are resorting to alternative sources as a result of the ensuing energy crisis. In this context, the West, turning its eyes to African countries, claims that the conti-

nent's fossil fuel deposits have great potential. However, some argue that increasing oil and natural gas exports will jeopardize the economic stability of many African countries and delay the transition to green energy. One of the main issues addressed during the 2022 United



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Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Egypt was the impact of geopolitical tensions in Europe and energy security on Africa.

Indeed, Western nations with substantial shares in the African Development Bank (AfDB), such as the United States of America (USA), England, Italy, France, and Germany, are taking steps to transform the continent into a “gas station” to resolve the energy issue. Western companies’ shares in the AfDB pave the path for additional investments in natural gas projects across Africa.[1]

While increasing natural gas exports from African nations provides an immediate solution to Europe’s energy crisis and will benefit producing countries in the short term, it will also exacerbate the climate crisis in the long run. Investments made in the poorest continent of the world in order to increase natural gas exports can be considered as a short-term and risky strategy. The main reason for this is that the demand for fossil fuels will decrease in the medium term. Furthermore, the construction of natural gas infrastructure may lead the continent to fall behind in its green transformation for energy use, resulting in a shortage of export markets in the future when the effects of the energy crisis are mitigated.

So, African leaders tried to make their voices known at the COP27 Summit about the dangers to Africa’s energy transformation, despite the fact that it was not on the conference’s agenda. In this regard, Senegalese President Macky Sall replied to Western leaders’ statements that natural gas will be utilized as “transition energy” during the summit by saying, “We are in favour of a just and fair green transition, instead of decisions that harm our development process.”[2]

It might be claimed that Egypt, who is hosting the COP27 Summit, is eager to grow its gas industry and is attempting to position itself as a viable option to European nations facing supply problems to replace Russian imports. As a result, it is likely that at the summit’s conclusion, African leaders’ remarks that the continent’s massive solar and wind resources are a far better alternative than investing in gas will go unanswered.

The “transition energy” claims of the West have not been found convincing as a solution to poverty by many activists and analysts. Because, as neocolonial history demonstrates, there is no case where the operation and usage of African mines has resulted in the development of the continent. As a result, rather than investing in natural gas in Africa in accordance with imperialist companies’ interests, moving the region to a leadership position in the climate target through solar and wind energy is one of the most logical solutions for both the world and African countries.

European interest in African gas also contradicts its climate targets. Many infrastructure investments are required to actually benefit from Africa’s fossil resources, such as the extraction, processing, and pipeline transportation of natural gas from power plants. Moreover, all these steps aim to increase the use of fossil fuels, as well as the risk of a significant amount of methane gas emissions through infrastructure construction.

Furthermore, those who promote the utilization of natural gas resources on the continent disregard the fact that African countries release the least carbon per capita on the world. As a result, it is hypocritical to ask African natural resources to address the energy problem, which was largely produced by former colonial countries, at the price of their own energy transformations.

In conclusion, the growing interest of Western countries in exploiting Africa’s fossil fuels makes it difficult to raise their climate targets. Because expanded new gas investment and similar operations may enhance neocolonial activities on the African continent and undermine African people as they will face negative consequences.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Future of China-Russia-North Korea Relations

Russia invaded Ukraine for the second time, eight years after annexing Crimea in violation of international law in 2014. In this framework, the Moscow government initially separated the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic from Ukraine, known as Donbas region, recognizing their "independence."

Later, like Crimea, it held a referendum in these nations and announced that it had annexed them to its own territory. Furthermore, Russia has declared that it will respond to any potential attack on these regions with all available means, including nuclear weapons. These events accelerated Finland and Sweden's



Elcan TOKMAK

ongoing membership process in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which perceived a security threat from Russia and strengthened the search for solutions to the nuclear threats made to the West.

Of course, they are not the only consequences of the Ukrainian War. Moscow reduced its energy supply in response to Western sanctions placed on Russia as a result of the war. According to the data of 2021, Russia alone provides 14% of the world's energy supply.[1] Therefore, Russia's use of the energy card in response to sanctions exacerbated the pre-Ukraine War energy crisis.

While these events unfold in Eastern Europe, North Korea continues to conduct missile tests as an isolated state. However, Pyongyang's increased missile tests since September 2022 have raised regional and global concerns. In this context, on September 23, 2022, the United States of America (USA) deployed the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in South Korean waters.

Following North Korea's missile tests, artillery rounds were fired, and tensions on the Korean Peninsula reached a new height with mutual warning shots.[2] Thus, the Pyongyang administration started to display an even more aggressive attitude against the increasing pressure of the West. This has caused it to become even more isolated from the international community from which it was already isolated.

Another country that faces serious difficulties in the international system is China. China has had turbulent relations with the United States and its allies for a long time, owing to its growing economic dominance on the one hand, and its stance against the West on the other. As is well known, the "trade wars" that began during the previous administration of US President Donald Trump constituted a pivotal point in US-China relations. Furthermore, the 2017 restructuring of the 2007 Quadruple Security Dialogue (QUAD)[3] and the establishment of AUKUS in 2021 have exacerbated polarization in the Asia-Pacific. Furthermore, claims that China brought dissident Chinese to China to be prosecuted through the police stations it established abroad,[4] that it intervened in the Canadian elections in 2019 and 2022,[5] and reports that it employed former Western fighter pilots[6] are all factors that have contributed to the polarization.

As a result of all these developments, signs of rapprochement and solidarity are observed in the relations between China, Russia and North Korea. Since the start of the Ukraine War, China has indicated in its remarks that it understands Russia's security concerns and has deepened both commercial and political connections with the Moscow administration by signing various accords. For example, China and Russia signed an agreement on September 7, 2022 to free their trade from the shackles dollar.[7] This is related to the Moscow administration's aim of reducing the power of China and the US in the global system by learning from the sanctions it has faced. As a result, the two countries, who have long emphasized the multipolar system, increased their efforts and resolved to act cooperatively. In addition, the said agreement can be interpreted as an example that positively affects the relations between the parties.

Another example is the meeting of Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ma Zhaoxu with the new Russian Ambassador to China on October 1, 2022. During the meeting, Ma stated that thanks to the strategic guidance of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the two states maintain their development momentum and that their comprehensive strategic coordination is operating at a high level. Ma also underlined that this is a good example for modern major state relations.[8] Therefore, the parties promised to deepen their relations and increase strategic partnership coordination. [9]

Russia-North Korea ties are also in the tendency of becoming closer in the changing global context. As a matter of fact, Russia and China did not support the resolution condemning North Korea's military activities in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on November 5, 2022.[10] While fears that the Pyongyang government would conduct another nuclear test have grown, Beijing and Moscow's support of North Korea has indicated that the three nations' relations have expanded.

In conclusion, North Korea-China-Russia relations are developing due to the difficulties and conflicts experienced by all three states in the international system. The isolation of Russia as a result of the Ukraine War, the Taiwan problem that China has not yet settled, the

growing economic power of the US, and North Korea's military operations, which are increasing by the day, compel the three nations to cling to one other. As a result, it can be assumed that the Pyongyang-Beijing-Moscow trio will continue to act together.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Importance of Kazakhstan in Germany's Central Asian Initiative

One of the capitals that has recently increased its interest in Central Asia is Berlin. Germany, one of the largest economies in the world, became the third trading partner of Central Asia after Russia and China in 2010.[1] In this context, Kazakhstan has an important place in the Berlin administration's policy towards Central Asia. Because Kazakhstan is the country where Germany has the most trade volume among the Central Asian countries.

This situation causes Germany to attach special importance to Kazakhstan. It should also be emphasized the fact that Germany has historically strong ties with Kazakhstan. Because after the Second World War, the administration of Joseph Stalin in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) emigrated Germans from East Germany to Kazakhstan. Therefore, there is still a significant German population in Kazakhstan. This is another reason for the importance that Germany attaches to Kazakhstan.



**Cemal Ege
ÖZKAN**

Currently, Berlin is one of Astana's important partners and has invested about 5.3 billion dollars in Kazakhstan since 2005. In 2021 alone, the trade volume between Kazakhstan and Germany increased by 6.4% compared to the previous year and reached 2.2 billion dollars. In the first half of 2022, the two countries traded 1.2 billion dollars.[2]

Moreover, Kazakhstan is an important partner for Germany in the energy resources sector as well as in the economic field. In addition to its location and logistical advantages for Berlin, Astana also has a huge resource and human potential.[3] As a matter of fact, Germany's trade volume with Kazakhstan accounts for 85% of its total trade with Central Asian countries.[4] These data reveal how important Kazakhstan is in Germany's Central Asian initiative. In this context, it can be said that Kazakhstan is a key country in Germany's Central Asian initiative.

On October 30, 2022, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock paid an official visit to Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. In her statement just before her visit to Kazakhstan, Baerbock stated that the countries of the region had always hoped to be a bridge between Russia, China and Europe, but they were afraid of finding themselves as a pawn completely caught in the middle in the current process. For this reason, Baerbock explained that the main purpose of her visit to Kazakhstan was to listen to the expectations of people in the country about Europe. Moreover, the German Foreign Minister stressed that this visit, which took place on the 30th anniversary of the relations between the two countries, meant that Germany is not turning its back on Central Asia. Therefore, Baerbock expressed the desire of Germany to maintain its economic and cultural ties with Central Asia.[5]

As can be seen from Baerbock's statements, Germany desires a Central Asia in which the influence of Russia and China in particular is diminished. In this context, it can be argued that the Russia-Ukraine War was seen as an opportunity for Germany. Because it is seen that Moscow's influence has begun to decline in the region it defines as its "backyard" as well as on a world scale. It can be said that this is seen as an opportunity for the Central

Asian countries as well as the Western states. Therefore, it can be argued that the developments in the relations on the Berlin-Astana line may serve Kazakhstan to take more initiative in terms of multifaceted foreign policy.

It can be said that the basic element of the relations between the parties is energy cooperation. In this context, the Russia-Ukraine War was instrumental in further increasing the interest of the Berlin administration in Kazakhstan. Because this war has revealed the importance of the Middle Corridor for Western states. Due to its strategic location, Kazakhstan is of great importance for the development of the Middle Corridor. Because the international transportation links connecting Europe and Asia pass through Kazakhstan. Therefore, Astana is becoming a more important partner for Berlin day by day.

German Foreign Minister Baerbock was received by Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Alikhan Ismailov during his visit to Astana. During the meeting, the parties focused on increasing the volume of mutual trade, developing renewable energy and logistics infrastructure and investment cooperation. The Prime Minister of Kazakhstan emphasized that Kazakhstan's main trade and investment partner in the European Union (EU) is Germany.[6] Baerbock stated that the two countries have an important potential for economic cooperation, including energy, and expressed their belief that it is essential to establish mutually beneficial economic relations on an equal basis. Germany has also announced that it will open a Hydrogen Diplomacy Office in Astana to institutionalize its energy relations with Kazakhstan. In addition, Baerbock noted Kazakhstan's successful role in promoting interfaith tolerance.[7]

Consequently, it is seen that the parties desire to develop bilateral cooperation in various sectors, especially in energy and economy. Furthermore, it is important that the German Foreign Minister emphasizes "equality" in relations. In this context, it is possible to say that the relations between the parties will continue to develop within the framework of "mutual respect." This indicates that the relations on the Astana-Berlin line will develop further in the following period.

