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Reasons for Russia’s  
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## ANKASAM OUTLOOK

# The Russia-Ukraine War: Rising Fascism in Europe and the Return of the “Western Problem”

The Russia-Ukraine War, which began on February 24, 2022, fueled the growth of the far right in Europe's conventional norms and accelerated developments that demonstrated that principles like democracy and human rights were only just rhetoric. These processes began with the rise of Islamophobia following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and hence

the casting of “Islam” as the “other.” The global economic crisis in 2008, the Arab Spring that broke out in 2011 and the resulting migration movements, the Ukraine Crisis in 2014, the Brexit that took place as of December 31, 2020, and the outbreak of Covid-19 made the process of nationalistic ambitions ever clearer in European societies.



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Two prominent issues bring Europe's fears to the forefront in the context of the Russia-Ukraine War. These are security and the economy. While it is possible to discuss a multidimensional situation in terms of security, particularly energy, food, migration, and even borders; economically, Europe is facing the reality of hyperinflation just like during the interwar era. This produces economic challenges, which subsequently lead to social and political crises.

Indeed, Europe, which is becoming increasingly unstable by the day, is confronted with resigning governments, sharpening nation-state reflexes, and a burgeoning far-right reality. In this way, one could argue that the circumstances that gave rise to Adolf Hitler in Germany or Benito Mussolini in Italy are repeating themselves today. The election victory of the Brothers of Italy led by Georgia Meloni in Italy, the far right coming to power in Sweden, the "cradle of social democracy," the Conservative Party's continued leadership despite the political turmoil in England, the growing influence of neo-Nazi groups such as PEGIDA in Germany, and the rise of the National Rally in France confirm that Europe is being plunged into the pre-World War II atmosphere.

Furthermore, protests in countries such as Germany, France, and Czechia in response to the energy crisis and criticizing their nations' Russian policies demonstrate that governments are under intense public pressure to pursue a strategy that prioritizes their national interests. Because sanctions intended at weakening Russia have a "boomerang effect" on Europe, which attracts the reaction of impoverished societies. As a result, even though many experts' assessments neglect the public component, it is apparent that the pressure in question will rise even more. In other words, not only far-right parties but also governments across the continent tend towards far-right discourses. Thus, it might be argued that the continent's divisions will trigger some political ruptures in the future.

To summarize, opportunist pragmatism comes from the idealist discourses produced by the European Union (EU) through values, in which each nation prioritizes its interests and shows a desire to return to its own historical rules. Of course, this position opens the door to a process known as the "European Crisis" in particular and the "Western Crisis" in general, just as it did before World War II.

The most serious challenge confronting the West is the lack of self-confidence caused by the leadership of the United States of America (USA). Because the EU countries feel the humiliation experienced by Hitler's Germany to the core. Although the American leadership has established a secure environment for the continental nations, the differences that arise in Trans-Atlantic ties from time to time raise the question of "Which West?" This may lead the actors to turn to a revisionist policy.

The most pressing issue at this juncture is Continental Europe's leadership. The recent escalation of conflicts and rivalry between Germany and France also calls to mind the fight for European leadership before World War I and II.

The armament decision demonstrating the revival of the national ambitions of Germany, the economic giant of the EU, and France's European Political Community (EPC), indicates that the Berlin-Paris divide may spiral out of control, particularly in the EU-EPC debates.

Furthermore, Germany's Chinese orientation, which is supposed to have learned lessons from World War II and the Russia-Ukraine War, demonstrates that Berlin's aims may become disastrous. Therefore, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to Beijing on November 4, 2022, has considerable symbolic significance. At this stage, it is important not to overlook the "Emerging Asian Powers" that emerged before World War II, as well as the "Fascist Alliance" ideology that developed in Japan. Because the world is once again experiencing discussions on the concept of "Rising Asia."

Furthermore, French President Emmanuel Macron's transformation of his country into an actor deeply interested in former colonial geography within the framework of Napoleonic policies, while making room for the extreme right in domestic politics in the context of the "yellow vests," recalls times when rising nationalism triggered colonialism. It also demonstrates that actors are seeking methods to revert to their colonial pasts by abandoning integrationist policies.

Of course, the issue is not limited to Continental Europe. Because Britain is also looking for ways to return to its glorious imperial days. Brexit was a tool to achieve this goal. Britain, which seeks to be prominent in Eurasian geopolitics by participating in the "New Great Game" and being the main subject of the "Great Game" in history, seeks to open up to Eurasia through Eastern Europe. The defense-based cooperation agreement signed between Britain, Poland, and Ukraine shortly before the Russia-Ukraine War is an outcome of this policy. This purpose also explains why London stands apart from other EU capitals in its approach to Kyiv and Moscow, taking a considerably more radical stance.

As it will be remembered, one of the features of the process leading up to World War II was the failure of the League of Nations, which was established to prevent wars from happening. Today, the United Nations (UN), which has drawn criticism for its ineffectiveness in dealing with crises, may suffer a similar fate. As a result, if some UN structural reforms are not implemented, it may be impossible to prevent Europe's shift from right-populism to right-wing fascism. This could turn Continental Europe into a geography where wars take place. This is the painful truth that history has shown.

All these assessments reflect the divergence experienced in Europe in particular and in the West in general in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian War. The answers to the question "what kind of a future" in the context of Ukraine may influence European security architecture and trigger vulnerabilities in Continental Europe. Because the current picture is, in every way, reminiscent of World War II.

Finally, the EU is confronted with the devastating threat of the acute nation-state mindset that has been on the rise among the far right. In this context, it is possible to assert that the separation processes triggered by Brexit tend to deepen and broaden with new challenges focusing on "Mediterranean Europe" and "Eastern Europe." The world is once again confronted with a "Western Problem" centered on Europe. The ghosts of Hitler and Mussolini are looming over Europe. Undoubtedly, this process has an Asian component that must be addressed later.



## ANKASAM OUTLOOK

# Organization of Turkic States Samarkand Summit: “Towards Common Development and Prosperity”

The Ninth Summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) will be held in the ancient city of Uzbekistan, Samarkand on November 11, 2022 hosted by the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, the President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Former President of Turkmenistan, and the Head of the

People’s Assembly of the National Council of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, and the Secretary General of the OTS Baghdad Amreyev are expected to attend to the summit.[1]

The summit, which includes the theme of “Towards Common Development and Prosperity”, represents the search for stability, security, and prosperity based on the understanding of



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common history, culture, and civilization.” In that sense, the decisions at the summit are quite important.

In terms of these decisions, firstly, it should be needed to mention the enlargement processes of the OTS. It is expected that Turkmenistan, which became an observer member in the Istanbul Summit in 2021, in which Turkic Council was renamed as OTS, to be a full member.[2] It can be said that Turkmenistan’s membership in the organization will bring new momentum and will strengthen the search for regional security, cooperation, peace, and prosperity, as Turkmenistan sees “dialogue as the guarantor of peace.”[3] Therefore, the OTS could follow more effective diplomacy against many crises including the Afghan Issue. The other significant development in the OTS Summit is the expectance of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus to be an observer member of the organization.[4]

On the other hand, it is expected that the initiatives towards developing integration of the member states with each other, with the region, and with the world. In that sense, as a significant step towards escalating economic integration, it is planned to establish a “Common Investment Fund.”[5] At that point, it should be underlined that The Council of Banks Associations of Turkic States was established on 4 November 2022.[6] When the two developments were addressed together, it can be expressed that the efforts toward economic integration started to reach concrete outputs.

Another trivet of economic cooperation is energy and transit logistics in terms of routes and corridors. Especially after Russian-Ukrainian War, the deadlock of the Northern Corridor escalated Caspian-centered cooperation processes. As a matter of fact, it is observed that the member states, through both bilateral and multilateral agreements, are increasingly seeking cooperation in the Trans-Caspian Corridor, for instance, the Middle Transport Corridor, which starts from China and extends to Europe. That’s why it is possible that new decisions to be taken at the point of logistic-corridors centered Trans-Caspian. Because, OTS member states do not want a world, which evolves into a rival area on the axis of power struggle and destabilizes, they expressed their aim to establish cooperation bridges. In that context, the OST, specific to Trans-Caspian Corridor, could provide a constructive perspective focused on cooperation against regional and global instabilities.

In addition to all these, it is declared that there will be a platform, on which several agreements on OTS projects and official documents will be resolved.[7]

It should be noted that this platform is important in two aspects. The first is its contribution to economic cooperation, complementing the “Common Investment Fund” and the “Council of Banks Associations of Turkic States.” The second and more important one is related to the strengthening of the institutional identity of the OTS. Indeed, the OTS continues its institutionalization steps in line with the message conveyed by the name change dated November 12, 2021. This shows that the member states want to transform the OTS into a full-fledged international organization. As a matter of fact, the new appointments and some changes to be made in the OTS secretariat are the product of the same approach. [8] Therefore, the OTS is taking firm steps toward becoming a strong international organization.

On the other hand, it is expected to adopt the “Strategy Document”, which will draw the first five-year course of the Vision Document, which was adopted at the Istanbul Summit on November 12, 2021, and which constitutes the twenty-year roadmap of the OTS in the pursuit of common development and prosperity.[9] Thus, it can be said that the member states will demonstrate their determination to strengthen economic, political, cultural, and social ties. At the same time, this document also means that the will to seek a common future will continue. In that context, it can be predicted that the Samarkand Declaration, which will be accepted at the end of the summit, will include messages on the search for cooperation, development, prosperity, and peace at the global level.

In addition, the OTS is preparing to produce policies to develop a new approach in the fields of green energy, climate, ecology, agriculture, water, etc., which are also prioritized issues in the region, to find a solution to the food and energy crisis that the whole world is facing harshly, first with the Covid-19 pandemic and then with the impact of the Russia-Ukraine War. Therefore, it can be argued that various memorandums of understanding will be signed on these issues and that these texts will be complementary to the document in question. In other words, the OTS stands out as a structure that aims to develop and deepen cooperation as an antithesis to crises.

As a result, on the one hand, the OTS focused on the development of economic, political, cultural, and social cooperation within the member states; on the other hand, accelerated its efforts to become a full-fledged international organization by strengthening its own institutional identity. In doing so, the Organization tries to provide constructive roadmaps in the face of regional and global problems, especially food and energy,

both by presenting new perspectives and strengthening regional cooperation on logistics corridors, which have begun to turn into a global crisis. This positions the OTS as an actor that contributes to cooperation, prosperity, security, and peace not only at the regional level but also at the global level at a time when crises tend to escalate. In other words, the OTS emerges as a constructive organisation that aims to develop and intensify cooperation as an antithesis in the face of crises. For this reason, it is possible to state that the decisions to be taken at the Samarkand Summit of the OTS are of great importance in terms of achieving the goal of “common development and prosperity” not only in the context of member countries but also in the regional-global dimension.

[1] “Basın Duyurusu-Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı (TDT) Zirvesi Özbekistan’ın Semerkant Kentinde Düzenlenecektir.”, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, [https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/basin-duyurusu-turk-devletleri-teskilati-tdt-zirvesi-ozbekistanin-semerkant-kentinde-duzenlenecek-tir\\_2674](https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/basin-duyurusu-turk-devletleri-teskilati-tdt-zirvesi-ozbekistanin-semerkant-kentinde-duzenlenecek-tir_2674), (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[2] Emrah Kaya, “Turkmenistan’s Full Membership to the Organization of Turkic States”, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/turkmenistan-full-membership-to-the-organization-of-turkic-states/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[3] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, “Turkmenistan, the Address of Continuity in the Search for Peace: “Dialogue is the Guarantee of Peace””, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/turkmenistan-the-address-of-continuity-in-the-search-for-peace-dialogue-is-the-guarantee-of-peace-1/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[4] “Kalin: KKTC, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı’na Gözlemci Olarak Katılacak”, TRT Haber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/kalin-kktc-turk-devletleri-teskilatina-gozlemci-olarak-katilacak-721339.html>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[5] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Zirvesi Hazırlıkları Devam Ediyor”, Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turk-devletleri-teskilati-zirvesi-hazirliklari-devam-ediyor/2733607>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[6] “Türk Devletleri Banka Birlikleri Konseyi Kuruldu”, CNN Türk, <https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/turk-devletleri-banka-birlikleri-konseyi-kuruldu>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[7] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Devlet Başkanları Zirvesi 11 Kasım’da Özbekistan’da Toplanacak”, TRT Avaz, <https://www.trtavaz.com.tr/haber/tur/avasyadan/turk-devletleri-teskilati-devlet-baskanlari-zirvesi-11-kasimda-ozbekistanda-to/636b586201a30a2e3402e400>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[8] “Basın Duyurusu...”, op. cit.

[9] “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı 9’uncu Zirvesi İçin Semerkant’a Gidiyor”, Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-turk-devletleri-teskilati-9uncu-zirvesi-icin-semerkanta-gidiyor/2733820>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).



## ANKASAM OUTLOOK

# Reasons for Russia’s Withdrawal from Kherson Region

On November 9, 2022, Sergey Surovkin, the commander of Russian soldiers in Ukraine, suggested to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu that they should withdraw from Russian-controlled Kherson to the eastern bank of the Dnieper River. Shoigu took the suggestion and ordered the withdrawal of Russian soldiers the same day.

Given the timing and the allegations, the decision to withdraw Russian soldiers from a part of Kherson, one of four regions annexed by Russia during the invasion by holding a referendum, is a new event that may be considered a prominent development and therefore a turning point in terms of the Russia-Ukraine War. Although this statement may appear overly ambitious in the current context, it could be in-



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terpreted as an obligation for the parties given the state of the conflict.

Indeed, Russian authorities viewed this as a “tough decision” from their standpoint. There is no doubt that such a development is an extremely serious decision in terms of the Moscow administration’s Ukraine policy. As Russian officials have explained, this was a difficult decision to make. The main reason for this difficulty is that the Kherson region is one of four that Russia annexed in violation of international law by holding a referendum. Therefore, Kherson is considered “Russian soil” according to the laws of Russia. For this reason, the withdrawal will inevitably create discomfort in the Russian public. At this time, it is possible to claim that Russia’s retreat, which has left a part of the Kherson region in the hands of the Ukrainian Army, is for a range of reasons.

The first of these is the situation caused by the war. Because Russia’s human and economic costs make the Ukraine War unsustainable. The rise in human and economic costs is exacerbating Russia’s socioeconomic discontent. Thus, the notions that the war with Ukraine was “attrition warfare” and that Russia was not on the winning side began to emerge, both among Russian leadership and among a section of Russian society.

As could be predicted, this is creating rifts within society as well as among Russia’s leadership. In this context, decision-makers have to evaluate different options. In reality, it can be claimed that one of the possibilities on the table is to withdraw from a portion of the Kherson region and leave it to the Ukrainian Army and play defense. In other words, Russia may have decided to shift from an offensive to a defensive approach. It is also claimed that the decision was a “strategic retreat.” However, given the state of the conflict, it is doubtful how much a strategic retreat will help Moscow in terms of a new skirmish.

Secondly, Russia may prefer to use the Kherson region as a bargaining chip against Donbas, which it still controls. The Kremlin administration revised its aims and concentrated its attention on the Donbas immediately after Russia’s armed action against Ukraine that began in February 2022. In other words, the primary goal of Moscow is to control the Donbas region. Russia’s major reason for intervening in the Kherson region was based on the

idea of gaining control over Donbas. As a result, Russia may use the withdrawal as a facilitating factor to persuade both domestic and international public opinion that the process and negotiations are restricted to Donbas. As a result, Russia may have felt the need to update and repair its image in the eyes of the foreign public, particularly the Russian people. This can turn into an argument that will further strengthen Russia’s hand at the diplomacy table. In other words, the events may have triggered a process that is appealing to Russian and Ukrainian citizens, based on the “win-win” idea and reciprocal compromises.

The fact that Russia made such a “tough” decision despite holding a referendum in the Kherson region and stating that it had annexed these regions raises an important question. This question is: Is Russia preparing for making a bigger bargain with the US?

In truth, Russia has long desired to sit at the negotiation table with the US. The Russian authorities have repeatedly stated this. As a result, the reasons that forces Russia to negotiate with the US were effective in Russia’s withdrawal from some of the regions it occupied by abandoning its ambition to capture the entirety of Ukraine.

In this context, it is possible to talk about many reasons. These, as mentioned at the beginning, may be related to the heavy cost of the war. But it is more than just that. Because Ukraine is becoming stronger every day due to the war. The psychological superiority conferred to Ukrainian soldiers by the conflict, as well as the sense of national unity it created, aided Kyiv. Furthermore, the equipping of Ukraine by the US and other Western countries elevates the country to the status of a major military force. As a result, stopping the Ukrainian Army armed with modern weaponry and expertise is difficult for the Russian forces.

The extension of the war wears out Russia while also providing Ukraine with some military benefits. As a result, the war undermines Russia’s global strategy. For example, the Russia-Ukraine War has strengthened Trans-Atlantic relations. In reality, despite Russia’s desire to position Europe as an independent pole from the US, ties between the US and the European Union are strengthening. Even a state like Germany, which has strategic relations

with Russia in the Western Alliance, has now reduced its relations with Moscow to a minimum. Furthermore, Berlin’s relations with Kyiv are improving.

Furthermore, Russia is isolated not just in the West, but also in the non-Western world, and suffers from the “abandonment” syndrome. This is particularly evident in the relations on the Moscow-Beijing line. Russia did not get the support it expected from China regarding the war in Ukraine. In addition, China is acting against Moscow’s interests in Central Asia and Russia’s border regions and is initiating operations to enhance its influence.

As can be seen, the Russia-Ukraine War is paving the way for China, which may have made Moscow uneasy. Looking at the new process from the point of view of the US, the Washington administration probably thinks that Russia has reached the desired consistency and does not want it to weaken further. This is consistent with the US-China competition, which has been disclosed from the beginning of the war of keeping Russia away from China and pulling China closer to itself. The US, which has inflicted a serious blow to the system that wants a multipolar world against itself, appears to want to impose a burden on China along all lines by, at the very least, neutralizing Moscow by securing peace between Russia and Ukraine. In this context, it seems to have achieved the desired result with the Ukraine Crisis to a large extent.

China, on the other hand, is progressively turning away from its notions about the “multipolar international order,” which it supports with Russia, and is signaling its willingness to reconcile with the US. The claims that Beijing is seeking a “controlled bipolar” system with Washington probably did not escape the attention of Russia. This caused Moscow to reconsider its foreign policy and especially its relations with the great powers.

To summarize, the war in Ukraine has not only damaged the Russian-Chinese partnership but also showed that the United States can inflict hard blows on Russia with “proxy wars.” Of course, this can be interpreted as a message from the US to Russia. It might be claimed that Moscow has realized that if it does not voluntarily embrace the Washington administration’s interests, the US would use other tactics to put Russia in difficulty.

Thus, Russia’s partial withdrawal from Kherson means that Moscow is preparing to take some steps for negotiations. Therefore, Russia sees the start of negotiations as one of its most important targets. Undoubtedly, Ukraine’s reaction to this process and the approach it will display is a reality that should not be ignored. At this point, the US secret diplomacy is most likely at work.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# New Policy of Russia Towards Azerbaijan-Armenia Relations

The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, in his declaration on October 27, 2022, at Valdai Discussion Club's 19th meeting, assess the Karabakh Issue in Azerbaijan-Armenia relations. In that sense, Putin said the following:[1]

"Russia's approach is towards a need for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia; however, Moscow will not impose anything on Yerevan and will not support any actor."



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In addition, the Russian leader expressed that he proposed the transfer of the region, which is under the control of Yerevan to Azerbaijan; however, the Armenian officials did not accept this.[2] As it is known, in September 2022, there were conflicts between the border of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and in these conflicts, over 100 people lost their lives. In addition, the sides are regularly blaming the other.

On the other hand, it is expected that the Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan will meet the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, and the President of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev. The last meeting between Pashinyan and Aliyev was at European Political Community Summit held in Prague, Czechia, on October 6, 2022.

This meeting was qualified as a positive step towards peace. Mr. Aliyev indicates that around the end of 2022, a peace agreement can be signed with Armenia. On the other hand, it is seen that Armenia Security Council points out a similar process.

In addition, the Secretary of Armenia Security Council Armen Grigoryan, and the Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Hikmet Hajiev, met with the United States (US) National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in the White House on September 28, 2022, and negotiated on there will be a peace agreement at the end of the year.

So much so that Grigoryan, in his statement at this meeting on October 12, 2022, said, "It was agreed to sign a peace treaty, that is, to agree by the end of the year." [3] Following Putin's statement, Pashinyan said the following on October 28, 2022:[4]

"Yerevan has accepted the Russian study on the basic principles and parameters for the establishment of interstate relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and is ready to confirm it in Sochi. We hope that Russia will support its proposals."

On the same day, Valentina Matviyevko, the President of the Russian Federal Council, who met with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova, said that Moscow would continue to assist in the signing of a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[5]

It should be noted that Putin's statements at the Valdai meeting that Karabakh would remain under Armenia's control in exchange for Baku's ceding five regions/regions of Azerbaijan were one of the peace plans that had a long history. However, Russia's attempts to resolve the Karabakh Issue have not yielded positive results; on the contrary, they have led Azerbaijan to lose hope in these talks.

In the pre-Pashinyan period, Armenian governments were not willing to return either Karabakh or the five occupied regions outside Karabakh to Azerbaijan. Therefore, the following two options were seen as the most reasonable for Yerevan: The first was to cede Karabakh and other occupied territories to Armenia; the second was to freeze the conflict.

In 2020, Azerbaijan's recapture of its occupied territories invalidated the old "peace projects" as Putin put it, and caused both Armenia and Russia to change their policies on the issue.

Putin states that Armenia missed the opportunity offered on the Karabakh issue. In other words, Putin emphasizes that Yerevan is the main responsible for the troubled relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In addition, Azerbaijan and Armenia have made significant progress in reaching a peace agreement through talks mediated by the US and France, in addition to the talks between themselves.

Russia is concerned that if it stays away from the developments in the Caucasus, it will not be able to manage the process and will lose its role in the region to Europe. Armenia, on the one hand, is satisfied with the peace negotiations, but on the other hand, it would like to hear a proposal that would make it more profitable for itself.

As long as the problems in Russia-Armenia relations persist, Moscow cannot be expected to make any significant proposals to Armenia. Proposals that are contrary to Azerbaijan's interests could lead to a renewed escalation of tensions along the Azerbaijan-Armenia border. Pashinyan's goal here is to define the borders and reach a peace agreement without going to a new war with Azerbaijan.



To summarize, Russia wants to be an active actor in the Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations and the normalization of relations. Considering the presence of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in Karabakh, it can be said that Moscow is trying to maintain its influence in the region.

For this purpose, Moscow believes that it needs to improve its relations with Azerbaijan. This heralds a transition to a new form of relations in Russian foreign policy. The year 2025 is critical here. Otherwise, it is possible that after the expiration of the mandate of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in Karabakh, Baku will demand the withdrawal of the Russian Peacekeepers. Undoubtedly, the resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border issues and the signing of a peace treaty, followed by the withdrawal of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in Karabakh, would mean that Moscow would lose the region to third actors.

For all these reasons, the Kremlin seeks to revive the negotiations over Azerbaijani territories to start a new process, in which it can remain a mediator and a dominant player in the region. However, Baku would be uncomfortable if Russia resorted to tried and tested methods such as taking control of Karabakh from Baku in exchange for the return of some occupied territories to Azerbaijan.

[1] "Путин предлагал Армении передать Азербайджану пять подконтрольных районов", Kommersant, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5634851>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "В Совбезе Армении сообщили о договоренностях заключить мир с Азербайджаном до конца года", Kommersant, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5608463>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[4] "Армения согласна работать с Азербайджаном по предложенным Россией принципам", Kommersant, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5635103>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[5] "РФ намерена содействовать подписанию Баку и Ереваном мирного договора", İzvestiya, <https://iz.ru/1417296/2022-10-28/rf-namerena-sodeistvo-vat-podpisaniu-baku-i-erevanom-mirnogo-dogovora>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

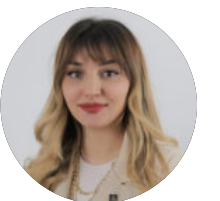


## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Deepening Competition in Arctic Region: US-China-Russia

Long with the changes seen in world politics, China is beginning to be taken as a rising actor within the global balance of power. The United States of America (US), which seeks to maintain the unipolar world order, is endeavouring to prevent the rise of China. Meanwhile, along with

the resurrection of the Cold War atmosphere of the Russian-Ukraine War, it is witnessed that Russia, the traditional enemy of the US, has started a built an alliance with China with her desire for achieving a "multipolar world". Thus, strategic rapprochement among these states



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meets the eyes of the world. These developments have led to the Arctic Region being positioned as the centre of the global power struggle as the “competition area” between these three nations.

As part of the global warming effect, the Arctic geography stands out as one of strategic importance due to rapidly melting glaciers and related to this, the occurrence of possibility to access numerous valuable resources. As well as energy reserves, critical minerals, and fisheries, newly accessed shipping routes across the Arctic enable the possibility of creating a new route between Europe and Asia. Hence, several countries' interests arouse regarding the Arctic region, both economically and politically. Therefore, a power struggle appears in the region as new players and new investments occur. Russia, China, and the US are at the forefront of these actors.

Under a treaty called the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), these three signatory countries have the right to exploit resources from the seabed out to 370 kilometres off their shorelines. However, the natural gas reserves of the region are beyond the legal boundaries that were drawn by the UN.[1] Thus, their interests are rather than land; even actors that are relatively far from the North Pole, such as China, which are in the natural resources of the region, pursue an active policy in the region.

The publication of the white paper titled “China’s Arctic Policy” in January 2018 by Beijing, put China’s interest in the region on a concrete basis and China defined itself as a “near-Arctic state”[2] Even though China does not claim any territory in the region, it maintains that it has a right to conduct scientific research, pursue economic resources, and participate in the region’s administration. In this context, the Beijing administration considers the Arctic Region within the scope of the Belt-Road Project and bases its presence in the region on the “Polar Silk Road”.

Despite the relations between China and Russia currently have been perceived as an “alliance”, it is evident that Moscow is uncomfortable with the expansion of China’s presence in the region. From a geopolitical perspective, Russia has the longest Arctic coastline. As such, the North Pole have meaning in national security, legitimacy ve prestige for Kremlin. The role of economic growth and development in Moscow’s Arctic policy is also crucial.

In recent years, Russia, particularly after deteriorating relations with the United States and the West in general due to the Ukraine Crisis, has been strengthening its military presence in the Arctic and expanding its activities. Although Russia and China symbolize the pursuit of multipolarity and fight together against the unipolarity of the US, the interests of Beijing and Moscow regarding the Arctic are divergent. Furthermore, China’s economic, financial, and technological resources far surpass those of Russia, creating a negative situation for Moscow in terms of its interest in Arctic geopolitics.

In this framework, Moscow wants to diversify the cooperation it has developed within the Arctic Region. The sanctions imposed due to Ukraine War led to the Arctic activities of Russia hanging in hence, and there is no other option left for Moscow but to seek partners which can provide high technology to its projects. Kremlin’s ongoing dialogue with Saudi Arabia and India on the said partnership, reveals Russia to enter into rivalry with China in the Arctic. Since India plays a significant role as a global actor, particularly in the Indo-Pacific Region, in balancing the strategic relationship between Russia and China.

As is seen, insecurity which has persisted for many years among the Beijing-Moscow line may worsen due to the uncertainty about Russia’s regional goals relating to the Arctic after the Ukraine War. Accordingly, it would be accurate to claim that China and Russia, together with the USA, constitute a tripartite competition in the Arctic.

Washington, on the other hand, evaluates Arctic politics and security within a scope of defiance to Russia and China. In addition, the goal of the US to prevent the rise of its rivals in the oil industry, China and Russia, and the relations it has developed with the Arctic countries under NATO, are considered the main reasons for the Washington administration’s interest in the Arctic. This is also clearly shown by the new “National Strategy for the Arctic Region” that was published by the White House on 7 October 2022. [3]

While the US and China are considered structural rivals for global hegemony, Russia is the unquestionable military superpower when it comes to the Arctic Region. In this case, it may be expected that the US will pursue more active policies in the region to contain China and Russia. This also is mainly the reason for support for Sweden and Finland’s NATO membership.

Consequently, climate change, globalization the return of competition between great powers turns the North Pole into a hot spot of geopolitical competition. Moreover, the activities of the United States, China and Russia in the region are of great importance to demonstrate that the “Arctic exceptionalism” is over.