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[4] "Germany Eyes Green Hydrogen Potential in Kazakhstan", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/11/germany-eyes-green-hydrogen-potential-in-kazakhstan/>, (Date of Accession:11.11.2022).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Importance of Organization of Turkish States from the Perspective of Uzbekistan

Samarkand hosted the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) Heads of State Summit on November 11, 2022, involving Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Hungary and Turkmenistan. On occasion of this summit, Uzbekistan took over term presidency of the organization from Turkey.

OTS is on the rise as an organization in line with pragmatic and dynamic cooperation reality

of the 21st century. Regional organizations are increasingly replacing international organizations of a global nature. For this reason, many states have given weight to regional structures in recent years since regional platforms provide the most suitable ground for mutual cooperation between states. OTS also has this structure.



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OTS has undergone a three-stage transformation since its establishment. First of these is Summits of Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States meetings, which started in 1992 and was the first step towards regional integration. The leaders, who came together nine times until 2009, opened the door to a new era with the Nakhchivan Agreement, which was signed on 3 October 2009 and enabled the establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council). The period in question continued until the Istanbul Summit on November 12, 2021, when the Turkic Council changed its name to OTS. The Samarkand Summit, dated November 11, 2022, was of great importance as it was the first summit convened with new structure of OTS.

Currently OTS is an organization in which Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan operate as full members. In addition, Turkmenistan and Hungary are observer members of the OTS. With the Samarkand Summit, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus joined as an observer. These countries are home to approximately 173 million people, representing more than 2% of the world's population. At the same time, member states account for more than 3% of their GDP, calculated according to purchasing power parity.

It can be said that OTS has multidimensional opportunities for cooperation. As a matter of fact, according to Article 2 of the Nakhchivan Treaty, objectives of the organization are to strengthen peace and security environment as well as political, economic, cultural, environmental and scientific cooperation. In addition, fields such as education, transportation and finance are also included in this cooperation.

TDT aims to create favorable conditions for mutual trade and investment, to simplify customs and transit procedures, and to develop cooperation in the fields of science, technology, education, health, culture, youth policies, sports, and tourism within the framework of the Turkic World Vision 2040 Document, which was adopted at the Istanbul Summit in 2021.

The Organization operates with six structures to achieve its objectives. These organizations are; International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY), Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic Speaking Countries (TÜRKPA), International Turkic Academy, Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation, Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Organization of Turkic States Delegation in Hungary.

Uzbekistan, which hosted the Samarkand Summit, became a member of the organization in 2019 and with this status, it participated in the Turkic Council Summit, which was held in Baku in 2019. As a matter of fact, OTS member countries are among the main economic partners of Uzbekistan. Therefore, OTS offers additional opportunities for the Tashkent administration to develop cooperation with these partners. As a matter of fact, economic impact of cooperation between OTS member states is clearly seen in the example of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan traded 9.3 billion dollars with OTS member countries in 2021. This constitutes 22% of Uzbekistan's foreign trade. When this figure is compared with the data for 2016, it can be concluded that Uzbekistan has tripled its trade with OTS countries.[1]

Uzbekistan exports textiles, electrical, automobile materials, horticultural and ferrous metal products to the markets of OTS countries. In doing so, the country imports metal products, aluminum, building materials, petroleum products and grains.[2]

In this context, it should be emphasized that the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, attaches importance to economic cooperation between member states. Mr. Mirziyoyev advocates establishing an economic cooperation strategy between Central Asian countries, eliminating trade barriers, expanding e-commerce and increasing the trade volume. Mr. Mirziyoyev also suggested the establishment of a "Commercial Cooperation Research Center" between the Turkic states in order to explore the potential in this matter and to develop constructive suggestions. As a matter of fact, the first meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of OTS countries was held in Tashkent, where it was decided to develop mutually beneficial relations, including promotion of scientific and technological innovation. In this context, an agreement has been reached to establish five boards under the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group.

For Uzbekistan, the most important priority at OTS point is to increase economic relations and thus bilateral trade volume. This raises issues such as improving infrastructures and developing joint projects. In fact, Tashkent's approach is also compatible with the Turkic World 2040 Vision. Because OTS envisions a prosperous region. At this point, it is very important to establish a "Joint Investment Fund"

within the body of OTS at the Samarkand Summit. Such initiatives will enable countries to coordinate their efforts and increase the efficiency of investments.

At this point it should be noted that; between 2017–2021, OTS member states invested around 2.5 billion dollars in Uzbekistan. This corresponds to 10% of total foreign investment in the country. Moreover, investments made in the country by OTS states increased by 30% since 2017.[3]

Another important issue for Tashkent administration is digital transformation. Because nowadays, digitalization has become the highest development priority of almost every state. Therefore, this issue is of great importance for Uzbekistan in particular and for OTS in general. This issue has already been focused on within the scope of Turkic World Vision 2040. In this context, vision document foresees the establishment of digital connections and the improvement of telecommunication infrastructures. Especially considering that artificial intelligence is the forefront, it can be predicted that cooperation in technological fields will increase with both industry and urban infrastructure dimensions.

Strengthening cultural and human ties can be mentioned as another area of cooperation that Uzbekistan attaches importance to. Because historically, the peoples of OTS member states share the same roots. For this reason, the expansion of cultural and human ties is of particular importance for OTS countries. In particular, it seems possible to increase the cooperation between educational and scientific institutions through academic exchanges and common cultural interactions. For this reason, Tashkent will continue to support activities within the framework of Türksoy.

On the other hand, it should be noted that transportation sector is also important in terms of cooperation between OTS countries. As a matter of fact, this issue was also focused on the Samarkand Summit. Therefore, Uzbekistan values the development of relations in context of corridors. Because OTS countries have the means to connect Europe and Asia. In fact, Mr. Mirziyoyev emphasized that it functions as a bridge that provides the East-West and North-South connectivity of the Turkish peoples.[4] At the same time, Mr. Mirziyoyev drew attention to need for development of Middle Corridor, which starts from China, stretches through the Caspian Sea to Caucasus and then to Europe.[5]

As a result, OTS is a regional organization with a high potential that brings together the peoples of the Turkic World. For this reason, it is becoming an increasingly attractive structure. Therefore, all member states, especially Uzbekistan, are in a desire to develop and deepen their OTS-based cooperation processes.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Why is the US Sending Dollars to Afghanistan on Behalf of the International Community?

On August 15, 2022, the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan after two decades hiatus. However, the Taliban leadership has not been recognized by any state or international organization. Nevertheless, despite the Taliban's problem of recognition, the international community continues to send aid to Afghanistan under the guise of “humanitarian aid.” In fact,

every week since September 2022, 40 million dollars have been sent to Afghanistan. In the latest statement of the Central Bank of Afghanistan, which is under the control of the Taliban, it was announced that 1 billion 633 million dollars have been sent to the country within the scope of humanitarian aid since August 2021.[1]



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Expert

Predictably, the source of this money, how it will be spent, and how much of it is spent are causing serious controversy. Taliban opponents, especially the Penshir Movement, describe as a paradox the fact that the international community sends financial aid to the country despite not recognizing the Taliban administration and accuse the West of indirectly strengthening the Taliban. The opponents also question how and where the money sent was spent.

Moreover, it is seen that financial aid is being discussed not only in Afghanistan but also in the US. In fact, in the latest report published by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), it was emphasized that the US was the state that helped Afghanistan the most, but the Joe Biden administration did not inform the institution about the details of the aid.[2] SIGAR explained that since the Taliban regained dominance in Afghanistan, the US has sent 1.1 billion dollars in aid to Afghanistan and has not been able to share information about it with the public and congress. SIGAR also stated that these funds are not used for infrastructure projects.[3]

As it is known, the US Congress established SIGAR in 2008 to independently supervise the projects put forward for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. It can be stated that the main mission of the institution is to ensure the effective implementation of the projects developed at the point of reconstruction of Afghanistan and to prevent the misuse of resources. For this reason, SIGAR prepares reports on the activities carried out in Afghanistan at intervals of three months and submits them to the Congress and the US public. Indeed, before the Taliban dominated Afghanistan, SIGAR had an office within the US Embassy in Kabul. The institution was conducting investigations through the office.[4]

Following SIGAR's allegations, US State Department spokesman Ned Price said the institution's authority was limited to examining aid in infrastructure areas and did not cover humanitarian aid. Price noted that after the Taliban dominated Afghanistan, development aid to the country was halted and the US focused on humanitarian aid.[5] Therefore, according to Price's statements, this issue is outside the jurisdiction of SIGAR. SIGAR has suggested that the difference between development aid and humanitarian aid is very small, or even there is no difference at all.[6]

According to the data shared by SIGAR, a third of the humanitarian aid going to Afghanistan is sent by the US on behalf of the international community, and the rest is sent by other Western states with the approval of the Washington administration. There is also the assistance of the United Nations. In the past, when SIGAR criticized Washington administration for not supporting Afghanistan enough, the government announced its readiness to cooperate, but this time there was an scolding that drew attention to SIGAR's lack of authority. It can be said that there are various reasons why Washington has developed such an attitude.

First of all, it can be mentioned that the Biden administration believes that SIGAR will not be able to get the authority to review humanitarian aid from Congress, relying on the Democrats' majority in Congress after the recent elections. This can be attributed to the fact that the criticisms of the institution are not taken seriously.

Secondly, the Biden administration may be preferring that the money sent remain secret. Because the US refuses to send money directly on the grounds that it does not recognize the Taliban and carries out its assistance through international organizations and non-governmental organizations. However, it is inevitable that these funds will fall into the hands of the Taliban. Therefore, Washington refrains from revealing that SIGAR's investigations revealed that the taxes paid by the American people somehow went to the Taliban.

Third, the US considers sending aid to Afghanistan important to its long-term strategic interests. Because the Taliban administration cares about relations with the US. Undoubtedly, financial aid is one of the reasons why the Taliban looks warmly at the US. In fact, it is

claimed that the US has recently allowed the printing of Afghan banknotes and that intelligence-level meetings have been held between the parties. In other words, instead of marginalizing the Taliban, the U. wants to make some concessions and make its demands accepted. Moreover, it can be stated that the US wants to prevent the depreciation of the Afghan currency by sending dollars to Afghanistan before Afghan banknotes reach Kabul.

Finally, it should be noted that by sending dollars to Afghanistan, the US is trying to prevent the Taliban from getting closer to the actors opposing the American leadership. Because various states, especially Russia, are disturbed by this aid. This can be understood from the Kremlin administration's increasing pressure on the Taliban. In fact, the claims that the Taliban was established by the US have recently started to be voiced in Russia. In fact, Russia did not include the Taliban in the meeting on Afghanistan held in Moscow.