[1] “Who Owns the Arctic” Live Science, <https://www.livescience.com/who-owns-the-arctic.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.10.2022).

[2] “China’s Arctic Policy”, The State Council of People’s Republic of China, [http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2018/01/26/content\\_281476026660336.html](http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.html), (Date of Accession: 18.10.2022).

[3] “Biden’s New Arctic Strategy Foresees Competition With Russia, China”, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/bidens-new-arctic-strategy-foresees-competition-with-russia-china-2022-10-07/> (Date of Accession: 18.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Russian-Chinese Cooperation Limits

In recent years, the growing cooperation between Russia and China has become one of the current discussions between international relations researchers with a disagreement. Some attach great importance to this cooperation and see the two countries as leaders of a non-Western bloc united against the global hegemony of the United States of America (USA). Others tend not to underestimate the

Russian-Chinese alliance, but to emphasize the borders of the alliance. But recent developments have shown that both views do not fully reflect the exact truth, meaning that the painting cannot be depicted with only two colors, black or white.

First of all, Russian-Chinese relations have an extremely complex historical heritage. Although



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the two countries were in the same ideological camp during Cold War, the majority of the period went through competition, and disputes in many areas followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, with the Shanghai Agreement signed in 1996 to establish trust in border regions, the foundations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were laid. Only a year later, the same states made a joint statement regarding their demands for a multipolar world order. Thus, Russia and China have now begun to solve their problems over time and strengthen cooperation in international politics. Although this cooperation has not created a real alliance, it has deepened by spreading to many different areas, especially in the last ten years.

The first important pillar of cooperation is in the military field. On one hand, resolving border issues between parties has reduced burdens in the field of border security; on the other hand, it has opened a door to a neighborly relationship based on mutual trust. In an environment of ongoing border problems, it can be argued that Russia will need to deploy more troops on the Chinese border and will have to think twice before sending troops to Syria or launching an attack on Ukraine. Similarly, China can allocate more military resources to issues such as the Taiwan Issue, border disputes with India, and the modernization of the army, thanks to having fewer soldiers on the Russian border.

The economy is equally important. While economic cooperation is asymmetrical, Russia can balance this asymmetry to a certain extent with its natural resources and its advantages in military technology. But one of the most critical aspects of collaboration is related to shared interests in the international system. Both countries perceive Western international interventions as some kind of imperialism, view Western values, such as democracy and human rights as excuses for interfering with the internal affairs of other states, and are skeptical of the leadership of the USA in the system. This is the most important reason for the deepening of Russian-Chinese cooperation, especially in recent years. Because the parties are united in the demand for multipolarity.

The fact that the USA has gradually shifted its foreign policy and security priorities away from the global fight against terrorism and directed it towards interstate competition at the level of the international system, makes the multipolar demand of Russia and China more meaningful and directs these two countries to closer cooperation. Therefore, common interests arising from the structural transformation in the international system show that Russian-Chinese cooperation has a strong motivation. However, this cooperation also has some limitations.

Firstly, although structural transformation in the international system is related to change in the balance of power, identity and cultural dimensions are neglected in discussions on the subject. For example, Moscow's opposition to American hegemony does not have an anti-imperialist or anti-Western basis. Russia has been one of the most important players in the European balance of power since the 19th century and sees itself culturally closer to Europe than to China. In this respect, Russia's objection is not the Western hegemony itself; it is about not being a partner in this hegemony. Represented to a certain extent in the European security architecture, sensitive to its national interests, not surrounded by steps such as the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); in other words, a Russia that partially shares the Western hegemony may follow a very different foreign policy line. These are, of course, a matter of speculation, but Moscow cannot be held responsible for Russia's growing distance from the West.

On the other hand, it is controversial that China dreams of a multipolar world. Although China refrains from portraying a revisionist state, it aims to become a global leader in the long run. China also sees Russia as a weak partner. In other words, in terms of achieving the goals in the international system, Moscow needs Beijing more than China needs Russia. China's deep historical and cultural heritage also points to a political thought that positions itself at the center of the world. For all these reasons, the cooperation between China and Russia does not have a strong historical, cultural, and identity foundation and is more pragmatic.



Secondly, the tools and methods used by the two countries in foreign policy also differ. China has developed rapidly, not by challenging the global economic structure, but by integrating with it. China has chosen to resolve its disagreements with its neighbors, not geopolitical conflicts, but to focus on cooperation opportunities. It avoided being involved in international problems and acted in favor of stability in the geographies it penetrated. Therefore, Russia's increasing aggression in its relations with the West and using its military power as a problem-solving method contradicts China's approach.

It is difficult to say that China is satisfied with the rise of geopolitical tensions in the international system. While admitting that Russia has legitimate national security interests, China did not give any support to Russia on the ground in the war in Ukraine. The fact that the annexation of Ukrainian lands by Russia was not recognized is very important in terms of showing the limits of support given to the Moscow administration.

On the other hand, the two countries often prefer to act together in the United Nations (UN) Security Council. But China; attaches importance to its relations with international institutions, takes active roles in these institutions, and increases its role in the UN day by day. Moscow's actions against the basic norms of the international system contradict Beijing's policy.

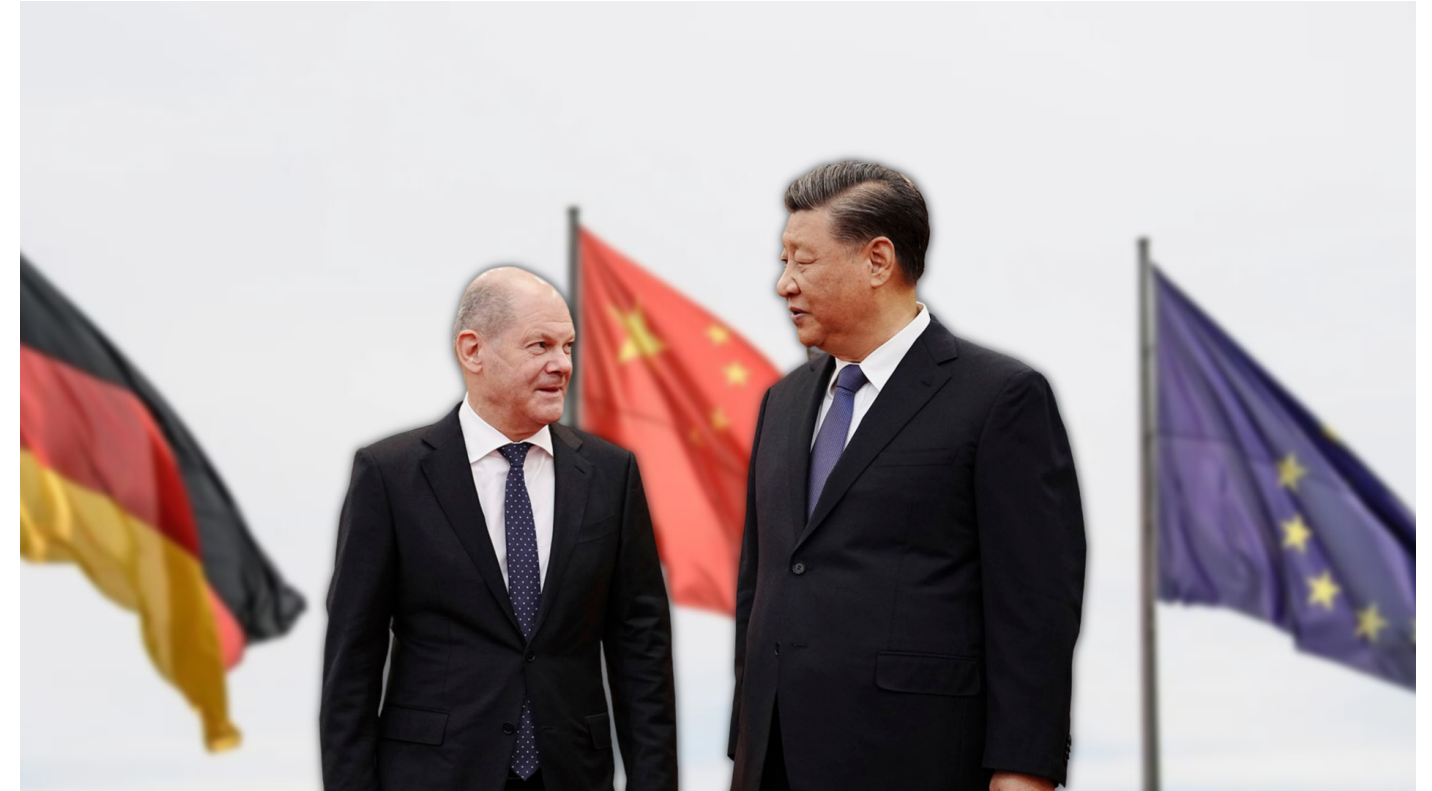
Third, despite common interests in the structure of the international system, the two countries are rivals in more concrete policy areas. One of the issues that attracted particular attention after the Ukraine War is the increasing Chinese activity in Central Asia. Russia's dominant power position in former Soviet geography has been questioned, and the reliability of defense alliances, which is the main basis of Russian influence in the region, has been shaken. China's growing influence in the region is mainly based on economic and diplomatic efforts.

The importance of the Middle Corridor in the Belt-Road Project has increased due to the instability in the north of the Black Sea and the economic sanctions imposed on Russia. This corridor, which reaches Europe through Central Asia, Caspian, Caucasus, and Türkiye, has gained a much more favorable political ground than the Eurasian Northern Corridor passing through Russia. In short, China is quick to fill the power gap created by Russia.

Fourth, the sustainability of Russian-Chinese cooperation, which has a pragmatic character, is also controversial. The main reason behind the deepening of this cooperation in recent years is the rising tension in relations with the USA. But, the USA's normalization of relations with one of these two countries would have a significant impact on Russian-Chinese cooperation. An example of this was during the USA-China rapprochement in the 1970s. After the Ukrainian War, it will not be easy for the USA to normalize its relations with Russia, but relations with China that have improved to a certain extent will chronic Russia's isolation in the international field.

As we can see, Russian-Chinese cooperation is of great importance and is a critical variable in the structural transformation of the international system. But this collaboration does not have a real appearance of an alliance. It's more like a pragmatic collaboration than a natural alliance. This pragmatic aspect is associated with the tension in relations with the USA and is difficult to say that there is a strong relationship of trust between the two countries. However, this does not mean that Russian-Chinese cooperation is fragile. But the Ukrainian War is not a development that strengthens cooperation on the Moscow-Beijing line, but rather a testing event.

As a result, the two countries meet on common ground in their demands for the international system. China acknowledges that the Ukrainian War is caused by the provocations of the USA, such as NATO enlargement, and supports Russia's security sensitivities. But Beijing's support for Moscow in this war contradicts its long-term interests. For this reason, the prolongation of war is not an image that China desires. As the war drags on and Russia is isolated in the international system, the political costs of China's cooperation with Russia are increasing. This puts Russian-Chinese cooperation to a challenging test.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# EU-China Relations in the Context of Scholz's Visit to China

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz made a controversial visit to China on November 4, 2022. This visit is of symbolic importance as it is the first visit of a European leader to Beijing after the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP), in which Chinese President Xi Jinping was elected for a third term.

A delegation of German business people accompanied Scholz's visit. This situation was interpreted as Germany's continuing economic cooperation with China. Considering that Germany has a liberal economy and companies in the country want to get out of the economic recession, it can be said that Berlin wishes to deepen its economic relations with Beijing. However, Scholz's insistence on devel-

oping trade relations with China caused reactions from both the government he led and the opposition.

For example, Germany's sale of 25% of the container terminal at the Port of Hamburg to COSCO, which is owned by the Chinese state, on October 20, 2022, has led to discussions between the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Green Party, which make up the German Government. Minister of Economy Robert Habeck and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who are members of the Green Party, opposed Prime Minister Scholz's desire to realize the sale.



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As it will be remembered, Baerbock underlined on October 18, 2022, that the country's economic relationship with Russia caused problems after the Ukraine War and stated that the same mistakes should not be repeated in relations with China by drawing lessons from this.[1] In addition, in the statements he made during his visit to Uzbekistan on November 2, 2022, Baerbock stated that Scholz made the decision to visit China himself and stated that he expected Scholz to convey the messages of the German Government to Xi Jinping.[2]

On the other hand, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also warned against being overly dependent on China. In his statement on the subject, Steinmeier said:[3]

"We have to learn lessons and learning the lesson means we have to reduce unilateral dependencies wherever possible, and that applies to China in particular."

The statements in question indicate that there is no consensus within the state regarding the steps taken by Scholz about China. Moreover, Scholz's policy is not welcomed by Brussels. Because while the European Union (EU) criticizes Beijing on issues such as human rights and trade; It aims to get rid of economic dependency in relations with China. Because the Union does not want to face a similar negative process in the energy field due to Russia, being dependent on China is not a wanted outcome as well. In short, the example of Russia has been a bitter experience for the EU. Therefore, Brussels is very sensitive in its economic cooperation with China and states that it is necessary to act strategically.

Pointing out that tensions with China increased after the meeting with the EU leaders on October 21, 2022, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, "Obviously, we have to be very cautious when it comes to dependencies. We learned our lesson." [4] This shows the EU's approach to China. In addition, Thierry Breton, the member of the EU Commission responsible for the internal market, called on European governments not to be "naïve" about economic cooperation with China before Scholz visited Beijing.[5]

It is seen that France is also disturbed by these developments. Because the Paris administration argues that cooperation with China goes against the interests of the EU. As a matter of fact, on October 21, 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron said, "We have made strategic mistakes in the past with the sale of infrastructure to China." [6] He clearly showed his perspective. Therefore, its attitude of France indicates that the issue China has added to the conflict with Germany in the field of energy.

Despite all this, Scholz, who explained Berlin's new China policy before he visited Beijing, emphasized that new power centers have emerged in the multipolar world and emphasized that they aim to establish partnerships and expand their cooperation.

To summarize, the Beijing visit of German Chancellor Scholz, at a time when EU-China relations were not very good, brought along some disagreements both within the country and the EU. Despite France's opposition to the EU-China cooperation issue, Germany's tendency to improve its relations with China may cause the cracks in the union to deepen. Because Berlin adopts such a policy despite the reaction of the EU, "Is Germany implementing a policy independent of the EU?" raises the question.

However, Scholz's failure to take a step back despite the reaction from both German domestic politics and the EU regarding his visit to China may cause problems with his coalition partners. At the same time, due to Beijing's approach to the Russia-Ukraine War, the EU's spirit of mutual solidarity may also be negatively affected by this process.

On the other hand, China may see Scholz's visit as an opportunity to deepen its cooperation with Europe. Xi Jinping can also use it as a move against the United States, where he has a "trade war." [7] However, Scholz argues that it would be a wrong approach to sever economic ties in competition with China. Despite this, it cannot be said that the EU is too intent on allowing China to increase its influence in the region.

[1] "German Foreign Minister Urges Caution in China Relationship", ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/german-foreign-minister-urges-caution-china-relationship-91665504>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).

[2] "Germany's Baerbock Warns Scholz Ahead of His China Trip", Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germanys-baerbock-warns-scholz-ahead-of-his-china-trip/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).

[3] "Germany Finds Compromise Over Chinese Hamburg Terminal Deal", ABC News, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/germany-finds-compromise-chinese-stake-hamburg-port-92106238>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).

[4] "EU Witnessing Acceleration of Tensions with China: Von Der Leyen", TVP World, <https://tvpworld.com/64078361/eu-witnessing-acceleration-of-tensions-with-china-von-der-leyen>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).

[5] "Thierry Breton Issues China Warning Ahead of Scholz's Beijing Visit", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/thierry-breton-issues-china-warning-ahead-of-scholz-beijing-visit/>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# West's Struggle with China and Germany's Differentiating Attitude

With the approval of the third term of General Secretary Xi Jinping at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP) on October 16-23, 2022, Western countries began to worry about further strengthening of China. In this context, Beijing's proactive foreign policy is said to threaten not only the Indian-Pacific but also the security of Europe. Expecting the deepening of the United States (US)-China rivalry in the new era of Jinping, European states are preparing to "systematically confront" China in near future.

The European Union (EU) officially sees China as a "strategic partner", an "economic competitor" and a "systemic competitor". [1] Institutions such as the EU and the G7, which represent Western democracies, criticize Beijing on issues such as Hong Kong and Taiwan and security policies, although they want to benefit from China's economic potential.

In this context, Western powers have difficulty displaying a harmonious stance against Beijing. On the subject, Charles Michel, President of the European Council used the phrase: "Europe



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has shown a very clear will to avoid being naive towards China, but we did not want to enter into the logic of a systematic confrontation with it.” [2] Similarly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Wopke Hoekstra said, “There is an increasing realism in the dialogue with China. We are leaving naivete behind.” [3]

Worried that Jinping will be more assertive in his third term after the 20th CCP Congress, the EU has started to increase its consultations to keep up with the new conjuncture. Michel, as the US-China rivalry deepens; argued that the union should develop its model. In other words, it is thought that Europe should be prepared for this competition and take precautions.

European leaders have said they will continue to cooperate economically with China but will avoid dependence on critical trade items and technology, as they did in Russia. Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz stated that there is a consensus in Europe on economic cooperation with China and that avoiding it is pointless. President of France Emmanuel Macron called for a more balanced relationship between China and the EU and stated that they made “strategic mistakes” due to the infrastructure transfer to China in the past.

Throughout Europe, there is fear that global competition will deepen during the third period of Jinping. The economic effects of this will reflect on all of Europe. Europe, which agrees on reducing economic dependence on China, is also taking care to retain the sanctions card for use when necessary.

As it will be remembered, China has imposed “secondary economic sanctions” on Lithuania due to political reasons (establishing relations with Taiwan). The EU is concerned about this step in China. Surely China’s pressures in this direction will continue to increase. It will therefore be difficult for Europe to find ways to cooperate with China without making it an enemy.

There is confusion about what Europe wants to do with China. The general view of Continental Europe, excluding Germany, is that it is necessary to be prepared for the crises that China will create shortly. Because a big strategic mistake was made due to unilateral dependence on Russia in the field of energy. It would be a similar mistake to become dependent on China for trade. Germany planned to turn to Japan in 2021 to fill the gap of China in the economic market. Already after Scholz took

office, he made his first Asian visit to Tokyo and never visited China. However, it is seen that the Chancellor of Germany has stepped back from this idea as of November 4, 2022. Thinking that marginalizing China would be a worse choice, Scholz planned to secure economic relations with his visit to Beijing.

The reason for Germany’s sensitivity to China is the problems in trade and even more in technology. It is very difficult for Germany, which has a large market in automobile production, to replace Taiwan and China in the chip supply chain in a possible crisis. For this reason, Germany is trying to play a stabilizing-mediating role on the Beijing-Washington line to prevent the outbreak of a Taiwan-related crisis.

In addition to all of these, Scholz demanded from Jinping to use influence over Moscow for stopping the war in Ukraine. Because Jinping has given messages on getting through the war at the SCO Summit. Putin, on the other hand, said that “we understand your concerns” mentioning Jinping. Therefore, the Chancellor of Germany knows that the President of China is against Russia’s war against Ukraine and expects Jinping to stop this war.

The European power chooses the marginalization of China, instead of cooperating and negotiating with Beijing. It should be noted that; the radical right in Europe has recently been talking about the dangers of cooperating with China. In this context, Scholz’s trip to China drew criticism.[4] To balance this, President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier went on a trip to Japan and South Korea, and on the same dates; Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock went on a tour of Central Asia.[5] These steps show that Germany is trying to implement a balanced policy in Eurasia. At the same time, Berlin aims to allay concerns about China within Europe.

The general trend in Europe was that war in Ukraine was not sustainable, the energy crisis could become inextricable and this would put great pressure on the economy. Before the Russian attack in Ukraine started, the Berlin Government wished that their cooperation with Moscow in the field of energy would not be disrupted, and in this sense, tried to reduce the risk of conflict in Ukraine until the last moment to avoid any disruption in the Nord Stream II project. In other words, Germany could not give strong enough messages to Russia on Ukraine, as it prioritized its interests in the energy field, and was accused by Western powers of being soft on Moscow. At this point, it is said

that Germany could make a similar mistake in its relations with China. If Germany isn’t tough enough on China, it could become the country hardest hit by a potential crisis in Taiwan.

Another Western institution that wants to join forces in the fight against Russia and China is the G7. In this context, the G7 Foreign Ministers met in Germany on the 3rd of November 2022 to discuss policies regarding Russia’s attacks on Ukraine and China’s growing influence.[6] Just as in the EU example, it is difficult to harmonize the interests of the G7 states regarding Russia and China. First of all, some of these countries are on different continents. Despite this, they must collaborate within common security interests. For example, US and UK’s approaches to China are tougher. Canada, which cares about economic cooperation, is more reluctant in the fight against China.

Similarly, Germany is another Western state that focuses on economic interests in relations with China. It can be said that Italy also has common concerns with Germany in this sense. Within Western powers, Washington and London aim to shift the direction of G7 to China after Russia. Therefore, these actors are concerned about the Chancellor of Germany’s visit to Beijing, China. Because the majority of Western states are in favor of being careful in their relations with China. Germany, on the other hand, seems to follow an optimistic line until the last moment in relations with China after Russia.

[1] “EU Not Seeking ‘Systematic Confrontation’ As Rival China Grows”, Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/22/eu-not-seeking-systematic-confrontation-as-rival-china-grows/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] “EU Is Leaving ‘Naivety’ Behind with China, Dutch Foreign Minister Says”, US News, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-10-17/eu-is-leaving-naivety-behind-with-china-dutch-foreign-minister-says>, (Date of Accession: 22.10.2022).

[4] “Worries Over Germany’s China Dependency Overshadow Scholz Trip”, Saw The Beirut, <https://english.sawtbeirut.com/world/worries-over-germanys-china-dependency-overshadow-scholz-trip/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).

[5] “German Politicians Are Drawn to Asia”, New Sing Germany, <https://newsingermany.com/german-politicians-are-drawn-to-asia/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).

[6] “G7 Foreign Ministers Seek Aligned Policy on Ukraine War, China”, Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/g7-foreign-ministers-seek-aligned-policy-on-ukraine-war-china/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Closer Relations on the Ashgabat-Astana-Tashkent

In the first years of its independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan gave priority to taking steps to consolidate its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unitary structure. In this context, although it was the global powers' wish for Central Asia to be unstable, Turkmenistan confirmed the "Permanent Neutrality Status" before the United Nations (UN) on 12 December 1995 by putting forward an approach that prioritizes peace, security, and prosperity in the Central Asian geography. Undoubtedly, this development has made Ashgabat the center of pre-emptive

diplomacy in the face of crises, and Turkmenistan has acted with an approach that sees dialogue as a guarantee of peace, especially after President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov came to power.[1]

This approach did not cause Turkmenistan to be isolated from the international community; on the contrary, Ashgabat has become a respected member of the international community both with its projects that prioritize regional cooperation and with its relations with international organ-



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izations. In this context, after President Serdar Berdimuhamedov came to power, a dynamic process is observed in Turkmenistan's foreign policy that will ensure the country to be highly regarded, and contribute to the regional security, cooperation, and welfare environment. Most particularly, the developments in October 2022 are significant in terms of revealing that Ashgabat is in favor of deepening its relations with Astana and Tashkent.

The first development is President Berdimuhamedov's visit to Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, on 15-16 October 2022, where he met with his Kazakh counterpart, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Following the meeting between the two leaders, the 2022-2024 Bilateral Cooperation Program and ten different memoranda of understanding were signed. The signed papers are essential in terms of showing that the relations in sectors such as finance, energy, tourism, transportation, space, and chemistry will be deepened.[2] In addition, it was explained that a consensus was reached on the opening of ferry services between the ports of "Turkmenbashi-Kuryk-Makhachkala." [3] This means that Caspian-centered collaborations will also deepen.

Meanwhile, President Berdimuhamedov hosted the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on October 22, 2022. During this visit, the opening ceremonies of the Tashkent Park, which was built in Ashgabat to symbolize the friendship between the two countries, and the construction of the Khwarazm-Dashoguz border trade zone were held.[4] Undoubtedly, this development reveals that the countries are determined to develop the strategic partnership set forth during President Berdimuhamedov's visit to Tashkent on 14-15 July 2022.[5]

As it can be understood, President Berdimuhamedov is taking concrete steps to improve his country's relations with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which is positively reflected in Central Asia-based integration processes. Thus, relations develop with a perspective that prioritizes mutual interests with a multilateral, multidimensional, and balance-based approach in accordance with the foreign policy principles of the regional states.

It can be predicted that this cooperation will have two important outcomes. The first of these is related to the Organization of Turkic States. During the Istanbul Summit held on 12 November 2021, the Organization decided to deepen the integration by developing the bilateral relations of all member states. Undoubtedly, when this decision is taken together with the idea that Turkmenistan will receive full accession to the organization

at the Leaders' Summit to be held in Samarkand in November 2022, it can be predicted that the dynamism that President Berdimuhamedov has established in Turkmenistan's foreign policy will positively reflect on integration processes based on the Organization of the Turkic States as well.

Secondly, it can be said that Turkmenistan has made initiatives to bring efficiency to the Middle Corridor through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan-based collaborations. Of course, this situation should be evaluated with an eye to the projects carried out under the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway deal. Therefore, it is observed that the rapprochement on the Ashgabat-Astana-Tashkent line also addresses Bishkek and Beijing.

In this sense, it can be said that the Middle Corridor, which starts from China, traverses Central Asia, and reaches the Caucasus and Europe, will continue to be the prominent transit and energy route. Thus, the interaction between Europe and Asia and thus between the East and the West will be strengthened.

As a result, President Berdimuhamedov has made important initiatives in terms of bilateral relations, the Organization of Turkic States and the Middle Corridor through the contacts he made in October 2022. Ensuring regional cooperation, stability, security, development, and prosperity, which is the most important objective of Turkmenistan's foreign policy, constitutes the ground for these initiatives. This way, both the organization and the Middle Corridor are welcoming a period of significant rise through relations that are based on mutual respect within the framework of the principle of sovereign equality of states, and that consider dialogue as the guarantee of peace.

[1] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "Turkmenistan, the Address of Continuity in the Search for Peace: "Dialogue is the Guarantee of Peace", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/turkmenistan-the-address-of-continuity-in-the-search-for-peace-dialogue-is-the-guarantee-of-peace-1/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 27.10.2022).

[2] "Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan Adopt Comprehensive Program of Cooperation", Prime Minister.kz, <https://primeminister.kz/en/news/kazakhstan-and-turkmenistan-adopt-comprehensive-program-of-cooperation-1794242>, (Date of Accession: 27.10.2022).

[3] Ibid.





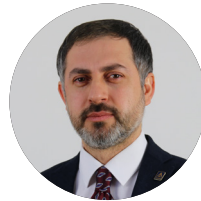
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# “The Marshall Plan for Ukraine” and Russia’s Frozen Assets Abroad

The debate about the fate of Russian assets seized in Europe and North America has begun to turn into a process that is not much different from the past discussions of Western politicians on this issue. Indeed, European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders said on October 31, 2022, that at least the funds of the Central Bank of Russia should not be confiscated, but frozen until Russia voluntarily agrees to the restructur-

ing of Ukraine. According to Reynders, the European Union (EU) has frozen more than 17 billion euros of Russian assets as part of sanctions against Russia due to its invasion of Ukraine. In this context, Reynders said the following:[1]

“More than 17 billion euros of assets of 90 people have already been frozen in seven member states, including 2,2 billion euros in Germany ... if



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the EU confiscates money from the criminal business, they can be sent to a compensation fund for Ukraine. However, this amount is far from enough to finance the reconstruction.”