As can be seen, the U.S. continues to be interested in Afghanistan despite withdrawing from the country. In this context, on the one hand, is establishing relations with Taliban opponents, and on the other hand, is making moves that it believes will enable the Taliban to take steps in line with the demands of the international community. At this point, it can be said that the biggest trump card the US has is financial aid. In this context, the Washington administration wants an inclusive government to be established in Afghanistan and emphasizes that it will put pressure on the Taliban for this.[7]

Consequently, the US is looking for ways to persuade the Taliban by using its economic power while directing Taliban opponents away from the military option to a diplomatic solution. All this information indicates that a formula such as the Bonn Conference will be on the agenda. However, the Taliban are unwilling to share power. This stands out as the biggest challenge facing Washington in its Afghanistan policy.

[1] "دی سر رلاد نویلیم ۶۳۳ و درایلیم کی هب ناتسن اغفا هب یدقن یاهکمک نازیم"، Etilaatroz, <https://l24.im/SxTzH6J>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[2] "ناتسن اغفا هب یرشب یاهکمک یسررب ؤنیمز رد ندیاب تموکح یراکمه مدع زا راگیس داقتنا"، VOA, <https://www.darivoo.com/a/us-afghan-auditor-decries-non-cooperation-by-biden-administration-/6816836.html>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[3] "دنکییم ینکشراک ندیاب تلود :راگیس ؛ناتسن اغفا هب لوپ لاقتنا دروم رد تاویقحت"، 8am, <https://8am.media/investigations-on-the-transfer-of-money-to-afghanistan-cigar-the-biden-administration-is-disrupting/>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[4] "ناتسن اغفا یزاسزاب یارب هژیو شتفم رس هرادا"، SIGAR, <https://l24.im/FDecbS>, (Erişim Tarihi: 15.11.2022).

[5] "درادن ار ناتسن اغفا هب اکیرما هئاتسودرشب یاهکمک رب تراطن تیخالص راگیس :سیارپ دن"، Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202211023950>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[6] "ناتسن اغفا هب یرشب یاهکمک یسررب ؤنیمز رد ندیاب تموکح یراکمه مدع زا راگیس داقتنا"، VOA, <https://www.darivoo.com/a/us-afghan-auditor-decries-non-cooperation-by-biden-administration-/6816836.html>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[7] "درک دیکات ناتسن اغفا رد ریگارف تموکح هب «تردق مظنم لاقتنا» رب اکیرما هجراخ ترارو"، Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202211143484>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Reason Behind the Tensions Between Italy–France: Ocean Viking

As you may know, four non-governmental organization (NGO) ships have been searching for a safe harbor for hundreds of migrants rescued in the Mediterranean since the early days of November 2022. However, Italy, the closest nation to the ships, originally barred its ports to these ships before evacuating only those deemed “vulnerable” from the ships. However, all of the immigrants on the three ships

were brought ashore until November 10, 2022. The fourth ship, Ocean Viking, which is operated by a French NGO but sails under the flag, has repeatedly requested permission to dock at the Italian ports but has been denied each time. The ship, unable to obtain authorization from Italy, attempted to obtain clearance from France, Spain, and Greece, but the situation remained unchanged.



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In this regard, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin called on Rome. According to Darmanin’s comments, if Italy accepted the immigrants aboard the ships, France and Germany would accept some of them so that Italy would not be carry the burden of the immigrants alone.[1] However, the ship carrying 234 immigrants was denied by Rome and decided to head to the French port of Toulon to dock there. On November 10, 2022, the Paris administration stated that the ship and the refugees on board would be able to come ashore within the scope of “exceptional circumstances.”[2] Thus, the refugees finally disembarked on 11 November 2022.

The reason for Italy’s stance on the issue stems from a new decree issued by Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi. According to the decree, Italy would use a “selective” approach in determining who will disembark from NGO ships. Those who are not considered “vulnerable” in this context will be forced to leave Italian waters and will be handed over to the nation whose flag is flying on the NGO ship. However, the main development that increased the tension between Rome–Paris was the fourth ship, not the first three ships. Italy was criticized by France for not allowing Ocean Viking to dock at its port. Because Italy has insisted that immigrants be admitted by the nations whose flags are visible on the ship. Furthermore, on November 8, 2022, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni congratulated France for taking the ship.[3] However, the Paris administration had not made such a commitment at the time of the Italian leader’s statement. Thus, Meloni’s words incited a diplomatic tension.

Darmanin claimed that because the ship was in the Italian search and rescue zone, Rome’s conduct breached international law. Indeed, when ships carrying people in need wishes to dock at a port, the nearest and safest port is expected to receive the ship. Paris interpreted the insistence of the Roman administration not to take the ship as “incomprehensible and unacceptable” and described Italy as “irresponsible.”[4] These criticisms from France increased the tension between the two countries.

Moreover, Paris wanted to take the matter one step further and retaliate against Rome. As part of a European Union (EU) scheme, France was to relocate 3,500 migrants from Italy to France in 2023. However, Darmanin remarked that France had “suspended all relocations” and that other EU nations should do the same.[5] Thus, the ship dispute will have ramifications in the future, not only in bilateral ties but also in the context of the EU.

Meloni, on the other hand, said that she was shocked by Paris’ “incomprehensible, unjustified and aggressive reaction.”[6] Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also called France’s statements on the subject “disproportionate” and stated that his country accepts far more immigrants than the Paris administration, claiming that Italy fulfills its responsibilities but that other countries do not their part.[7]

As can be understood, the dispute began when Meloni acted early and thanked France for accepting the immigrants. Because this statement put French President Emmanuel Macron in a difficult situation and sparked a backlash from right-wing parties in France. For this reason, Darmanin tried to fend off criticisms in domestic politics by stating that the passengers on Ocean Viking belonged to the vulnerable group and that they must “fulfill their humanitarian duty.” However, Marine Le Pen, former Chairman of the National Rally, accused Macron of “dramatic laxity” in admitting the ship and stated that the French leader has failed to prevent “mass and anarchic immigration.”[8] This caused the Paris administration to raise its voice against Italy in order to calm the turmoils within its politics.

After harsh words from both sides, on 14 November 2022, the Presidents of the two countries made statements emphasizing the importance of developing good relations between the two allies and neighbors.[9] The important point here is that the Presidential position in Italy is purely symbolic. However, because he got along well with Macron, Italian President Sergio Mattarella may have attempted to resolve the tensions. However, because Meloni has actual authority, Mattarella’s remarks were insufficient to resolve the matter.

As you may know, for many years, the Franco-Italian relationship has maintained a cordial tone. In fact, during the period of the previous Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, the parties cooperated on many issues concerning the EU. However, the issue in question has resulted in the creation of strong rhetoric that EU partners generally avoid using against one another. During this crisis, the far-right Meloni administration, which was distrusted by Europe, indicated that it would pursue an immigration strategy centered on “Italy first” against France and the EU.

Another point to consider is that Meloni and Macron have quite different political ideals. Meloni is a leader who has far-right views. Macron, on the other hand, is a liberal that can be defined as centre-left. This might be reflected in the relations between Rome-Paris in the new period. It is important noting at this point that Meloni was outspoken in her criticism of France while she was in opposition.

In conclusion, Italy has demonstrated that it would not make concessions by drawing the line at immigration, a delicate topic in Europe. The friction between Italy and France, which comes at a time when Europe needs cooperation on many problems such as defense, economics, energy, and immigration, suggests that disputes in Continental Europe may increase. This might be interpreted as a future increase in the debates regarding the EU's future.

[1] “Ocean Viking: Migrant Rescue Ship Allowed to Dock in France After Italy's Refusal”, Euro News, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/10/ocean-viking-migrant-rescue-ship-allowed-to-dock-in-france-after-italys-refusal>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[2] “Ocean Viking: The First Real Diplomatic Crisis between France and Italy?”, Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/ocean-viking-the-first-real-diplomatic-crisis-between-france-and-italy/>, (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

China's Attitude within the G20 Talks

The G20 Summit, which took place on the Indonesian island of Bali on 15-16 November 2022, hosted leaders, and representatives from all over the world. State leaders' meetings with each other and their statements to the press drew the attention of the world to the summit. One of the leaders who attracted attention during the summit was Chinese President Xi Jinping. Because it is possible to draw inferences about China's foreign policy from the talks and statements made by Jinping.

Jinping maintained its uncompromising stance on Taiwan throughout the summit. The Taiwan issue is a problem that the Beijing administration has faced since the establishment of the People's

Republic of China in 1949 and has been constantly brought to the agenda by the Western states. At the point of solving the problem, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is in favour of implementing the “one country, two systems” structure; Taiwan considers itself an independent country. This conflict between China and Taiwan often comes before the Chinese Government as a problem. In the face of this issue, which was once again brought up at the G20 Summit, Jinping reiterated that Taiwan is the red line.[1]

On the other hand, it is seen that Jinping used a balanced discourse on the Russia-Ukraine War at the summit. The Chinese leader has not taken a



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clear stance in favour of either Ukraine or Russia. He made a joint statement with the President of the United States of America (USA) Joe Biden, stating that “a nuclear war should never be fought and can never be won”[2] only at the point of use of nuclear weapons. However, it is also remembered that Russian President Vladimir Putin stated in October 2022 that nuclear weapons would not be used in Ukraine.[3] Therefore, Jinping's statement with Biden does not contain a message that contradicts Russia. In other words, China continues its covert support to Russia. Already, world leaders are disturbed by China's policy towards Ukraine and North Korea.

As a reflection of the above-mentioned issues, at the G20 Summit, Western leaders conveyed their ideas to Jinping in order for China to play a more active role in related issues. In this context, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez asked Jinping to use his influence over Putin to help end the war in Ukraine.[4] Similarly, French President Emmanuel Macron demanded that China be a mediator in his meeting with Jinping.[5] Biden, on the other hand, asked Jinping to intervene in the issue so that North Korea would stop its nuclear tests. Taking a “neutral” stance on Ukraine upon the requests, Jinping once again repeated his rhetoric regarding North Korea that he could not interfere in the internal affairs of other states.

It is quite important that the channels of dialogue with a state remain open, with or without consensus. Considering that Russia maintains a dialogue with a small number of states and avoids meeting with state leaders at summits, the idea of Chinese mediation is on plausible ground.

In addition, the fact that Jinping met with the leaders of the states with which China had some problems in bilateral relations, such as the US and Australia, is proof that Beijing pays attention to keep diplomatic channels open.

Economy was also among the topics discussed in the talks. During his meeting with Biden, Jinping stated that “starting a trade or technology war between the USA and China, building walls and barriers and trying to separate supply chains are against the principles of market economy and undermines international trade rules”[6], and Jinping is doing his best to avoid any negativity that will disrupt the Chinese economy. In this context, his messages were in this direction.

As a result, it can be said that within the frame of the developments at the G20 summit, China continues its relations with the states in the scope of economic and commercial cooperation and stays away from politically problematic areas. However, Western states are uncomfortable with this attitude of the Beijing administration and want China to act more actively in solving problems. But China seems to refrain from taking responsibility as long as it does not face the perception of threat, economic damage, and similar issues.