According to Reynders, 300 billion euros have also been frozen from the foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank of Russia within the framework of Western sanctions. Reynders said in his assessment, “It seems to me that these 300 billion euros can be kept at least as a guarantee until the time when Russia will voluntarily agree to the reconstruction of Ukraine.”[2]

As it will be remembered, the “Marshall Plan” for the reconstruction of Ukraine was proposed at the conference held in Berlin on October 25, 2022, with the participation of high-ranking EU officials, G7 Ambassadors, international partners, and Ukrainian officials. It is noted that 50 experts around the world are working on the “Restoration of Ukraine” or the “Marshall Plan for Ukraine.” According to this plan, which will take decades, it is envisaged not only to return to the pre-war level but also to make a new leap in European standards in modernization and digitalization for Ukraine. The plan envisaged for the country aims to make the country a member of the EU after the reconstruction of Ukraine and reforms.[3]

On the other hand, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, who made a statement at the conference, made a different explanation from European Justice Commissioner Reynders, saying that the main goal is not to freeze Russian assets in Europe, but to confiscate them. However, according to Leyen, the EU does not have the necessary legal framework for this. Nevertheless, the EU is working on it. The purpose of the established temporary expert group is not only to determine where and what is frozen but also to understand what legal conditions exist that can be used to confiscate funds and restore Ukraine. Referring to the estimates of the World Bank, Leyen stated that more than 350 billion euros will be needed to restore Ukraine from September 2022, and said that this figure corresponds to the volume of Russian assets frozen by the EU and the US.[4]

In March 2022, Finance Minister of Russia Anton Siluanov stated that the Moscow administration had lost access to 300 billion dollars of reserves totaling around 640 billion dollars due to sanctions.[5] These are funds, real estate, and other property of individuals, primarily Russian oligarchs, as well as gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Bank of Russia abroad.

On August 30, 2022, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky also stated at the Meeting of the French Initiative Movement that rebuilding Ukraine’s infrastructure after the war will require an expenditure of between 600 and 800 billion dollars.[6] Therefore, while the cost of the war is increasing, it is also being discussed how to use the Russian reserves that Western states keep under control.

While Russia was intervening militarily in Ukraine, one of its main goals was to destroy the country’s military infrastructure. The Moscow administration, which wanted to ensure the surrender of Ukraine by disarming it, had to move away from this goal over time and began to target the civilian infrastructure of the country, not only limiting its attacks to military facilities and strategic assets.

While the damage caused by the war to the country’s infrastructure in the period from February to August 2022 officially cost at least 600 billion dollars, the continuation of the war leads to an increase in this damage. For example, after the attack on the Crimean Bridge, the Russian Army deepened the extent of the destruction by conducting missile and unmanned aerial vehicle attacks on more than ten cities in Ukraine. Moreover, Russia has started targeting Ukraine’s cities, strategic assets, and energy facilities again.

As it is understood, the West stipulates to Russia and states that it can return these assets to Russia, provided that Ukraine is restructured. However, this return is also part of the post-war design. In other words, it is not known how much longer the conflicts in Ukraine will continue. Therefore, the continuation of conflicts continues to leave the Russian economy in a difficult situation. Moreover, even if the end of conflict, Russia will want to spend the reserves held by the West for the development of its own country. In short, even after the war, the issue of Russian reserves on the Russia-West-Ukraine line will remain on the agenda as a controversial issue.

Another factor is the approach of not giving resources to Russia in any way. According to the West, the main source of the Ukraine War is the policy of the Moscow administration. Because the war in Ukraine has also damaged Europe. For example, the Kremlin's restriction of the flow of natural gas to Europe caused the energy crisis. In this context, an approach has emerged in the form of making the damage paid to the Moscow administration. Therefore, the EU may want to use the assets belonging to Russia for the solution of its problems.

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that according to the West, Russia should be at the table as the losing party in the peace agreement to be signed after the end of the Ukraine War. In this case, the approach of "Russia's participation in the reconstruction of Ukraine" expressed by European leaders will mean, in a sense, the capitulation that Moscow will accept. In this scenario, it will not be surprising if the EU countries do not return the reserves they hold. In this sense, the West can confiscate frozen assets as compensation for the cost it spent on the Ukraine War.

Consequently, the discussion about how to use the reserves controlled by the West, even though they belong to Russia, related to the plan being considered for the reconstruction of Ukraine continues. Undoubtedly, the prolongation of the war will also increase the cost. In this case, the use of these resources for Ukraine will not make sense, and the West will use these assets either for its own needs or to arm Ukraine.

[1] "Еврокомиссар допустил заморозку резервов Центробанка РФ, пока Россия не начнет восстановление Украины", Yevropeyskaya Pravda, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/rus/news/2022/10/29/7149636/>, (Date of Accession: 31.10.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Мартина Богуславец, "Новый план Маршалла для Украины: платформа в формате Рамштайн и Фонд восстановления", ZN.UA, <https://zn.ua/mac-rolevel/novyj-plan-marshalla-dlja-ukrainy-platforma-v-formate-ramshtajn-i-fond-vosstanovlenija.html>, (Date of Accession: 31.10.2022).

[4] "Глава Еврокомиссии назвала главной целью ЕС конфискацию российских активов", Lenta.Ru, <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/10/25/konfiskaziya/>, (Date of Accession: 31.10.2022).

[5] "Силуанов заявил о заморозке половины золотовалютных резервов России", Lenta.Ru, [https://lenta.ru/news/2022/03/13/polovina\\_rezervov/](https://lenta.ru/news/2022/03/13/polovina_rezervov/), (Date of Accession: 31.10.2022).

[6] "Восстановление Украины может обойтись в \$600-800 млрд, — Зеленский", Focus, <https://focus.ua/economics/527388-vosstanovlenie-ukrainy-mozhet-oboitis-v-600-800-mlrd-zelenskiy>, (Date of Accession: 31.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to China

Pakistan labels China as a "good and bad days' friend" since it gained its independence in 1947. That's why it is seen that Islamabad develops close relations with Beijing. Thus, the Pakistani people support the development of relations with China. One of the reasons that Pakistan approached China was that the Communist Party of China (CPC) cares about the Islamabad administration. The disagreement be-

tween the two countries with India, Pakistan is a nuclear power and the fact that Beijing attributes critical roles to this country in its global strategies are also factors that contribute to the development of relations between the parties.

As it is known, in the 20th Congress of CPC on October 16, 2022, President of China Xi Jinping



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was reelected for the third time as CPC Secretary General. Thus, after the success of Xi, the first foreign leader to visit China was the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shahbaz Sharif. The visit was in a quite constructive atmosphere. Because, before the visit of 1-2 November 2022, in the analysis that Sharif wrote for "Global China Daily", he clarified that the relations with China are building blocks of the foreign policy of Pakistan.[1] During his speech in China, he said that "The world faces different issues. In such a situation, China and Pakistan will strengthen their strategic relations, and Pakistan is ready to establish constructive relations with its all neighbors." [2]

On the other hand, after Sharif came to power, it is seen that he followed a policy close to the West. In fact, on the occasion of this visit, the Prime Minister of Pakistan put that he follows a balanced policy between the West and China. Because, Sharif observed that the former Prime Minister Imran Khan's policy of rapprochement towards China was not enough to solve the economic and political issues in the country; therefore, he focused on restoring the relations with the United States of America (USA) in private, and with the West in general.

It should be noted that it is observed that the Sharif Government's policy of enhancing relations with the West brought significant acquisition to the country. For instance, the International Money Fund (IMF) loaned 1,7-billion-dollar worth of credit to Pakistan. Moreover, the USA started to express that it sees the Islamabad administration as a partner, in contrast to criticizing Pakistan. In addition, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) declared that they exclude Pakistan from the grey list, which is terrorist-supporter countries take place in. In addition, the Washington administration said that it will provide 450-million-dollar worth of military aid to Pakistan for the repair of the F-16 fighter jets.

As it can be understood, while normalizing relations with the West, especially with the USA, the Sharif administration has also visited China, demonstrating that it is pursuing a multilateral foreign policy based on balance. Therefore, as the first leader to visit the country during Xi's third term, Sharif has shown that he aims to improve and deepen relations between Islamabad and Beijing.

In this context, it can be said that the main agenda of Sharif's visit to China was Chinese investments and security issues in his country. [3] In addition, the Prime Minister of Pakistan also tried to convey the message that developing relations with the West should not disturb Beijing. This is because Islamabad's foreign policy orientations have made China uneasy. As a reflection of this, China halted electricity exports to Pakistan due to Pakistan's default on its debt. Sharif, on the other hand, used the occasion of his visit to send the message that Pakistan sees China as a "friend on a bad day."

The most important issue discussed during Sharif's meetings with Chinese officials was the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC is one of the six economic corridors of the Belt-Road Project. China plans to invest 63 billion dollars in CPEC. Despite the USA's discomfort with CPEC, Sharif has stated that he cares about the interests of his country and that Pakistan will not give up on CPEC because it is a vital project for Islamabad. However, it is also known that the project has been stalled for some time. In this environment, Sharif, as if to show that he cares about relations with China despite the West, stated that Pakistan is ready to take every step for the realization of the project. As a matter of fact, during the negotiations, the parties agreed on the urgent implementation of the MLI Railway Project within the scope of CPEC.[4]

Another issue discussed during the visit was the deferment of Pakistan's debts and the request for new loans from China. Allegedly, Pakistan has a debt of 6.3 billion dollars to China. However, due to economic problems, the Islamabad administration wants this debt to be postponed. As a matter of fact, in addition to economic problems, it is stated that even seasonal floods have caused 30 billion dollars of damage to Pakistan. In this context, the Chinese President's announcement that he will provide 500 million yuan in aid to the country is very important.[5]

Another issue discussed during the leaders' meeting was the security of Chinese citizens in Pakistan. It is well known that separatist Baloch groups in Pakistan's Baluchistan region have been carrying out attacks targeting Chinese investments and Chinese workers.

This makes Beijing concerned about the security of CPEC. What should not be overlooked here is that before Sharif visited Beijing, the Pakistani government ratified a security agreement aimed at ensuring the security of Chinese citizens. In this context, it was also announced that Pakistan will establish a special battalion consisting of 28 thousand people.[6]

The Afghan issue was also discussed during the Prime Minister of Pakistan's visit to Beijing. In line with its desire to develop and deepen its relations with the West, Islamabad is currently engaged in various processes with the West on Afghanistan-based developments. This inevitably disturbs China. For instance, by opening its airspace to the USA, Pakistan allows Washington to conduct surveillance activities in Afghanistan. It can be said that Beijing has concerns about this. Sharif has tried to allay these concerns. In fact, in his statements at the UN General Assembly, Sharif tried to gain Beijing's support by stating that some radical organizations that threaten China's national security are active in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, in his meeting with Sharif, Xi stated that Afghanistan's security and stability are important for regional development and that the country should join CPEC.[7] This means that CPEC could lead Beijing and Islamabad to act together in the context of the Afghan Question.

As a result, relations between Pakistan and China are strategic in nature. The fact that Sharif was the first foreign leader to visit Beijing during Xi's third term confirms this. The messages given by the parties also herald that the relations will continue to take shape at a positive momentum. Therefore, it is possible to say that Pakistan has successfully maintained its multilateral foreign policy based on balance.

[1] "تسا نیچ اب یراذگه‌یامرس و تراجت هعسوت راتساوخ ناتسکاپ: فیرش زابهش", ISNA, <https://l24.im/JYX>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[2] "دهاوخیم هچ رفس نیآ زا فیرش؛ نیچ هب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن رفس", IRNA, <https://l24.im/QM49>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[3] "دنکیم وگتفگ روشک نیآ یهدب و یداصتقا لیاسم هراب رد فیرش زابهش؛ نیچ هب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن رفس", Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202211017318>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[4] "نیچ روهمچ سیئرگنپ نج یش اب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن ینزیر", Raaznews, <https://l24.im/W4>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[5] "دنکیم وگتفگ روشک نیآ یهدب و یداصتقا لیاسم هراب رد فیرش زابهش؛ نیچ هب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن رفس", Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202211017318>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[6] "دهاوخیم هچ رفس نیآ زا فیرش؛ نیچ هب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن رفس", IRNA, <https://l24.im/QM49>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).

[7] "نیچ روهمچ سیئرگنپ نج یش اب ناتسکاپ ریزو تسخن ینزیر", Raaznews, <https://l24.im/W4>, (Date of Accession: 02.11.2022).



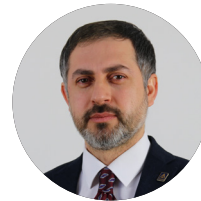
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# “Central Asia–Russia” Summit: Russia’s Attempt to Return to the Region

On 14 October 2022, the “Central Asia–Russia Summit” was held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. The Presidents of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, and Kazakhstan met during the summit as a group of six to improve their cooperation. Yuri Ushakov, Assistant to the President of Russia on international affairs declared: “The meeting of the six countries was initiated by Moscow. It is pro-

jected to further develop cooperation between Russia and the countries of the region.”<sup>[1]</sup>

During his speech at the summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin said: “Our agenda includes measures to protect common commercial and economic interests, especially in the current geopolitical situation and regional security issues regarding the situation in Afghanistan.”



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Putin highlighted external interventions as the most important problem for Russia, which is used to hinder the integration of regional countries and Russia and to disrupt the close ties and deep interactions that have developed in politics, economy, and culture throughout history. “In our opinion, the thoroughly coordinated joint steps of our countries are in great demand both to establish an alliance and strategic partnership and to increase the stability of our economies,” Putin stated.<sup>[2]</sup>

In general, Putin argued that Russia’s relations with the five Central Asian countries cause a stir among non-regional states. The Russian leader stated that in the last five years, Russia’s trade with the regional states has doubled to 37.1 billion dollars, and according to the data for the first half of 2022, mutual trade has increased by 16%. Putin added that the total volume of Russia’s direct investments in the economies of Central Asian countries reached approximately \$5 billion.

Putin pointed out that cooperation between Russia and five states in the field of energy security has deepened, production capacities have increased and partnerships have developed on the construction of nuclear power plants and switching to digital technologies. He explained:<sup>[3]</sup>

“Our country is ready to help the re-establishment of the unified energy system of Central Asia, which will increase the energy security of all states in the region... The redirection of exports and imports by Russia encourages the development of transport corridors throughout Greater Eurasia. The key task is to organize the new Trans-Eurasian corridors traversing the territories of your countries.”

On the other hand, the United States (US) has a consultative mechanism with five Central Asian countries with a “5+1” format. The US aims at addressing regional security issues and improving cooperation with the countries of the region through this mechanism. Moreover, China has the “Central Asia–China” consultative mechanism with the regional countries at the level of foreign ministers. The third summit of the mechanism was held in Astana in 2022. Likewise, China seeks to increase cooperation of the regional countries with Beijing, whereas trying to prevent them from getting closer to the US or other actors on geopolitical issues. For this reason, China intensifies its contact with Central Asian countries.

Similar to the prospect of China and the US, Russia’s desire to hold the “5+1 / “Central Asia–Russia” talks with regional countries indicates that Moscow is trying to develop a new policy for the region.

China has hitherto developed its relations with the countries of the region through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and through bilateral relations. Therefore, Beijing’s initiation of the “Central Asia–China” negotiations is not only an act against the US but also against Russia, which is a member of the SCO. This is because the “Central Asia–China” negotiations serve as a platform excluding Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia has developed different cooperation and integration tools since 1991. In this sense, institutional structures such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are operating. However, Moscow’s desire to establish a new mechanism outside these existing structures with the regional countries is very important as it suggests a new policy. There may be three main reasons for this change.

First, organizations such as the CIS, the CSTO, and the EAEU, which are established in the geography of the former Soviet Union, include countries beyond Central Asia, and their focus deviates from the relations between Russia and the regional countries. Second, these organizations are of the 20th century, and although they are institutional, they are not functional enough on certain issues. Third, only part of the Central Asian countries are members of these organizations.

As a result, by changing its policy for the region, Russia is trying to establish a resilient structure replacing the existing international organizations. Thus, Moscow wants to take steps on issues such as improving commercial-economic relations that the region needs the most and making investments.

[1] “Первый саммит Россия–вентральная Азия пройдет в Астане 14 октября”, Ria Novosti, <https://ria.ru/20221012/sammit-1823457015.html>, (Date of Accession: 14.10.2022).

[2] “Саммит Россия–вентральная Азия”, kremlin.ru, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69598>, (Date of Accession: 14.10.2022).

[3] Ibid.



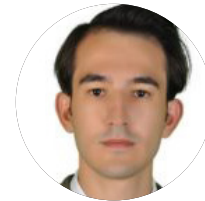


## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Increasing Tension on the Sarajevo-Zagreb Line

Recently, it has been seen that the relations on the Sarajevo-Zagreb line have been quite tense. Especially due to the general elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 2, 2022, Croatian President Zoran Milanovic's rhetoric targeting Sarajevo has raised the tension between the parties to the peak point.

On 13 September 2022, at the Brdo-Brijuni Summit in Slovenia, where the leaders of the Western Balkans met, allegations that the President of Croatia denied the Srebrenica Genocide led to a diplomatic crisis between the two countries.[1]



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On the anniversary of Jajce's recapture from the Serbs, Milanovic said, "They don't respect us in Bosnia and Herzegovina although the Croatian boot forced Radovan Kradzic to sit at the table." Moreover, he stated that Bosnia owed its freedom to the Croats and that Zagreb did not get enough in return, given its contributions to the war. The President of Croatia, also stated that the Croats in Bosnia are not a minority, but have been reduced to minority status.[2]

Following the controversy over Srebrenica and Milanovic's rhetoric targeting Bosnia's political structure, tensions between the two countries have increased. Milanovic called for changes to the electoral law in Bosnia and Herzegovina and demanded that Croats elect their own representatives.

Officially, Zagreb does not recognize the current member of the Tripartite Presidential Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Croatian people's level, Zeljko Komsic, because they believe that he was elected by the votes of Bosniaks, and not by Croats.[3] In other words, Croatian politicians are not happy with Komsic. This situation leads to conflicts between the two countries.

In order to better understand the problem between Sarajevo and Zagreb, it is useful to take a look at the political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina consist of two entities, one of which is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the other is the "Republika Srpska", as well as three constituent peoples, Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, and the Brcko Region, which has a separate administration.[4]

The main goal of Croatia is to make it possible for Croats in Bosnia to elect their own representatives. For this reason, the President of Croatia has made statements that went too far for changes in the electoral law of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In fact, Milanovic said on April 26, 2022, that Zagreb should block Finland and Sweden's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) until changes are made to Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral law before the general elections take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[5] In short, the Croatian president has pursued a policy of threatening to block Finland and Sweden's membership in NATO, demanding that third actors put pressure on Sarajevo.

On 28 September 2022, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic admitted that they were involved in negotiations with the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina Christian Schmidt on amendments to the electoral law. As can be seen, Zagreb has made various attempts to change the electoral law. Therefore, Schmidt's decision to amend Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral law after the elections held on October 2, 2022 can be interpreted as the successful conclusion of Croatia's initiatives.

Schmidt stated that the development would not affect the elections on 2 October 2022 and that the decision was taken to improve the functionality of the institutions. In this context, the number of delegates in the Assembly of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has increased. Thus, Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks, the constituent peoples, will be represented by 23 delegates instead of 18 delegates.

In this context, it can be suggested that Croatia has made significant gains in the electoral law. Because on 3 October 2022, the Croatian Foreign Minister stated that the decision to adopt an electoral law was a success of the Croatian Government, but that Komsic's election to the Croatian membership of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina remained a "stain" on relations between the parties. [6]

Although the Croatian Foreign Minister considers Schmidt's decision a success, Zagreb is uncomfortable with Komsic's presence. Therefore, it is foreseeable that Croatia may make other demands in the future. Moreover, it can be stated that Croatia is a member of organizations such as the European Union (EU) and NATO, and therefore uses its presence in these organizations to make a decision on amending the electoral law.

On October 4, 2022, Croatian President Milanovic said that he would support autonomy for Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina if they decide. In addition, Milanovic stated that the amendments made by Schmidt to the electoral law were late and insufficient.[7]

Furthermore, it can be said that the tension between the two countries will reflect negatively on Bosnia's EU membership process. Because on October 12, 2022, Oliver Varhelyi, the member of the EU Commission responsible for enlargement, announced that they had expressed an opinion on granting Bosnia and Herzegovina the status of a "candidate country." [8] However, on October 13, 2022, Croatian President Milanovic stated that Bosnia and Herzegovina did not fulfill the conditions of a "candidate country," because it violated the necessary conditions.[9] In fact, with this statement, Milanovic implied that Sarajevo violated the rights of Croats living in the country.

Consequently, it is possible that Croatia will bring similar conditions to Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as Bulgaria stipulated to North Macedonia in the EU membership process and Greece to Skopje in the NATO membership process. For this reason, if Croatia does not get what it wants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is possible that Sarajevo's EU membership process will remain protracted.

[1] "Croatia's Milanovic Allegedly Denied Srebrenica Genocide at Brdo-Brijuni Summit", Nlenglish, <https://ba.nlinfo.com/english/news/croatias-milanovic-allegedly-denied-srebrenica-genocide-at-brdo-brijuni-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 20.10.2022).

[2] "Croatian President: They Don't Respect Us in Bih, Even Though the Croatian Boot Forced Karadzic to Sit Down at the Table", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/croatian-president-they-dont-respect-us-in-bih-even-though-the-croatian-boot-forced-karadzic-to-sit-down-at-the-table/>, (Date of Accession: 20.10.2022).

[3] "Croatian President: I Will Support The Self-Government of Croats in Bih", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/croatian-president-i-will-support-the-self-government-of-croats-in-bih/>, (Date of Accession: 20.10.2022).

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[6] "Schmidt's Decision a Success of Croatian Government", Republic of Croatia Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, <https://mvep.gov.hr/press-22794/schmidt-s-decision-a-success-of-croatian-government/248755>, (Date of Accession: 21.10.2022).

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[9] "Croatian President: Bih Cannot Fulfill The Conditions For The Status of a Candidate of EU", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/croatian-president-bih-cannot-fulfill-the-conditions-for-the-status-of-a-candidate-of-eu/>, (Date of Accession: 21.10.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Morocco-Nigeria Gas Pipeline: Europe's Search for Alternative Suppliers and Russia's Position

In September 2022, a meeting between Nigeria, Morocco, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took place in Rabat, Morocco, where an agreement was signed for the implementation of an offshore gas pipeline linking Nigeria to Morocco.[1] The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Morocco's National Office of Hydrocarbons and Mining (ONHYM), Senegalese Oil Company, and Mauritanian companies participated

in the meeting and the agreement. The project envisages the construction of a pipeline of more than 7,000 km from Nigeria to Morocco and from there to Europe.[2]

At this point, the fact that Senegal and Mauritania oil companies also signed the agreement reveals that these two countries support the project. In addition, the project aims to transport 3 billion cubic meters of gas per day.[3]



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The realization of this gigantic project requires a financing of 25 billion dollars and investment is expected to be found for this financing in 2023. The European Union (EU) will also benefit from the project.[4] Therefore, it is foreseeable that the Union will put its hand under the stone to invest in the project.

Nigeria already has an offshore pipeline connecting Benin, Ghana, and Togo. This project involves the construction of a new pipeline in addition to this pipeline to reach Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, and finally Morocco.

The project, which is planned to include thirteen African countries, is also important for Europe. This is because Europe is looking for alternative sources after Russia played the energy card in response to EU sanctions over the Ukraine War.

Recently, many countries in Europe have faced high energy prices and related protests. Therefore, it is believed that the continent is entering a difficult winter. In this regard, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, "More difficult years await us. A period against the wind is beginning for Germany." [5] Therefore, Europe is trying to find secure and low-cost energy sources. Therefore, diplomatic negotiations are being held to access gas from different geographies such as Africa, the Middle East, and Norway. The Morocco-Nigeria Gas Pipeline is one of them.

The project, which is expected to meet all of Europe's gas needs when completed, is closely followed by Russian President Vladimir Putin. It is impossible for Moscow to ignore a project of this magnitude and importance. Consequently, the Kremlin is playing a dangerous game in Africa to block the project. This is because Moscow wants to eliminate the possibility of Europe finding an alternative. As a matter of fact, Russia is trying to make a move through Algeria. Already, tensions between Morocco and Algeria have increased again after the Ukraine Crisis.

On the other hand, Algeria is a major producer and supplier of oil and gas, has two pipelines connecting Italy and Spain, and is an important actor in the transportation of natural gas to Europe. However, due to Algeria's political situation, its good relations with Russia and its attitude towards Morocco, Europe considers the Algerian government as a dangerous and difficult actor to cooperate with. To illustrate this with an example, it can be recalled that at the beginning of 2022, the friendship and neighborliness agreement between Algeria and Spain was suspended. This was because Spain supported Morocco's plan for the Sahara.

Russia is also using Algeria's position on Morocco to its advantage. At this point, Algeria's energy supply to Europe may be threatened in the future. At a time when the Ukraine Crisis is taking place and Europe is imposing sanctions on Russia, it is necessary to think about the real reasons behind Algeria's decision to downgrade its relations with Spain. It is highly likely that Russia is behind this decision.

In this way, Russia can easily use its gas weapon against Europe and destroy its alternatives. In addition, Russia's strategic moves in Africa, which we can call influence operations, can also be characterized as a strategy game of Moscow. At this point, it is important that the Wagner Group signed an agreement with the country about a year after the coup in Mali and increased its influence there. In addition, the waving of Russian flags during the coup in Burkina Faso in September 2022 also brings Wagner to mind.

Considering all these issues, it can be said that Russia has two strategic objectives in Africa. The first of these is Russia's orientation towards African resources in order to circumvent the sanctions imposed by the US and the EU. The second goal is to continue to use gas as a weapon and to condemn the EU itself by blocking the energy agreement planned to be made between the EU and Africa in order to maintain the energy problem, which is one of the most important problems of Europe. In this context, Moscow is working with Algeria for both strategies. Algeria is the largest arms buyer from Russia in the continent.

Europe is also expected to make various moves against this Russia's strategy game. However, if Russia increases its influence on the continent through Wagner and arms deals, Europe's steps may come to naught. Therefore, the Morocco-Nigeria Gas Pipeline Project is expected to be put forward quickly. Under former US President Donald Trump, Washington recognized Morocco's sovereignty over the Sahara, after which several countries opened consulates in "Southern Morocco."

The resolution of the Sahara issue could prevent Algeria, and Russia in particular, from using this issue. In addition, supporting this pipeline project could end Algeria's, and in the background Russia's, use of the issue of energy supply to Europe as a tool of pressure. Therefore, critical steps could be taken in the future for Europe to support this project. This is because the alliance between Algeria and Russia will continue to worry the EU.

Morocco's complete resolution of the Sahara Issue and Europe's cooperation with Morocco is considered to an important potential to break the influence and steps taken by Algeria and Russia in the region. Therefore, it is highly likely that the EU will improve its cooperation with the Rabat administration in the coming period.

[1] Juan Peña, "Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline: Mauritania and Senegal commit to the Project", Atalayar, <https://atalayar.com/en/content/nigeria-morocco-gas-pipeline-mauritania-and-senegal-commit-project> (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Berlin Process: New Period of Cooperation in the Western Balkans

Recently, the initiatives of the European Union (EU) towards the Western Balkan countries have started to gain momentum. It is seen that the EU, which is trying to solve the fragilities in the region, especially in Germany and France, intends to accelerate the membership process of these countries. In particular, Germany is one of the states that most appreciates the efforts of the Western Balkan countries that want to join the EU. France, on the other hand, approaches the EU's enlargement process towards the Western Balkans with concern

compared to Germany. Because Paris, in the enlargement process, primarily wants reforms in the countries of the region such as the fight against corruption, democracy, and the solution of bilateral problems.

The Berlin Process, which was initiated in 2014 under the leadership of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to facilitate the EU integration of the Western Balkans and to increase cooperation between the countries of the region, stands out as an important platform today. So



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that; The summits, hosted by countries such as Austria, France, Italy, England, and Poland in the past, provided a critical environment for the countries of the region to strengthen their ties with the EU member states. However, it can be said that the Berlin Process has a positive effect on deepening regional cooperation among Western Balkan countries on issues such as infrastructure and economic development.

How Does the Process Towards Cooperation in the Western Balkans Work?

The leaders of the six Western Balkan countries, consisting of Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania, came together at the meeting hosted by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on 3 November 2022 as part of the Berlin Process. In the meeting, which was attended by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the EU Council Charles Michel, many issues, especially the energy crisis, were discussed.

In the said meeting, historical agreements were signed between the Western Balkan countries. For example, by taking an important step towards accelerating EU accession, a consensus has been reached between the countries of the region on travel with identity and mutual recognition of university degrees.[1] The German Chancellor stated that he made efforts at the meeting for the enlargement of the EU within the framework of the accession of the Western Balkan countries, and made the following statement:[2]

"The key to accelerating the EU accession process of the Western Balkan countries is the improvement of regional cooperation. The signed agreements are a great success for the citizens of the region. This shows that the six Western Balkan countries are serious about moving towards the EU with their regional cooperation."