[1] “China's Xi tells Biden: Taiwan Issue is ‘First Red Line’ That Must not be Crossed”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/chinas-xi-tells-biden-taiwan-issue-is-first-red-line-that-must-not-be-crossed-2022-11-14/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 15.11.2022).

[2] “Biden Meets China's Xi Jinping at G-20 Summit in Indonesia, Raises US Concerns About Taiwan, Hong Kong, Putin”, Fox News, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-meets-chinas-xi-jinping-g20-summit-indonesia-raises-us-concerns-taiwan-hong-kong-putin>, (Erişim Tarihi: 17.11.2022).

[3] “Russia's Putin Says He Won't Use Nuclear Weapons in Ukraine”, AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/putin-europe-government-and-politics-c541449bf88999c117b033d2de08d26d>, (Erişim Tarihi: 17.11.2022).

[4] “Spanish PM Urges China's Xi to Use Influence over Putin to End Ukraine War”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spanish-pm-urges-chinas-xi-use-influence-over-putin-end-ukraine-war-2022-11-15/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 17.11.2022).

[5] “French President Plans Beijing Trip to Seek China's Help Mediating Russia's War on Ukraine”, South China Morning Post, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3199886/french-president-plans-beijing-trip-seek-chinas-help-mediate-russias-war-ukraine>, (Erişim Tarihi: 17.11.2022).

[6] “Şi: Ticaret veya Teknoloji Savaşı Kimsenin Çıkarına Değil”, Borsamatik, <https://www.borsamatik.com.tr/si-ticaret-veya-teknoloji-sava-si-kimsenin-cikarina-degil-haber-149245>, (Erişim Tarihi: 17.11.2022)



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Energy Factor and Kazakhstan in Baerbock's Visits to Central Asia

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on 30 October and 2 November 2022 respectively. In her statement before the visit, Baerbock did not hide the geopolitical and strategic reasons that led her to go to Astana and Tashkent. As a matter of fact, when we look at the statements made to the public and the general meaning of the visits, it is seen that the Berlin administration has different strategic goals for both countries. While focusing on Kazakhstan's large en-

ergy reserves, Baerbock drew attention to the potential of Uzbekistan in terms of population and its capacity to become a regional power.

As it will be remembered, the German Foreign Minister said that they wanted to create an effective network between Central Asia and Europe before the visit. In addition, Baerbock stated in the same statement that Germany in particular and Europe in general do not aim to create new dependencies or economic ad-



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vantages, but rather to create honest and fair opportunities.[1] In fact, this statement shows that Germany is trying to develop a different perspective against the policies of Russia and China. Therefore, Berlin is careful to create a positive image in the face of Central Asian capitals. As a matter of fact, Baerbock's statement that they desire the establishment of a partnership in accordance with the principle of equality of states also proves this.

One of the remarkable statements made by the German Foreign Minister before her visit is that 85% of Germany's trade with Central Asian countries is with Kazakhstan.[2] Trade with other Central Asian states is only 15%. That's why Baerbock first visited Astana on her trip and she met with senior government officials, including Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov and Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi.

At a press conference following the discussions in Astana, Baerbock divided the focus of her interactions into three points: praise for taking a position in support of international law, the extent of the country's green hydrogen potential, and sustainable growth. In addition, the German Foreign Minister also drew attention to the situation of interdependence in Kazakhstan-Russia relations.

As expected, Baerbock's speech in this discourse is praise to Kazakhstan's attitude of caring about international law in the Ukrainian War, despite its close relations with Russia. As it is known, Kazakhstan has been cautious since the beginning of the war and calls for acting in accordance with the law. This issue is important for Germany. But the main reason for Astana's approach is the desire to turn the sanctions imposed on Russia into an opportunity. Of course, this situation is in the interests of Europe, which wants to diversify its energy supplier. In fact, the frequency of the European authorities' visits to Astana also confirms this situation.

The most important development in Baerbock's contacts in Kazakhstan was the decision of the Berlin administration to open a Hydrogen Diplomacy Office in Astana. As a matter of fact, the

German Foreign Minister stated that an office will be opened, which will consist of experts from both countries. Considering that Kazakhstan is a major energy power, it can be asserted that Astana can turn into an energy centre in a global sense. At this point, it is necessary to remind that the delegation headed by Baerbock on her visit to Central Asia includes names of experts in terms of energy and infrastructure. Therefore, the Berlin administration is making a Central Asian initiative on energy. Obviously, this opening can be described as the most rational solution for the European Union (EU). Because, in the face of the energy crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine War, Europe has several options. These are projects based in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. However, in the current situation, there are serious risks regarding the security of the problems that will be carried out through the Middle East and Africa. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, is a stable actor in the context of both energy and route security.

On the other hand, an agreement of 50 billion dollars was signed between Kazakhstan and the Svevind Energy Group company, which is building the largest wind farm in Europe.[3] The power plant, which is projected to be one of the largest green hydrogen power plants in the world when completed, is planned to have a size of 20 gigawatts.[4] The most important point of the project in question is the production capacity. According to the company, the electrolyzers will be able to produce up to 2 million tons of green hydrogen per year starting from 2032. This is equivalent to one fifth of the EU's imported green hydrogen target in 2030.[5] Therefore, this project has a great importance for the energy security of Europe. In addition, since it is green hydrogen, the power plant in question will also mean a big step forward in terms of environmental sensitivity.

It should be noted that Kazakhstan is becoming a desirable centre due to its geography suitable for green hydrogen production at low costs. In this regard, Kazakhstan can be seen as an important and competitive actor in the global market. One of the reasons behind the visits made or planned to Kazakhstan in the recent period is the energy potential of the country. Therefore, increasing energy prices due to the Russian-Ukrainian

War have improved the hydrogen market against fossil fuels and new projects have come to the agenda in the world. This is what brings Kazakhstan to the forefront.

In short, the energy factor pushes European countries, especially Germany, to open to Central Asia. One of the most important countries here is Kazakhstan. Baerbock's visit is a reflection of this. Undoubtedly, Kazakhstan's approach to this issue is also important. However, the developments indicate that Astana will be evaluated as an important partner which many actors are trying to convince.

[1] "Statement by Foreign Minister Baerbock Prior to Her Departure for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan", Almany Federal Dış İlişkiler Ofisi, 30 Ekim 2022, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/-/2560922> (Date of Accession: 12.11.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Vanessa Dezem, "Kazakhstan Signs Deal to Make Hydrogen at a \$50 Billion-Plant", Bloomberg, 27 Ekim 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-27/kazakhstan-signs-deal-to-make-hydrogen-at-a-50-billion-plant> (Date of Accession: 12.11.2022).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.



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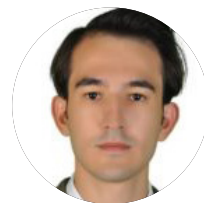
The EU's Stance on the Wiretapping Scandal in Greece

In August 2022, it was revealed that Nikos Androulakis, the leader of the opposition Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) party in Greece, was wiretapped by the Greece's National Intelligence Agency (EYP). This has been a development that has put Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in an extremely difficult position. Following the scandal, EYP Director Panagiotis Kontoleon resigned, while the opposition increased its pressure on the Prime Minister.

Moreover, the fact that Androulakis is a member of the European Parliament (EP) has led the EP to pay close attention to this scandal. In this context,

the EP, unlike the senior management of the European Union (EU), has attached importance to this scandal from the very first day and has addressed the issue.

All political parties in the EP, with the exception of the European People's Party (EPP), of which European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is a member, have condemned the scandal. The New Democracy Party (ND), led by Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis, is a member of the EPP. In addition, the EPP is the political party with the most deputies in the EP. This indicates that the Mitsotakis Government is in a sense protected by the



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people who make up the EU senior management. Despite all this, the Socialists and Democrats, the second largest political group in the EP, criticized the scandal and emphasized the need for political change in Greece. In fact, they have drawn a parallel between the scandal and the Watergate Scandal that took place in the United States (US) during Richard Nixon era.[1]

The EP decided to establish a committee, called PEGA, to investigate the wiretapping scandal in Greece. On October 3, 2022, EP Vice-President Dimitris Papadimoulis stated that the initiatives of the Athens administration and Mitsotakis would not yield results in Brussels.[2] At this point, Papadimoulis' words need to be emphasized. Papadimoulis is a member of Greece's main opposition party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA). With the above remarks, the EP Vice-President implicitly drew attention to Mitsotakis' ties with the EU senior management and said that the Greek leader's initiatives would not yield results. Therefore, it is seen that SYRIZA has the opportunity to put pressure on Mitsotakis through both domestic and foreign politics.

In accordance with the EP's decision, the PEGA committee visited Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus (GCA) on 1-4 November 2022 to examine the situation regarding the alleged use of surveillance spyware, and in particular the Israeli Predator.[3] The investigations carried out by the committee have also brought the issue to the agenda of the EP. In the briefing prepared in accordance with the request of the EP, it was stated that journalists and politicians have been wiretapped by the EYP on the occasion of the "predator" software for a long time.[4] EP Rapporteur In t' Veld stressed that the wiretaps that took place in Greece were carried out systematically and were part of a political strategy. On the other hand, Veld also stated that the GCA has become the centre for the export of surveillance software.[5]

As can be understood, institutionally, stance of the EP on the wiretapping scandal in Greece is different from that of the EU senior management. The EP directly blames Mitsotakis for the wiretaps and believes that the wiretaps were conducted in a systematic manner. The EP's investigation into this scandal may have consequences that will put the Greek Prime Minister in a difficult position. However, this will not happen until important people in the EU senior management take action.

Another example of the disagreement within the EP over the scandal is that Georgios Kyrtos, a member of the Renew Europe Party, the third largest party in the EP, accused EPP leader Man-

fred Weber of protecting Mitsotakis.[6] Therefore, it is seen that other parties within the EP have raised their voices against the stance of the EPP, of which Leyen is also a member, on the wiretapping scandal. This is extremely important in terms of showing that there are deep disagreements in the EP about the scandal. Therefore, it can be said that Mitsotakis is protected by both the largest group of the EP and the people in the senior management of the EU.

Consequently, it is seen that voices have been raised recently within the EP regarding the wiretapping scandal in Greece. The stance of the EPP and the EU senior management in support of Mitsotakis is decisive in this. However, the fact that the Greek Prime Minister has strong support within the EU relieves his hand in the face of the scandal. Although the EP reveals information that may put Mitsotakis in a difficult situation, it is possible to say that the attitude of the "main decision-making mechanism of the EU" will be more decisive. In this respect, the Greek Prime Minister has the support of both Leyen and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. Therefore, the EP's stance towards the scandal in Greece may put Mitsotakis in a difficult position, but there is no collective EU pressure.

[1] Sarantis Michalopoulos, "EU Socialist Chief: Greece Needs Political Change After 'Watergate' Scandal", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/eu-socialist-chief-greece-needs-political-change-after-watergate-scandal/>, (Date of Accession:15.11.2022).

[2] Sofia Mandilara, "EP PEGA Committee to Investigate Greek Spyware Scandal on the Ground", Euractiv, https://www.euractiv.com/section/all/short_news/ep-peg-a-committee-to-investigate-greek-spyware-scandal-on-the-ground/, (Date of Accession:15.11.2022).

[3] "PEGA Committee to Investigate Spyware Surveillance in Greece, Cyprus", Keep Talking Greece, <https://www.keeptalking-greece.com/2022/10/31/peg-a-committee-greece-cyprus-surveillance-spyware/>, (Date of Accession:15.11.2022).

[4] "Briefing for the PEGA mission to Cyprus and Greece 1-4 November 2022", Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/738330/IPOL_STU\(2022\)738330_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/738330/IPOL_STU(2022)738330_EN.pdf), (Date of Accession:15.11.2022).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Searching for a Solution in the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Borderline Disagreement

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were various problems and conflicts between the Central Asian states. Undoubtedly, border disputes are the most important of these issues. Thus, the borders drawn by the Russians in Central Asia, without considering the geographical and ethnic characteristics, brought the states of the region against each other. In addition to border problems, security is-

sues and sharing water resources also lead to deepening disputes between the states of the region. Undoubtedly, boundary conflicts are the most important of these issues. One of these disputes took place between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

To this extent, it can be said that Kyrgyzstan's access to water resources in the region and



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Uzbekistan's water needs create a serious problem. This process can be countable among the factors that complicate the collaboration and integration processes in Central Asia. Of course, as mentioned above, the Russians created artificial borders in the historical background of the issue. Such as, the map that divided the borders of Central Asia between 1924 and 1924, unfairly triggered the divisions between the Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, five Central Asian countries ended the unlimited and right-to-free transitional cycle and decided to set borders, can control the movement of goods and people. This has led to an increase in disputes. Especially after the bomb attack in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan in 1999 Tashkent's reservations about Islamist terrorists pushed Uzbekistan to gain a ditch in the Fergana Valley along the Kyrgyzstan border. In 2000, Uzbekistan laid mines on the border. Therefore, of this, many people lost their lives. [1]

At the present time, Kyrgyzstan's longest border is with its neighbour Uzbekistan, with which it shares 1,314 kilometres. Therefore, the contending parties have been continuing their negotiations since 2016 in order to resolve the conflicts between them. In this context, the Chairman of the Kyrgyzstan National Security Committee Kamchibek Tasiyev, in a statement he gave in March 2021, said, "The Kyrgyz-Uzbek border issues have been resolved 100%. We assume this difficult task and as of the point reached, there is not a single piece of land in dispute" he said.[2] Within this compromise of this agreement, the concerned parties aim to solve the border problems by the end of 2022.

In this direction, at the meeting held on March 11, 2022, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, and the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev reached an agreement. The agreement of the two leaders opened the door to a consensus on the 10% parts, in addition to the 85% of the border that was clarified in 2017.

For the remaining 5%, the concerned parties have committed to an agreement. In addition, an agreement was reached on the construction of the China-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Railway Line and the dynamics of conflict left its place for opportunities for reconciliation. [3] With the help of the mentioned railway, the missing link in the middle corridor will be completed and this will strengthen both the interaction and connection between Asia and Europe. The relevant agreement was signed at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Samarkand Summit on 14 September 2022.[4] In this sense, it can be argued that the political rapprochement between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan will contribute to regional and inter-regional stability, security, peace, and welfare. Particularly the increase in Central Asia-based trade will serve the development of the countries in the region and will ensure that the people of the region have a prosperous future.

Additionally considering that agriculture and livestock are at the heart of the economy of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, it can be stated that the development of cooperation in the region will increase food production both at the regional and global level and that the region can turn into a supply centre in the food crisis due to the Russia-Ukraine War.

On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the agreement of Bishkek with Tashkent will create a positive atmosphere in the efforts to solve the Kyrgyz-Tajik border problem. The Former Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan, Ibrahim Zhunusov, said the following in his assessment of the resolution of the border conflict:[5]

"The leader of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has been making efforts to strengthen relations with Kyrgyzstan since the day he took office. Once he said that if there is no agreement with the neighbours, there is no agreement with the others. Therefore, the border issue will of course be resolved. If we top off the delineation of borders with Uzbekistan, it will also become easier to resolve the case of the boundary with Tajikistan."

As a result, the agreement signed between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan represents a constructive reconciliation that will remove the instability in the region. While this agreement becomes stronger the search for regional cooperation, security, peace and prosperity; is at the global level, Asia-Europe; In other words, it will strengthen the East-West interaction. In addition, these developments will positively reflect on the negotiation processes on the Bishkek-Dushanbe line.

[1] "Tug-Of-War: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Look to Finally Settle Decades-Old Border Dispute", <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-kyrgyzstan-resolving-decades-old-border-dispute/28918059.html>, (Date of Accession: 16.11.2022).

[2]"Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan Inch Closer to Settling Border", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/08/kyrgyzstan-and-uzbekistan-inch-closer-to-settling-border/>, (Date of Accession: 16.11.2022)

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Elections in Slovenia: Transitioning from Populism to Democracy

Run-off elections were held in Slovenia on November 13, 2022 when no candidate received 50% of the vote on October 23, 2022. In the run-off, there was a tough competition between Anze Logar, the independent candidate supported by the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), and Natasa Pirc Musar, who received the

support of the Pirate Party of Slovenia (Pirati) and the Youth Party – European Greens (SMS-Z).

According to the results of the second round, Musar surpassed Logar with 54% of the vote.[1] Musar stressed the elements of freedom, dialogue, and respect after the presidential win



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was concluded, and claimed that the election of an independent and politically unhindered president represents the “will of the people.” However, she also stated that she will serve as a bridge between the two sides in Slovenian politics, which has recently shifted to a divide between the right and the left.[2]

It is worth noting that Musar, who has only just created a name for herself in politics, defeated Logar, who has a considerably deeper history in Slovenian politics. Therefore, this situation points to the change in the country's politics. In fact, it is possible to attribute the beginning of this change to the Parliamentary Elections held in April 2022.

In the elections held on April 24, 2022, the far-right parties were defeated. Janez Jansa gave way to Robert Golob, who came with the focus on “freedom.” This situation has been interpreted as an important development for Slovenia. It is well known that Jansa was linked to corruption and came to the fore as a result of its efforts to manipulate the courts and the media. Within the European Union (EU), Jansa was also regarded as an actor who opposed collaboration.[3]

Jansa, an experienced politician from a well-known political party, was defeated by a candidate who entered politics only a few months before the elections. While Golub's victory represents a loss for the far right, it may also be seen as a major step forward on the path to democracy. At the same time, this development can also be interpreted as a victory for Brussels.[4]

At this point, it is worth noting Logar's links to Jansa, Musar's opponent in the second round. Logar is a member of the right-wing SDS and served as Minister of Foreign Affairs when Jansa was leading the nation. Having received 34% of the votes in the first round of the elections, Logar received 46% of the votes against Musar in the second round. From this vantage point, Logar is a formidable contender versus Musar, but he is at a disadvantage because of his position in the Jansa Administration. Logar was inevitably seen as “one of his lackeys” because of his relationships with Jansa. This played a decisive role in his defeat in the election. Being aware of these accusations, Logar, on the other hand, tried to get rid of this “populist” image during the election campaign, but he was not successful.[5]

On the other hand, it is seen that Musar participated in the elections as a journalist. Musar, a former television presenter and lawyer, was seen as a hero in the face of the Jansa Administration's pressure on the press and the judiciary. Especially the fact that she was the lawyer of Melania Trump, the wife of the previous US President Donald Trump, increased Musar's popularity.[6] Furthermore, the fact that she was competing against Jansa and Logar, who is associated with him, bolstered his position. In this perspective, the fact that the Slovenian people turned to Musar in response to Jansa and the idea he symbolizes demonstrates that support for the extreme right in Slovenia has dwindled.

Although the presidency is a symbolic office in Slovenia, it is nonetheless a position of power that is respected. Moreover, it is also important that the president has the power to propose names to the parliament for the appointment of the president to various important institutions such as the central bank and the judiciary, and that he is defined as a guardian of the constitution.[7]

In conclusion, Musar, Slovenia's first female president since the country's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, confronts a challenging assignment. Because Slovenia is on the edge of a right-left split and populist discourse is on the rise, Musar has emerged as a solution to bring the parties together.[8] In fact, unlike Pahor, it is expected that Musar, who began with human rights, dialogue, and the battle against corruption, will attempt to reinvigorate the presidency.

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[6] Dusan Stojanovic, “Slovenia Elects First Woman President in A Runoff Vote”, The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/slovenia-votes-for-president-could-elect-first-woman/2022/11/13/baeb6bdc-6341-11ed-b08c-3ce222607059_story.html, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

[7] Maja Pavlin, “Analiza Volitev: ‘Predsednik Države Mora Biti Svetilnik’”, 24ur, <https://www.24ur.com/novice/volitve/predsedniske-volitve-2022/analiza-volitev-predsednik-drzave-mora-biti-svetilnik.html>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Convergence Effort in Sino-Western Relations

In 2018, the President of United States (US) of the time Donald Trump started a trade war against China by taking protective trade measures. Since this date, the relations between China and the US in particular and the West in general have become a struggle, and various conflicts have arisen. For example, in 2018, Huawei Vice Chairman Meng Wanzhou was arrested at the request of American officials, and China responded by detaining two Canadian citizens on espionage charges.[1]

In the following period, some tensions have been experienced in many areas, especially over the political fault lines in the Pacific Region, where China is geographically located. For instance, tensions have increased further due to the security-based dispute between Australia and China over the Solomon Islands.

While the West continues to have strained relations with China; it found itself faced with a much bigger problem. Because on February 24, 2022, Russia made a military intervention



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against Ukraine. On the other hand, while many Western countries implemented sanctions targeting the Moscow administration; the Kremlin also used energy as a trump card and reduced the gas supply. This situation has brought about the energy crisis. For this reason, European states have turned to various searches to solve the energy problem.

On the one hand, while Russia continues the war in Ukraine; on the other hand, the military activities of North Korea by the Pyongyang administration led to an escalation of tension in the Korean Peninsula. In this environment, the relations of both Russia and North Korea with China accelerated the marginalization of Beijing in the eyes of the West. Indeed, China's encounter with such a situation was not only due to the actions of Moscow and Pyongyang. The American experts argue that China will increase the pressure on Taiwan and may resort to the use of force within two years.[2] This creates serious uneasiness in the West.

In addition to all these, it is also known that there are allegations that China is engaged in espionage activities in various fields and that it harms democracies by interfering in elections in some countries. For example, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau was informed by the intelligence agency that China interfered in the 2019 elections in Canada.[3] As well as it is alleged that China recruited former fighter pilots of Western nationality to train the Chinese People's Liberation Army.[4]

On the other hand, the contacts made by Jinping show that there are signs of rapprochement in China-Western relations. As a matter of fact, on November 14, 2022, President of China Xi Jinping and the President of the US Joe Biden held a meeting that lasted for three hours. During the meeting, Biden stated that the US is not seeking a "new Cold War" with China and is committed to the "One China Policy." [5] The Washington administration's commitment to the "One China Policy" and Biden's statements that he does not want conflict with China created a positive atmosphere between the parties.