Leyen also stated that they want to bring the Western Balkan countries closer to the EU as soon as possible and announced that they will provide 1 billion euros of aid to support these countries within the scope of the energy crisis. Western Balkan leaders also expressed their satisfaction with the support to be made on energy security. In addition, with the joint declaration adopted at the end of the meeting, it was stated that it was agreed on the next Berlin Process Summit would be held in Albania.[3]

As can be understood, the agreement on free movement between the Western Balkan countries is a development with the potential to strengthen regional cooperation. In other words, a concrete step has been taken to establish the targeted common regional market. Therefore, the successful implementation of the agreements will lead to an increase in economic cooperation. In addition, these agreements are also advantageous for the Open Balkan Initiative targeting the common regional market.

On the other hand, it can be expected that the deepening of regional cooperation will have a positive effect on the resolution of conflicts in the region. For example, within the scope of this meeting, the leaders of the two countries had the opportunity to meet face-to-face during the ongoing tension between Kosovo and Serbia. Scholz himself voiced his call for a solution to the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo and said that together with Germany and France, they are actively working with the EU to make this possible.[4] However, it should be emphasized that despite all these calls from the EU, the crisis between the parties tends to escalate. Because the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kurti, made it clear in his statement in Berlin that the Union of Serbian Municipalities would not be established within the scope of the normalization process.

Kurti asked, "Is Serbia ready to establish Municipal Unions for Albanians, Hungarians, and Bosnians? You can't ask others to do things you're not ready to do in your own home." Their statements show that the Pristina administration did not make any concessions despite all the efforts of the EU.[5] Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic also canceled all his foreign visits due to the latest developments with Kosovo. Therefore, the crisis between the two countries negatively affects the constructive atmosphere created within the scope of the Berlin Process.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Berlin Process is promising in terms of strengthening and deepening cooperation among the Western Balkan countries and thus ensuring regional peace. This will accelerate the EU accession process of the countries in the region.

[1] "Western Balkans Sign Landmark Agreements in Berlin Ahead of December Summit", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/western-balkans-sign-landmark-agreements-in-berlin-ahead-of-december-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 04.11.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The New Energy Power of the World: Turkmenistan

The 27th International Turkmenistan Oil and Gas Conference (OGT-2022), held in Ashgabat on October 26-28, 2022, has proven that Turkmenistan is an important global power in the international energy sector. More than 500 domestic and foreign delegates participated in OGT-2022. In addition, the conference had 100

online attendees. Among the foreign participants were delegations from the United States (US), Azerbaijan, Austria, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), China, the United Kingdom (UK), Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore, and Türkiye.[1]



**Medihanur  
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The conference focused on improving Turkmen energy markets, particularly the development of offshore blocks in the Caspian Sea, attracting global investment, and increasing and optimizing production collaboration in current and future oil-natural gas resources.

According to international reports, Turkmenistan has come a long way toward becoming a leading energy power. In this setting, large-scale initiatives, both now underway and in the planning stages, are critical for both the region and the whole world. Two such projects are especially intriguing. The first of these is the Central Asia-China Transnational Gas Pipeline. The second is the natural gas pipelines leading to Iran and Russia. Despite a lack of sufficient natural gas pipelines, Turkmenistan is now able to export more than 110 billion cubic meters of gas. One of the most important projects under construction is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipeline, which is supported by major world powers and important international financial institutions. The capacity of TAPI is 33 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline Project is another significant project that has come to the fore in this setting.

While all of this was discussed during the conference, it was also revealed that Turkmenistan has recently implemented key joint projects such as the commissioning of a modern gas-chemical complex for the manufacturing of polyethylene and polypropylene in the Balkan village of Kiyili. LG International Corp and Hyundai Engineering, TOYO Engineering Corporation, Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd, and Renaissance Heavy Industries are the institutions mentioned in these joint projects.[2]

The President of the Turkmen Gas Group stated that Turkmenistan has great hopes for supplying natural gas to Europe. Furthermore, the General Manager of Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation (GOGS) indicated that Georgia values Turkmen gas supplies.

In the conference titled "Turkmenistan Oil and Gas-2022", hydrogen energy, gas, and petrochemical industry, the role of international financial institutions in promoting clean energy, project insurance, renewable energy expectations in Turkmenistan, and the reduction of methane gas and CO2 emissions were discussed. It was also emphasized at the conference that since 2009, the natural gas supply from Turkmenistan to China has exceeded 340 billion cubic meters. In addition, it was pointed out that the development of the Galkynysh Natural Gas Field would take 100 years, and that Turkmenistan needed to research renewable energy.

On the other hand, it was noted at the conference that Turkmenistan achieved major accomplishments in the oil and gas business this year, and three long-term partners of the nation, Dragon Oil, CNPC, and Petronas, received the Energy Excellence Award.

In conclusion, OGT-2022 allowed the interested parties to establish business contacts with Turkmen partners. One of the most significant outcomes of the conference, for example, is the signing of an agreement between Turkmennebit and Dragon Oil to conduct three-dimensional seismic surveys that will provide new geological information for the 19th block of the Turkmen shelf of the Caspian Sea. In addition, at the conference, 12 agreements and contracts totaling \$100 million were signed. In this regard, Turkmenistan aspires to become a key energy hub in both the regional and international systems.

[1] "В выставке OGT-2022 участвуют свыше 40 экспонентов и 10 иностранных компаний", Cental Asia, <https://centralasia.news/17772-v-vystavke-ogt-2022-uchastvujut-svyshe-40-jekspontov-i-svyshe-10-inostrannyh-kompanij.html>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).

[2] "Туркменистан подтвердил статус мировой энергетической державы", Central Asia, <https://centralasia.news/17841-turkmenistan-podtverdil-status-mirovoj-genergeticheskoy-derzhavy.html>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# US Policy Toward the Taliban Opponents

The longest-running war in the United States (US) history has been the US intervention in Afghanistan. After twenty years of invasion, the US chose to reconcile with the Taliban and withdraw its troops instead of dwelling on the situation in Afghanistan, thinking that it could not vanquish the Taliban. In this regard, Washington signed the Doha Agreement with the Taliban on 29 February 2020. According to the trea-

ty, the US would withdraw from Afghanistan, whereas the Taliban has pledged not to allow Afghanistan to be used against the US and its allies. Later, as a result of the negotiations between Afghans, the establishment of the "New Islamic State" was envisaged, and it was decided that the US would respect the sovereignty of Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Washington administration declared that it would not interfere



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in Afghanistan's internal affairs and would support the newly formed government.

Although the US withdrew its troops from Afghanistan within the scope of the Doha Agreement, it did not abide by the remaining part of the treaty. Moreover, the Taliban refused to initiate negotiations with the Afghan government and asked it to surrender power peacefully. According to the Taliban, what is meant by the Islamic State is the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan." When the US announced that it would withdraw completely without waiting for the outcome of the intra-Afghan talks, the Taliban swung into action with full force. Thus, the Taliban overthrew the republican regime established with the support of the West and planted its flag once again in the Presidential Palace of Afghanistan.

While the Taliban was ruling again in Afghanistan, the authorities of the overthrown regime either went abroad or went to Panjshir to establish the anti-Taliban "Panjshir Movement." After the Panjshir Movement and the Taliban failed to reconcile, the Taliban seized Panjshir by force. In this process, the Taliban declared that it remained loyal to the general amnesty it had declared and called on its opponents abroad to return to the country by establishing a "Return Commission." Although some officials of the overthrown regime returned to Kabul, leading officials publicly announced their plans for the future of Afghanistan and the requirements of reconciling with the Taliban by establishing new political structures.

The Panjshir Movement, one of the opposition movements against the Taliban, emphasizes the military option whereas the "High Resistance Council to Save Afghanistan" consisting of former Northern Alliance leaders, emphasizes the political and military administration. Lastly, the "Afghanistan National Peace and Justice Movement" was established under the leadership of the overthrown regime's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Haneef Atmar. This movement explained that the Afghan Conflict could not be solved by military means and that peace could be established only by political methods. In this context, this movement demanded that the Taliban initiate intra-Afghan talks within the scope of the Doha Agreement and that the international community, especially the US, support this process.[1]

Although the US has withdrawn from Afghanistan, it prevents any state or international organization from recognizing the Taliban government by claiming that the Taliban seized power by force, violating the Doha Agreement.

Furthermore, Washington has blocked Afghanistan's national reserves and put pressure on the Taliban. The US maintains unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Afghanistan airspace under the name of counter-terrorism and attacks various targets. In a recent incident, the US killed Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization, in Kabul.

While the Washington administration puts pressure on the Taliban, it also forms relations with it, preventing further weakening of the organization. In this context, the US gave the green light to the international community to send dollars to Afghanistan, under the guise of humanitarian aid, and to print the Afghan banknotes that the Taliban needed the most.[2] This approach of the Washington administration enabled the Afghan currency to maintain its value against foreign currencies.

The US, on the one hand, announces that it will not support armed opponents, and on the other hand, it calls on the opponents of the Taliban to unite their goals. In a speech, the US Special Representative to Afghanistan Tom West stated that his country will not support the Taliban's armed opponents and that other states should not support it either.[3]

As it is known, the US first suspended its talks with the Taliban after the killing of Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, later on, the Head of Intelligence of the Taliban and the US Vice President for Intelligence met in Doha. Speaking to Al-Jazeera after the meeting in Doha, a Taliban official stated that the US promised that it would not support the Taliban's armed opponents. [4]

The US Special Representative for Afghanistan goes to different states to meet with Taliban opponents abroad and holds talks with women representatives and other opponents. In this context, it was seen that Tom West held talks with Taliban opponents in Dushanbe, Tashkent, New Delhi, Doha, and other capitals.

On the occasion of these meetings, West learned about the views of Taliban opponents regarding the future of Afghanistan. West asked the opponents of the Taliban to determine their demands in line with the requirements of the international community and give up the military option.[5]

In addition, the US also held talks with Afghan politicians who stayed in Afghanistan. In this regard, it is revealed that West talked with Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, the President of the High Council for National Recon-



ciliation of the overthrown regime, on the phone from time to time. In his last meeting with Karzai, West emphasized that the opening of the schools for girls is important and that national negotiations should be initiated to determine the future of Afghanistan.[6]

The Washington administration also develops relations with states that have an impact on the parties addressed by the policy of reconciling the Taliban and its opponents. In this context, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan met with the government officials of Tajikistan. In the statement made following this meeting, it was stated that Washington and Dushanbe would support the initiation of a legitimate political process in Afghanistan in which all parties would participate.[7] Moreover, the US has recently developed relations with Pakistan, which has a significant influence on the Taliban. Islamabad also states that the Taliban should take steps in line with the requirements of the international community.

Although the US meets with all kinds of opponents of the Taliban, it pays significant attention to the ideas of the opponents who emphasize the political method against the Taliban and asks them to voice their demands under the Doha Agreement. All opponents of the Taliban base their requests on the Doha Agreement and demand that the Taliban allow the establishment of a pluralist, respectful of human rights and anti-terrorist government, which are the requirements of the Afghan people and the international community, and that the future of the country is determined by the initiation of actual intra-Afghan negotiations.

As a result, the US is in search of reconciling the Taliban and its opponents. It can be said that the goal of the Washington administration here is to reinforce its hegemony based on the image of “the actor who builds peace” by restoring the prestige and trust it has lost.

[1] “Statute of the Afghanistan National Movement for Peace and Justice”, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HXI976FGUAEwnwk5\\_djKpiPMvikg46Mb/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HXI976FGUAEwnwk5_djKpiPMvikg46Mb/view), (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[2] “دنداد رېځ ښاغفاهه[veتوون]کناپ باچ زا اکیرمه دندیامن و نابلط”, Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202210226984>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[3] “تسا هنوگچ تیعیقاو رد تیعضو[دندکveیمن تیامح نابلطاط حلسم نافلاخم زا تفگ اکیرمه؛ دریگی می گدامآ تمواقم””, Sputnik, <https://l24.im/JD8>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[4] “Accessed نابلطاط نابلطاط”, IRNA, <https://l24.im/9muit>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[5] “درک رادی دهیگرت رد نابلطاط دض ههبح نارس اب اکیرمه دندیامن”, Pars Today, <https://parstoday.com/dari/news/afghanistan-i176350>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[6] “ناتسناغفا رد یعیقاو یلم نامتفگ هب یروف زاین رب دیکأت؛ یزرک و تسوی و گوگوتفگ”, 8am, <https://8am.media/the-conversation-between-wist-and-karzai-emphasizing-the-urgent-need-for-a-real-national-discourse-in-afghanistan/>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).

[7] “داد رېځ ناتسناغفا دروم رد ناتسکیجات اب «کیدزن یراکمه» زا اکیرمه دندیامن”, Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/202206035965>, (Date of Accession: 28.10.2022).



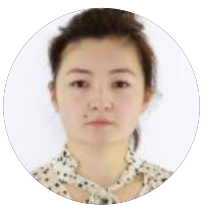
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Organization of Turkic States meets in Uzbekistan

On November 11, 2022, the first summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) with its new name will be held in Samarkand, the city of culture and science of the Turks. OTS has reached both this name and its current scope as a result of thirty years of studies. Undoubtedly, “Water has flowed and found its way” and many steps have been taken on behalf of Turkish unity since the 1990s.[1] States have organized the Summit of Presidents of Turkic Speaking Countries since 1992. In 2009, the Turkic Council

was established in Nakhichevan by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye.

When Uzbekistan became a member in 2018; Turkmenistan, which has had the “Permanent Status of Neutrality” since 1995, is, together with Hungary, the observer country of the organization. In addition, after the Samarkand Summit, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is expected to be an observer country.[2]



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OTS, which has a total population of 150 million people and covers an area of 4.5 million m2, has emerged as the structure that institutionalizes the non-aggressive, common, and strong will of states with a common history and cultural background, trying to protect their independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity come out.[3]

The organization, which operates in more than twenty areas of cooperation from economy to health, from transportation to energy, and from education to tourism, aims to prepare common history, geography, and literature textbooks and create a common alphabet to strengthen the common history, language, and culture that form the basis of solidarity and to raise new generations with the awareness of these common values, aims to achieve its development goals.

In 2021, when Türkiye held the Presidency, many important developments took place. In this context, the Turkish World 2040 Vision Document was put into practice. At the summit held in Istanbul, the heads of state adopted the vision document that will determine the organization's policy for the next twenty years. While determining the main principles and targets; the strategy document on the five-year implementation of the twenty-year document will be adopted at the summit in Samarkand.