Otherwise, Jinping stated that positive statements should be supported with concrete steps and emphasized that Biden should support her rhetoric with concrete actions, referring to the Taiwan Policy Law that the US Senate is working on.[6]

During the meeting traffic during the G20 Summit, a meeting was also held between the leaders of Australia and China. In this context, Jinping and Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese came together. Albanese described the meeting as warm and constructive; Jinping expressed that China cares about relations with Australia.[7] In addition, Arthur Sinodinos, Canberra's Am-

bassador to the US, described the meeting as a concrete step towards the improvement of bilateral relations and stated that Australia wanted to reduce the tension in relations with China. [8] Besides, the Ambassador also stated that there will be no change in alliance understandings and defence policies, especially in AUKUS. Additionally, Defence Minister of Australia Richard Marles underlined that the commitment to improve relations with China does not mean that Australia will not focus on defence policies.[9]

Another noteworthy meeting was held at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit between Jinping and Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida. During the meeting held on November 17, 2022, Kishida and Xi revealed their will to develop bilateral relations. Addressing the latest situation of the war in Ukraine, the leaders confirmed that they are against the use of nuclear weapons.[10] Moreover, Kishida also stated that although the Sino-Japanese relations contain many difficulties, they have a serious potential for cooperation.[11]

As a result, China-Western relations, which have been going through hard times for a long time, show signs of softening on the occasion of international summits. In this context, it can be said that Jinping's meetings with both the US President and the leaders of the countries that are partners of the US in the region are of great importance. However, especially the statements from the Australian authorities reveal that there has not been a process that has fully evolved into cooperation in the context of security and defence policies. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the driving force in China-Western relations is the economy.

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[2] John Grady, "China Will Increase Pressure on Taiwan in Next Two Years Rather Than Invade, Says Pentagon Official", USNI News, news.usni.org/2022/11/07/china-will-increase-pressure-on-taiwan-in-next-two-years-rather-than-invade-says-pentagon-official, (Date of Accession: 07.11.2022).

[3] Sam Cooper "Canadian Intelligence Warned PM Trudeau That China Covertly Funded 2019 Election Candidates: Sources", Global News, globalnews.ca/news/9253386/canadian-intelligence-warned-pm-trudeau-that-china-covertly-funded-2019-election-candidates-sources/, (Date of Accession: 07.11.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Moscow Format: Approach to Afghanistan Problem and Suggestion for a Solution

After the United States (US) started to negotiate with the Taliban, the Moscow Format was established with the initiatives of Russia. Taliban delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister of Taliban Mullah Abdul Salam Hanafi also attended the 2021 meeting of the format created in 2018.

The main objective of the meetings held is to propose solutions to Afghanistan Problem.[1]

Türkiye, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia also attended the last meet in the g of the summit on 16 November 2022 as



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observer states. Taliban were not invited to this meeting. At the summit, participating states expressed their expectations regarding Afghanistan. In this context, Pakistani representatives advocated for the international community to establish relations with the Taliban and drew attention to the need to increase humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. Russia said it was concerned about the terrorist incidents in Afghanistan, and said a government should be formed in that country that would include all identity groups. The Iranian representative also underlined the request for an inclusive government. In addition, the Chinese representative stressed that the US is the root cause of the Afghan problem. Tajik representatives claimed that Tajiks in the country were killed because they were in connection with the Panjshir Movement and harshly criticized the Taliban.

Following the meeting, a joint statement signed by the participating states was published. In the declaration, it was stated that the establishment of military basins of various states in Afghanistan is unacceptable and the establishment of a pluralistic government that will include all ethnic and political groups is of great importance. In addition, the declaration included the desire for a peaceful, independent Afghanistan free from terrorism and drug trafficking. In addition, participating states declared that they will support the Taliban's fight against terrorism and drugs and that humanitarian aid will continue to solve economic and political problems in the country. On the other hand, the US has been called to release Afghanistan's national reserves to overcome economic, social, and humanitarian problems in Afghanistan. The most important point was that states of the region expressed their will to act in coordination and that they would establish relations with the Taliban through United Nations (UN). In this context, the request for the establishment of an international negotiation group for Afghanistan under the auspices of the UN was a proposal agreed upon by all participants.[2]

Russia's Special Representative of Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov made a statement on the fact that the Taliban was not invited to the Moscow Meeting, and expressed that the Taliban did not care about the decisions that are taken in previous summits, and since it does not take into account the views of the summit, it was not invited to the summit. As it will be remembered, in the declaration of meeting in 2021, it was demanded the Taliban form a government that is respectful and inclusive of human rights, especially women's rights. In addition, the Taliban were asked to take a determined stance in the fight against terrorism. It seems; stakeholders of Moscow Format believe that no significant progress has been made during the one year.

However, the main reason why the Taliban is not invited to the summit is that the Taliban has been in various contacts with the United States and is a discomfort in Russia. It is also possible that Tajikistan's distant approach to the Taliban can be counted among the determining factors. However, the fact that the Taliban was not represented at this meeting also reveals that there has been a transformation in the approach of regional states toward the Taliban. Because this situation can be interpreted as actors in favor of putting pressure on the Taliban to accept the conditions of the international community.

On the other hand, participating states believe that they will be affected by the insecurity, instability, terrorism, and economic problems in the country, as they are countries near Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be said that they want to give a message that they cannot see the progress they expect from the Taliban over the course of a year. However, Moscow Format also took care not to marginalize the Taliban and gave the message that if various steps were taken, the Taliban would be helped. This can be read as "You can be a part of the solution to Taliban."

At this point, it should be noted that; the Moscow Format does not define what inclusive government is; however, it proposes a roadmap for the political dialogue process through the call for the establishment of an international negotiation group under the auspices of the UN. It can be argued that the main reason for the importance of the format to the UN is the thought that unilateral and therefore excluding the West solution proposals will not yield any results.

In economic terms, the format advocates the release of Afghanistan's national reserves. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of humanitarian aid and development projects for the Afghan people.

On the other hand, Taliban Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hafez Ziya Takal said that they welcomed the statement issued after the summit, stated that Afghanistan does not pose a threat to any state, and emphasized that they would not allow foreign powers to use Afghanistan as a base.[3] In this regard, Takal also stated that the articles in the declaration are in favor of Afghanistan.

As a result, states participating in the Moscow Format are to solve the problem, since they also care about their security. Moreover, the actors do not only look at the issue at the regional level; on the contrary, it advocates the development of a global understanding. For this reason, it is seen that the international community has focused on recommendations of the international community to develop a common attitude through the UN. The warm welcome of the Taliban after the meeting, on the other hand, can be described as a harbinger of some developments toward the development of de facto relations, although the issue of resolving the recognition crisis is not easy.

[1] "دنده لکش ار یسایس-یموق لومشه مه تموکح ناب لاط: وکسم تسشن", VOA, <https://www.darivoo.com/a/moscow-talks-on-afghanistan-call-for-inclusive-government-in-kabul-kabulov-says/6837459.html>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Why Greece Has Given Up on Privatizing the Port of Alexandroupoli?

The Port of Alexandroupoli stands out due to its strategic location. Currently, the port used by the United States (US), Britain, Italy and Spain for military purposes, it is known that the port is an alternative route for delivering military equipment to the eastern wing of the organization through North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Greece launched a tender in September 2022 for the privatization of Alexandroupoli Port, which is of such critical importance. In fact, the Athens administration announced that it had received bids for a 67% stake in the port from Quintana Infrastructure and Development (US), Black Financial Group (US), Euroports (Belgium), EFA Group (Singapore) and GEK Terna (Greece). [1] Summit had predicted that the US company



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Black Summit would win the tender. In fact, John Charalambakis, Managing Director of Black Summit Financial Group, stated that they received support from the Washington administration to win the tender.[2] However, the privatization of the port in Greece has been opposed by many, especially the main opposition party, the Radical Left Coalition-Progressive Alliance (SYRIZA). Thus, the Vice President of European Parliament and GUE/NGL group SYRIZA Delegation President Dimitrios Papadimoulis expressed that they see the privatization of big ports as a mistake.[3]

The reason why Greece wants to privatize the port in question is economic concerns. It is also claimed that the financial bailout packages provided by the European Union (EU) to Greece have forced Athens to privatize a large number of public assets, including the management of ports. For example, Papadimoulis, who opposed the privatization of Alexandroupoli Port, criticized Brussels, saying, “The EU has clearly put its financial interests ahead of security concerns.”[4] Therefore, Greece started to privatize its strategic ports after the economic crisis in 2008.

In 2016, the Athens administration sold 66% of Piraeus Port, the largest and most valuable port in the country, to the Chinese company China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO),[5] and in 2021, 80.3% of Thessaloniki Port to Belterra Investments, owned by Ivan Savvidis, a Greek oligarch known to be close to Russian President Vladimir Putin.[6]

While the privatization of strategic ports was criticized in Greece, it was announced that the tender for the sale of 67% of the shares of Alexandroupoli Port was cancelled on November 7, 2022. In this context, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated that they cancelled the privatization of the Port of Alexandroupoli and decided that it should remain in state ownership as a valuable asset that cannot be given up.[7]

It can be argued that geopolitical developments were influential in the abandonment of the privatization of the port. The most important of these geopolitical developments is undoubtedly the Russia-Ukraine War. Because Greece aims to become a key actor in the energy crisis caused by the war and to become an energy centre. Athens is deepening its cooperation with Sofia for this purpose. Therefore, it is clear that Alexandroupoli has the potential to become an energy hub for Central Europe. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why Greece has given up on the privatization of Alexandroupoli Port. It can be argued that Alexandroupoli Port, which Greece considers as an “indispensably valuable asset”, will play a key role in the realization of its goals in the field of energy as well as defence.

On the other hand, the most important partner that comes to mind when talking about this port is the US. Indeed, this port is extremely important for the Washington administration. Alexandroupoli is a port that Washington uses as a kind of “base” and increases its military buildup day by day. In particular, it is an important entry point for the supply of military equipment to Kiev during the Russian-Ukrainian War.

It is also strategically located for the diversification of European energy sources. This has increased the value of the port. In other words, the port is an important center for the US as it increases its military presence in Eastern Europe. Indeed, on November 2, 2022, it was claimed in the press that the US Army’s 1st Aviation Brigade would be sent to the Port of Alexandroupoli within the framework of

the five-year defense cooperation agreement signed between Washington and Athens in 2021. It has been claimed that the brigade, which has its origins in the Vietnam War, consists of attack helicopters and in this context, 600 American soldiers will be deployed to the port together with attack helicopters.[8] Therefore, the actions of the US, which aims to turn Alexandroupoli Port into a naval base, draws the reaction of Russia.

In this context, the Kremlin accuses Washington of sending arms to Kiev via the port of Alexandroupoli. In a statement on the issue, Minister of Foreign Affairs Russia Sergey Lavrov referred to the “historical ties” between Russia and Greece and called on Athens to reconsider its relations with Washington.[9]

To summarize briefly, Russia’s pressure may be behind Greece’s suspension of the privatization of Alexandroupoli Port. This is because continued military presence of the US there and its military support to Kiev through this port has drawn Moscow’s reaction. As a result, Athens has become a key actor in the struggle between Washington and Moscow by taking advantage of the increasing geopolitical importance of the Alexandroupoli Port, which was not used years ago.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] “Greece has Beenforced to Sellits most Important Port to China”, Bussines Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/greece-sells-piraeus-to-chinese-investors-2016-4>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2016).

[6] “Greece to Gain More Dependence on Russia Losing Touch with EU and U.S, Spurring Pariah State’s Ambition”, RoberLansing Institute, <https://lansinginstitute.org/2021/02/16/russia-will-conquer-a-vital-strategic-area-on-the-greek-staging-ground/>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

[7] “‘Geopolitical Developments’ Prompt Greece to Cancel Alexandroupolis Port Sale”, Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/geopolitical-developments-prompt-greece-to-cancel-alexandroupolis-port-sale/>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

[8] “‘ABD, Dedeagac Limanı’na Saldırı Helikopterleri Eşliğinde 600 Asker Konuşlandırılacak’ İddiası”, Sputnik, <https://sputniknews.com.tr/20221102/abd-dedeagac-limanina-saldiri-helikopterleri-esliginde-600-asker-konuslandiracak-iddiasi-1062990715.html>, (Date of Accession: 17.11.2022).

[9] Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

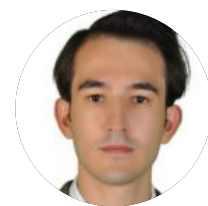
How Will Serbia's Foreign Policy be Shaped in the EU and Russia Dilemma?

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Serbia was one of the countries which were left in a difficult situation. On the one hand, Serbia is trying to become a member of the European Union (EU) and on the other hand, it wants to maintain positive relations with Russia, with which it has special relations historically and religiously.

Although Serbia officially has the status of a candidate for the EU, it seems unlikely that it will join the union. It is hardly possible to say that

Belgrade is pursuing a policy in harmony with Brussels. It can be said that Serbia's foreign policy has a multifaceted approach rather than being EU-oriented. The Belgrade administration adopts the doctrine of "military neutrality" as a state policy.

It can be said that the war was a turning point in Serbia's relations with the EU. Belgrade implemented a policy of balance between Moscow and Brussels until the Russia-Ukraine War. After the war in Ukraine, Brussels demanded that Bel-



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grade join the sanctions against Moscow, but Serbian President Alexander Vucic refused. Therefore, the war has shown how difficult it is for Serbia to implement a policy of balance between Russia and the West.

When the "plate crisis" between Kosovo and Serbia is added to all this, it has become "inevitable" that Belgrade's further approach to Moscow. The country that Serbia trusts the most in terms of the Kosovo Problem is Russia. So much so that, Russia is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This situation prevents Kosovo from becoming a member of the United Nations (UN). Moscow, taking into account the sensitivity of its traditional ally on the issue, does not recognize Pristina and does not oppose Serbia's efforts in this direction. In this matter, it should be emphasized that Serbia is dependent on Russia.

Predictably, for Serbia, Russia is an "indispensable" partner, especially in terms of the Kosovo Question. In other words, Serbia's severing of relations with Russia or imposing sanctions on Moscow would mean approving the resolution of the Kosovo Problem against Belgrade. For this reason, it seems extremely difficult for Serbia to join the Western sanctions against Russia.

On September 24, 2022, that is, at the time of tensions between Pristina and Belgrade, Serbia signed an agreement with Russia that includes mutual "consultations" on foreign policy.[1] The agreement has caused Serbia, which has EU candidate status, to receive heavy criticism from the bloc. Therefore, in a conjuncture where the tension between Belgrade and Pristina is increasing, it can be said that Moscow's weight has increased more than Brussels in Serbia's foreign policy.

Moreover, the new cabinet formed in Serbia on October 26, 2022, did not include Mining and Energy Minister Zorana Mihajlovic, who is wary of relations with Russia. Mihajlovic, who advocates Belgrade to pursue a pro-Western policy, said after the cabinet reshuffle that she "will always fight for a Serbia that is on the side of the West." [2]

It can also be stated that one of the important reasons why Mihajlovic is not included in the new cabinet is Belgrade's statements that it should impose sanctions on Russia. This could be interpreted as a loss of ground for those who advocate a policy of integration with the West in Belgrade.

Moreover, it can be argued that the absence of a politician known for his pro-Western views in the new cabinet in Serbia will create discontent in Brussels. Therefore, it can be suggested

that the politicians who want to conduct politics in harmony with the West and the EU in Serbia have decreased their effectiveness in the current government. The situation means that Moscow, rather than Brussels, is gaining weight in the foreign policy pursued by Belgrade.

Serbia's decision not to join in the sanctions against Russia is causing great reactions within the EU. For this reason, Germany pointed out on November 1, 2022, that Serbia must choose between Brussels and Moscow.[3] However, it should not be forgotten that Serbia is dependent on Russia to some extent due to the Kosovo Question. Given all this, Serbia will have to make some concessions if it wants to become a member of the EU. Therefore, it can be foreseen that Belgrade will have to choose the future.

On November 15, 2022, Serbian President Vucic praised the Russian-Serbian brotherhood and stated that Belgrade's brotherly relations with Moscow cannot be destroyed.[4] Vucic's use of these statements stems from recent developments regarding the Kosovo Question. As the Kosovo Question gains weight in Serbia's foreign policy, Moscow's influence over Belgrade is also increasing. In this context, Vucic's statements should not be considered a surprise.

In addition to all these, the approaches of the Western powers towards Kosovo should also be emphasized. Kosovo's insistence that Serbs living in the north of the country have car plates issued by Pristina has led the EU and the United States (US) to increase their pressure on Kosovo. The EU and the US are concerned that the dispute could lead to the reactivation of frozen conflict zones. This is the main reason why the EU and the US are exerting pressure on Kosovo. In the current conjuncture, Brussels and Washington have turned their weight to the Russia-Ukraine War. Therefore, new conflicts in a frozen conflict zone will cause the focus of attention of the EU and the US to dissipate. Brussels and Washington are also concerned about the possibility of Moscow getting involved in the problem in the future. For this reason, it is trying to prevent the escalation of the crisis.

Consequently, due to the developments regarding the Kosovo Question, it is seen that Serbia is getting closer to Russia in terms of foreign policy. Moreover, it is possible to predict that this trend will continue. This indicates that Belgrade, which is a candidate for the EU, will have tense relations with Brussels.

[1] "EU Candidate Serbia and Russia Sign Foreign Policy Agreement", Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-united-nations-general-assembly-foreign-policy-moscow-serbia-c63b0ca1271dd5b2ee3008bdcbb7de23>, (Date of Accession: 16.11.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Changing Perception of Taliban in Russia's Afghanistan Policy

The fourth meeting of the Moscow Format, hosted by Russia, was held on November 16, 2022, as part of the quest for a solution to the Afghanistan Problem. In addition to Russia, representatives from China, Pakistan, Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan attended the meeting.[1] Based on the nations present at the meeting, it may be concluded that the region's governments are attempting to develop a common stance toward Afghanistan. In other words, states want to act in unison when it comes to recognizing or not recognizing the Taliban.

However, the fact that the Taliban was not invited to the meeting in Moscow is an interesting development. Because the Taliban was represented at the summit held on October 20, 2021. Russian President Vladimir Putin indicated that the Taliban might be removed from Russia's list of terrorist groups,[2] which was interpreted as Moscow intending to recognize the Taliban administration. Therefore, this points to a change in Russia's perception of the Taliban.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted the participating nations' hope for the crea-



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tion of an inclusive administration in Afghanistan in its post-summit statement. This suggests that, at least for the time being, the actors are not inclined to recognize the Taliban. Russia's Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Zamur Kabulov, on the other hand, signaled a shift in the Kremlin's Afghanistan policy by hinting that not inviting the Taliban to the meeting was an important message given by the countries of the region.[3]

First of all, it can be said that the main concern of the regional states and course Russia regarding Afghanistan is the fragility of regional security. Regional states believe that the instabilities concentrated on Afghanistan will not be limited to the country in question, and that radicalization and terrorism will have a domino effect and extend to China via the Wakhan Corridor on one hand, and to Central Asia and then to Russia on the other. The operations of the terrorist group Daul al-Iraq and al-Sham (Daesh) in Afghanistan, in particular, have harmed regional security. It is seen that these activities disturb actors such as Tajikistan and Iran.

This is the main reason for the efforts to develop a common stance. Russia's view on the Taliban is changing because it feels obligated to be a part of this attempt to adopt a unified approach. Because Moscow has been criticized by several nations in the area as a result of the Ukraine War, as things are not progressing as they wish on the ground.

The Kremlin may not be able to handle the burden of establishing a different Afghanistan strategy than the regional nations in this setting, and it is aware of this. That's why it seems to have changed its rhetoric against the Taliban. In other words, whereas Russia formerly believed that by signaling recognition of the Taliban, it might persuade regional states to align with its Afghanistan strategy, it no longer wants to focus its attention and energy on Afghanistan. Despite this, Russia is cautious to preserve the initiative on the Afghanistan Problem in its own hands by continuing the summits under the Moscow Format. In other words, the Kremlin aims to maintain its influence in the heartland, the epicenter of the Eurasian power struggle, without putting forth a significant effort.

In this context, it can be said that there are four main reasons for Russia's policy change regarding the Taliban. The first of these is the international community's stance. Because no state or international organization has yet recognized the Taliban, which has been ruling Afghanistan since August 2021. Russia, on the other hand, is exposed to heavy sanctions due to the war in Ukraine and is isolated from the international community. Moscow, which does not want its isolation to worsen, takes care to conform to

the international community's demands on this matter. As a result, it has concentrated on expressing general demands of the international community such as dialogue, peaceful resolution, and inclusive government.

The second reason is the effect of the Ukraine War on Russia-Central Asian relations. In this context, the Moscow administration highlights the need of building a collective stance through cooperating with regional nations, as well as a policy that prioritizes regional security.

The third reason is related to the fact that Moscow values its relationship with Tehran. Because of the conflict in Ukraine, Russia has attempted to strengthen its military cooperation with Iran.

The fourth reason is the Taliban's rapprochement with the United States (US). According to the Kremlin, the main responsible for the situation in Afghanistan is the US. As a result, Moscow must assume responsibility for Washington's reconstruction of Afghanistan. Russia wants to keep the US out of the region. Because the Kremlin sees the Washington administration's activities in the region as a challenge to its dominance in its immediate surroundings. Therefore, it interpreted Taliban rule as the US's departure from the region and initially supported it. In reality, Russia was the first country to proclaim that the Kabul Embassy's operations would continue after the Taliban took over the city. However, recently, the Taliban has been getting closer to the US. It is stated that the parties held talks in Doha. Furthermore, the matter of Afghan banknotes indicates the existence of a consultation mechanism. Hence, Russia is sending a message to the Taliban that it is aware of its relations with the US and is uncomfortable about it.

In conclusion, while Moscow welcomed the second Taliban era in Afghanistan, it recently changed its policy. The main reasons for this situation are Russia's desire to share the international community's perspective on Afghanistan, its efforts to preserve cooperation in its relations with Tajikistan and Iran, and its discomfort with signs of rapprochement in Taliban-US relations. As a result, the Kremlin government, which previously stated that it was planning to remove the Taliban from Russia's list of terrorist groups and hosted both bilateral and numerous meetings in Moscow, decided to ignore the Taliban at the summit held on November 16, 2022.

[1] و ىلم ىتشآ ناواو اهروشك ناگدنآمن ؛وكسم تسشن ناآپ" Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202211166034>, (Date of Accession: 18.11.2022).

[2] Doğan Başaran, "Taliban Divergence in Russia-Iran Relations?", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/taliban-divergence-in-russia-iran-relations/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 18.11.2022).

[3] و ىلم ىتشآ ناواو اهروشك ناگدنآمن ؛وكسم تسشن ناآپ" op.cit. "دندش ناتسناعفا رد ريگارف تموکح لىکش

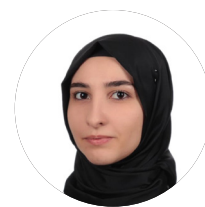


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Economic Developments in Pakistan-Kazakhstan Relations

In recent days, when global attention has focused on Central Asia, partnerships and collaborations established by states of the region attract much more attention than in the past. Relations are deepened by the visits of the European Union (EU) and United States (USA) officials to the region. In addition, there is in-

creasing momentum in the relations of Central Asian countries with other countries in nearby geography. The announcement by Pakistan and Kazakhstan that they will sign a Preferential Trade Agreement on November 18, 2022, can be interpreted as an important development in this regard.[1]



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Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin announced that a transit trade agreement would be signed to accelerate bilateral trade. In this context, Ambassador stated that the Minister of Trade and Integration of Kazakhstan Bakit Sultanov is expected to visit Pakistan in December 2022 to discuss the planned Preferential Trade Agreement and trade relations between the two countries. At the same time, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev stated that he will visit Pakistan in near future and this will contribute to the development of close relations between the two countries.[2]

Kazakhstan draws attention to the cooperation it has developed recently. The Astana administration stands out with its recent reform steps and decisions on its multi-vector foreign policy. For this reason, Kazakhstan is in the desire to deepen its cooperation with various actors and establish new partnerships.

Similarly, the Islamabad administration tends to increase its foreign policy partnerships. Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif attaches particular importance to economic partnerships and takes initiatives to attract investment to the country. Pakistan is taking steps, especially in the energy sector. In this context, Islamabad, which turns to Gulf countries economically, strengthens its cooperation with Kazakhstan in the energy context.

Two countries, which are considering signing a Preferential Trade Agreement, made a name for themselves with the energy agreement they signed on October 5, 2022. Thus, parties, which have made significant progress in bilateral cooperation, are striving to deepen their economic-based partnerships. It is possible to say that Pakistan's will to meet its energy needs and Kazakhstan's will to ensure cooperation diversity is decisive in the development of energy-economy-centered cooperation. Currently, it is known that the trade volume between the parties is 197 million dollars. Yerzhan Kistafin, Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Pakistan, stated that this figure can be increased to 1 billion dollars.[3] Kistafin's words have a reasonable basis. Because to diversify and intensify between the two countries, a roadmap was prepared in 2019-2020 and in this context, a memorandum of understanding was signed on thirty-five different subjects.[4]

The parties also care about each other geopolitically. For Kazakhstan, the ports of Pakistan facilitate Astana's access to the Arabian Sea. Therefore, Islamabad is of great importance in terms of economic interests in Astana. For Pakistan, the element that makes Kazakhstan attractive is energy. Islamabad administration needs energy from Kazakhstan. In return, Pakistan is seen as a gateway to the world in energy exports in Astana. This accelerates the rapprochement in bilateral relations.

It can be stated that the deepening of cooperation between the two countries is also important for economic integration in the South Asia-Central Asia line. Because the partnership of these two states, one of which is advantageous in terms of resources and the other in terms of logistics, accelerates regional and interregional cooperation. For this reason, it is possible to argue that number of projects in which the parties will come together will continue to increase in the future and other regional states will also participate in these cooperations.

Currently, Pakistan and Kazakhstan also have institutional relations through global and regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and United Nations. Through these institutions, contacts at the level of leaders have increased and therefore cooperation initiatives resulting in agreements have gained momentum.

As a result, relations on the Islamabad-Astana line tend to expand and deepen. In this sense, it can be said that cooperation in the fields of economy and energy is the driving force of bilateral relations. Therefore, it can be argued that the Preferential Trade Agreement to be signed between parties and the visit of Tokayev to Pakistan will accelerate the relations. Moreover, these developments indicate that not only Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations but also South Asia-Central Asia interaction will increase.

[1] "Pak-Kazakhstan Agrees to Sign Transit Trade Agreement: Ambassador Yerzhan", App, <https://www.app.com.pk/national/pak-kazakhstan-agrees-to-sign-transit-trade-agreement-ambassador-yerzhan/>, (Date of Accession: 19.11.2022).

[2] "Pakistan, Kazakhstan Agree to Sign Transit Trade Agreement", Radio Pakistan, <https://www.radio.gov.pk/18-11-2022/pak-kazakhstan-agrees-to-sign-transit-trade-agreement-kazakh-ambassador>, (Date of Accession: 19.11.2022).

[3] "Pak-Kazakhstan Agrees to...", op. cit.

[4] "Road Map Ready to Intensify Pak-Kazakhstan Bilateral Economic Cooperation Ambassador Barlybay Sadykov", DND, <https://dnd.com.pk/road-map-ready-to-intensify-pak-kazakhstan-bilateral-economic-cooperation-ambassador-barlybay-sadykov/159693>, (Date of Accession: 19.11.2022).



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Austria-Hungary-Serbia Alliance Against Irregular Migration

On November 16, 2022, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban met with Serbian President Alexander Vucic and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer, in Belgrade, and the parties signed a memorandum of understanding to fight irregular migration.[1]

The three countries are known for their strict stance on irregular migration toward Europe. Austria and Hungary are members of the European Union (EU), while Serbia has the status of

a candidate country. In addition to this, Austria and Hungary and Serbia and Hungary share a land border. Moreover, these three states are pursuing policies that oppose the EU's stance on migration. This is an important factor in the increase of cooperation between Budapest, Vienna, and Belgrade on irregular migration.

It can be said that the perceived "border security threat" is effective in the cooperation of the parties in the face of the problem. It can be



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said that the nucleus of this alliance was laid in Budapest on October 3, 2022. Accordingly, the leaders of the three states outlined the plan to prevent irregular migration to their countries. In this context, the parties agreed to act together to control the arrival of new migrants along the migration route through Serbia.[2] Therefore, the most important detail of this plan is that the three states will develop common policies against new migration movements, especially from the Serbia route. For this reason, it can be foreseen that Belgrade, Budapest, and Vienna will take strict measures against irregular migration in the future.

Furthermore, Austria and Hungary are among the most important actors striving for the accession of Serbia, which has EU candidate status, to the bloc. This indicates that the relations between the three countries are based on solid foundations. Therefore, cooperation between the parties can be evaluated not only within the framework of security but also as a multi-dimensional. In particular, it should be noted that the “energy” factor occupies an important place in the relations between Serbia and Hungary. As a matter of fact, on October 10, 2022, Belgrade and Budapest agreed to build a pipeline to transport Russian oil to Serbia.[3]

In taking the decision, the EU’s inclusion of energy in the pressure against Russia on the occasion of the 8th sanctions package played an important role. Until then, Serbia had been receiving Russian oil through Croatia through the Adriatic Oil Pipeline (JANAF). However, under EU sanctions, Belgrade is prohibited from importing Russian oil through the pipeline. For this reason, Hungary has shown solidarity with Serbia. All these developments are concrete evidence that the relations between Belgrade and Budapest are multifaceted.

However, the leaders of the countries in the alliance resolution against irregular migration adopted on November 16, 2022, expressed their concerns about a possible migrant crisis that could be worse than in 2015. In this context, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer stated that his country’s cooperation with Serbia and Hungary is imperative due to the failure of the EU’s asylum system. Moreover, Nehammer added that the two EU members, Vienna and Budapest, have sent a clear message to Brussels that Serbia is a reliable partner.[4]

Serbian President Vucic said the number of registered migrants in his country has nearly doubled compared to the previous year, and that Belgrade, with the support of Vienna and Budapest, will employ more police officers at the North Macedonian border.[5]

Hungarian Prime Minister Orban stated that migration should be prevented, not managed, and that Hungary and Austria share their fate with Serbia and that working together is of great importance in this critical issue.[6]

As can be seen from the statements of the leaders of the states concerned, it is seen that the biggest message in the fight against irregular migration is given to the EU. Therefore, this is a harbinger of the formation of a new anti-immigrant bloc in Europe. In this sense, it can be argued that some new countries may join Austria, Hungary, and Serbia in the future.

It is also understood that Budapest and Vienna continue to “lobby” Belgrade. This is due to the stance adopted by Serbia in terms of ensuring the border security of Austria and Hungary.

Consequently, as a result of the negotiations held in October 2022, the three countries took critical steps to increase border security, and an alliance agreement was signed on November 16, 2022. In this context, it can be foreseen that the relations on the Belgrade-Budapest-Vienna line may develop further within the “security framework.” Also, it can be said that there is a multidimensional cooperation between the parties and that the relations are built on solid foundations.

[1] Nikolaus J. Kurmayer- Zoran Radosavljevic, “Austria Teams Up With Hungary, Serbia to End Asylum a la Carte”, Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/austria-teams-up-with-hungary-serbia-to-end-asylum-a-la-carte/>, (Date of Accession:18.11.2022).

[2] “Hungary, Austria and Serbia Leaders Outline Plan to Curb Migration”, Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/10/04/hungary-austria-and-serbia-leaders-outline-plan-to-curb-migration>, (Date of Accession:18.11.2022).

[3] “Hungary, Serbia Agree to Build Pipeline to Ship Russian Oil to Serbia”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/hungary-serbia-agree-build-pipeline-ship-russian-oil-serbia-hungarian-govt-2022-10-10/>, (Date of Accession:18.11.2022).

[4] Talha Öztürk, “Serbia, Hungary, Austria Agree to Step Up Efforts Against Illegal Migration”, Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/serbia-hungary-austria-agree-to-step-up-efforts-against-illegal-migration/2740508>, (Date of Accession:18.11.2022).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Kurmayer- Radosavljevic, op.cit.

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22 November 2022

ANKASAM Güvenlik Danışmanı Doç. Dr. Şafak Oğuz TVNET Dünya Gündemi programında dış politikadaki güncel gelişmeleri değerlendirdi.

24 November 2022

ANKASAM Security Advisor Assoc. Dr. Şafak Oğuz evaluated the current developments in foreign policy in the TVNET Dünya Gündemi program.

24 November 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations about the Organization of Turkish States (TDT) Samarkand Summit were broadcast on O'zbekiston 24, the leading television of Uzbekistan.



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

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

JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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

ANKASAM JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