At the Samarkand Summit, leaders will also hold bilateral meetings. Agreements on Turkic Investment Fund, Turkic Trade Houses, energy security, customs, and freight transportation will also be discussed. In addition, the 'TURANSEZ' project to be established for the Turkic states in Turkistan to strengthen the economic cooperation between the Turkic states, including Kazakhstan's Caspian Crossing International East-West Central Corridor, will be discussed. In addition to all these, the person to be selected from among the candidates determined by the member countries at the summit will be awarded the "Ali Shir Nevai Award."

In light of recent developments, the fact that these states position themselves within the OTS when new power centers emerge and the balance of power changes drastically shows that they give important geopolitical messages. For example, it is a significant development that OTS members support each other, either militarily or diplomatically, whether it is the Karabakh Issue, the Cyprus Issue, or the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border issues and conflicts.

As a result, a century ago, İsmail Gaspiralı pointed out to the Turkish World, "Unity in language, thought, business!" By guiding the world, the Turkish World and OTS have begun to exist as strong actors with an international identity.[4] In fact, in analysis with the theme of "Organization of Turkic States" published in China, the definition of rising power for the Turkish World is made. The articles in the 2040 Vision Document are important for the Turkish World but also point to political changes. For example, the proposal to establish the Central Asia-Caucasus Platform and the efforts to support Afghanistan confirm that the Turkish World has become an active geopolitical subject.[5]

[1] "Dünyanın yükselen gücü: Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı", TRT Haber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/dunyanin-yukselen-gucu-turk-devletleri-teskilati-644709.html>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[2] "Kalın: KKTG, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'na Gözlemci Olarak Katılacak", TRT Haber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/kalin-kktg-turk-devletleri-teskilatina-gozlemci-olarak-katilacak-721339.html>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[3] "Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı'nın Önemi ve Hedefleri", Aydınlik, <https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/turk-devletleri-teskilatinin-onemi-ve-hedefleri-264346>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[4] Ibid.

[5] "Türk Devletleri Nihayet Güçlerini Birleştirebilecek mi?", Fikir Turu, <https://fikirturu.com/jeo-strateji/turk-devletleri-nihayet-guclerini-birlestirebilecek-mi/>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Germany's Expansion to Uzbekistan: A New Actor Who Wants to Be Included in the "New Great Game" and Central Asian Geopolitics

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who organized a three-day visit to Central Asian countries within the scope of diplomatic contacts, both her contacts and statements on her visit to Uzbekistan contain very important messages. It should be also emphasized that the messages given by the German Minister are not limited to Germany's foreign policy choices, but have certain qualities that can affect regional and global dynamics. In this re-

spect, it is useful to state that the visit has content that needs to be carefully analyzed.

Baerbock also visited Kazakhstan, one of the most important states of Central Asia both economically and politically, as part of the three-day program. She visited a school that has been teaching German since 1963 and the Almalyk Mining and Metallurgical Combine/Complex.



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Before moving on to the political dimension of the German Foreign Minister's visit, it should be noted that it is important in the context of the analysis to mention the visit to the Almayk Complex, which includes significant economic interests. Visits at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, when considered in the context of international relations and diplomatic practices, are activities that are tried to be limited to political contacts. However, Baerbock's inclusion of visits in the field of economy in its program can be considered as a matter showing that Germany is also interested in Central Asian geopolitics, especially in the energy and mining sectors. This becomes even more meaningful when because China is a rising economic value and challenges the economic pillar of Western hegemony. In addition, China's visionary and global projects for Central Asia within the scope of the Belt-Road Initiative make this move of the German Minister even more understandable.

Another stop of Baerbock, which draws attention with its visits outside the official agenda within the scope of its visit to Uzbekistan, was an educational institution taught in German in Tashkent. Here, too, there is a sign that more investments will be made in Uzbekistan in the future in the context of cultural interaction and public diplomacy. Therefore, Baerbock, acting for more than one purpose within the scope of the aforementioned visit program, was not limited to diplomatic and official political relations, and in a sense, revealed Germany's opening to Uzbekistan.

Another agenda item of the visit was cooperation on environmental issues within the framework of the "Green Central Asia" initiative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cooperation in environmental security issues, which is one of the most important problem areas that have been focused on in the international system, especially in the West, and which is at the top of the agenda of international politics, in a sense, is an important tool that lays the groundwork for political cooperation. Therefore, it is not too inconsistent to claim that a more maneuvering area in line with the strategy of opening a space for Germany in Central Asia, which supports the foreign policy preference expressed in the previous paragraph and expressed as "Germany's Uzbekistan Initiative", is tried to be activated by the German state.

Expressing that they aim to develop a high-level dialogue with Uzbekistan, the German Foreign Minister said; it was stated that

the Afghanistan issue, Ukraine and, accordingly, the current issues of the global agenda, regional cooperation issues, the expansion and deepening of the influence of Russia, and China in Central Asia, and the democratic renewal and socio-economic reform in Uzbekistan were discussed.

When we look at the issues shared with the public through the press, Germany does not have a limited interest and strategic orientation in the fields of education, environment, and economy, which realists treat as soft policy issues. In this context, the German Foreign Minister's statement that they support the reform process of Uzbekistan is a fact that shows that they closely follow and consider Uzbekistan and that Tashkent, which gives more place to Western values, is considered a partner for Germany in the Central Asian geopolitics in the new period. It also includes signals that it will be received.

The current situation and future of Afghanistan, which is seen as a serious issue in terms of both Uzbekistan and Central Asia and the international system, as well as the Russia-Ukraine War, also reveal the potential of expanding the partnership mentioned in the previous paragraph to a degree that is not limited to a narrow regional partnership.

The most crucial point of the visit, where many topics and strategically important issues ranging from environmental issues to economy, from regional issues to global issues were discussed; it is the call of the German Foreign Minister to prevent the unhindered growth of Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia. This call, on the one hand, puts forward the approach that puts Uzbekistan in the center in the context of Germany's opening to Central Asia, on the other hand, it openly declared that Germany will take part in the New Great Game as a Western power against Russia and China, and that "Ostpolitik" is part of Central Asia. That also gave the signals that Ostpolitik would extend up to the heart of Central Asia. Of course, when this development is evaluated through the geopolitical approach of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the founder of the 20th-century naval strategy of the USA, known as the "Clausewitz of the Seas", Russia and China entering into a rivalry and weakening the possibility of a German-Russian coalition. Also, it means the disappearance of the nightmare scenario for the American geopolitical culture.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Organization of Turkic States Samarkand Summit: Towards A Strong and United Turkish World

On October 11, 2022, in the Ancient city of Uzbekistan, Samarkand, the 9th Summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was held. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, the President of Türkiye

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Former President of Turkmenistan and Head of the People's Assembly of the National Council of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and the Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban joined to the summit hosted by the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev.[1]



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The summit, which took place under the theme “Towards Common Development and Prosperity”, is of great importance in terms of the decisions taken and the messages given by the leaders. In his article titled “Towards a Stronger, Integrated and United Turkic World” published on November 10, 2022, Secretary General of the OTS Baghdad Amreyev, whose term of office ended with the summit, put forward the integration efforts in the Turkic World in line with both the spirit of the Samarkand Summit and the vision of the organization. As a matter of fact, in his article, Amreyev made the following statements reflecting the vision of the organization:[2]

“Promoting common cultural richness, values, principles, and interests is at the heart of Turkic cooperation. Turkic states should be united by these commonalities and learn and grow on them.”

As stated by Amreyev, the OTS, which demonstrates cooperation based on the promotion of common cultural richness, values, principles, and common interests, has clearly demonstrated that it is a peace-making actor in the region, which is wanted to be associated with instability, with the decisions it has made at the summit. As a center of regional cooperation, welfare, progress, and security, the OTS is rapidly rising and attracting the attention of the whole world.

In this regard, Mirziyoyev proposed to create a “New Zone of Economic Opportunities,”[3] signaling that the states will deepen their approach that prioritizes mutual interests and thus operates on a “win-win” logic. This indicates that economic integration within the OTS will gain momentum.

In this context, Mirziyoyev emphasized that significant steps should be taken to make the Trans-Caspian International Corridor more operational, demonstrating that the OTS attaches importance not only to regional but also to global cooperation.[4] This shows that the OTS is positioned as an actor that builds bridges of cooperation, not blocks. Therefore, taking into account the situation of the Northern Corridor, which is blocked due to the Russian-Ukrainian War, it can be stated that projects centered on the Trans-Caspian International Corridor, i.e. the Central Transport Corridor; thus, connecting China and Europe through the Central Asia-Caspian Sea-Caucasus route will gain weight.

In addition, Mirziyoyev emphasized the importance of the “Turkic Agricultural Forum” by drawing attention to the global food

crisis. Moreover, he proposed to establish a comprehensive partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as if demonstrating that the Turkic World is a constructive actor at the global level in the face of crises.[5] This is a very important proposal as it reflects the constructive role of the OTS against global crises. It is possible to argue that through cooperation with FAO, Turkic states will make significant progress in agriculture.

Speaking at the Summit, Aliyev emphasized that the Turkic World covers a vast geography of more than 200 million people, has great economic potential, energy resources and transportation lines, and reminded the potential for cooperation within the OTS.[6] In addition, Aliyev gave the message that the heart geography of the OTS is much wider than the borders of the member states by using the following statements:[7]

“I think that it is time for our organization to give importance to the issues such as the protection of the rights, security, and national identity of our cognates living outside the OTS member countries and preventing their assimilation.”

Tokayev, on the other hand, made constructive proposals on the cultural dimension of integration, suggesting the creation of a unified education system among the Turkic states. In this context, Tokayev made the following statements:[8]

“It is necessary to create a unified education system between the higher educational institutions of our countries. In order to enable our youth to learn Turkic languages and get acquainted with the history and culture of fraternal peoples, I propose to consider the issue of creating a unified network of universities of Turkic states in 2023.”

Japarov emphasized that Kyrgyzstan is an integral part of the Turkic World and recalled the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Project, referring to the Trans-Caspian International Corridor. In other words, Japarov reminded the importance of a cooperative perspective in regional, interregional and global trade. Therefore, the Kyrgyz leader stated that “Strength is in unity”[9] made the following statement:[10]

“In the current crisis conditions, our countries need to cooperate even more closely to expand trade relations within the framework of the organization and find new supply chains.”

In addition, at the summit, Kurbanyanchbek Ömüraliyev, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Ankara, was elected Secretary General of the OTS, replacing Amreyev, whose term of office expired, and Shahin Mustafayev was appointed as the President of the International Turkic Academy, replacing Darkhan Kydyrali, whose term of office expired. On the other hand, considering that the OTS is in an effort to transform into a full-fledged international organization as of the Istanbul Summit held in 2021, the election of an experienced diplomat like Ömüraliyev to the post is of great importance. Because Ömüraliyev is an experienced diplomat who has served as Kyrgyzstan’s Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Türkiye, Israel, and Permanent Representative to the Commonwealth of Independent States.[11] In fact, the signing of the “Protocol on Amendments to the Nakhchivan Treaty” in the context of the functioning mechanism of the OTS reflects the will to transform into a full-fledged international organization.

In his speech, Erdoğan drew attention to the global instabilities and problems in the context of the Ukraine War and emphasized the peacemaking role of the Turkic World. In addition, Erdoğan said, “It is important that we increase the visibility of our organization in the international arena,” referring to the steps taken by the OTS towards becoming a full-fledged international organization.[12] In addition, Erdoğan drew attention to the need for a “Joint Investment Fund” in terms of developing economic integration.[13] In fact, Erdoğan’s proposal was accepted on the occasion of the Samarkand Declaration. The election of Amreyev as the chairman of this fund shows that Amreyev’s contributions to the integration of the Turkic World will continue. At this point, considering that the Council of Banking Associations of Turkic States was established on November 4, 2022, it is possible to state that economic integration will gain momentum.[14]

On the other hand, the fact that OTS declared 2023 as the “Year of the Rise of Turkish Civilization” to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye is an event that should not be ignored and clearly reveals the spirit of solidarity among the states of the union.[15] Similarly, another development reflecting the mentioned solidarity culture was the awarding of the “Supreme Order of the Turkic World” by the OTS to Erdogan for his constructive contributions to the integration processes of the Turkic World.

Berdimuhamedov, the Former President of Turkmenistan and the current Chairman of the People’s Commissariat of the Na-

tional Council, who participated in the OTS with the status of an “Observer Member” at the Istanbul Summit in 2021, stated that the focus should be on the constructive dimensions of cooperation that prioritize mutual interests, and said the following:[16]

“As part of our strategic mission, we contribute to increasing the opportunities of this organization in the fields of trade, energy, transport, environment, culture and humanitarian fields. I consider the transport and energy sectors of Turkmenistan as one of the priority aspects of the OTS.”

Moreover, during the summit, Berdimuhamedov, who served as Turkmenistan’s “OTS Aksakali”, was also presented with the “Supreme Order of the Turkic World” for his services to the Turkic World.

Speaking on behalf of Hungary, another observer member, Orban stated that the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor means the most rational road map in the context of the global energy crisis. In addition, Orban expressed the Budapest administration’s belief in OTS by saying, “Our country supports the work of OTS and will work for the successful implementation of the Turkish vision in the next decade.”[17]

On the other hand, it should be noted that one of the most critical decisions taken at the summit was the approval of the observer membership of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Because this decision shows that after the Karabakh conflict, the Cyprus issue is also considered a common issue of the Turkic World. At the same time, the decision shows that OTS tends to expand and grow, and is considered by other actors in the form of an attraction center. Furthermore, the decision also heralds that there may be new developments regarding the recognition of the TRNC. In fact, TRNC President Ersin Tatar, who made a statement after the TRNC was accepted as an observer member of the OTS, said the following:[18]

“Our state has gained this status as the TRNC with its constitutional name for the first time in an international organization. This element, which is a milestone that will pass to the pages of history, is an additional occasion of pride for us.”

In addition, when looking at the messages given at the summit, it is seen that the need to deepen cooperation on security issues such as terrorism, separatism, extremism, human and drug trafficking was also highlighted. Undoubtedly, this situation means that integration will also progress in the security dimen-



sion. This means that the OTS will take more initiative on issues related to regional security, especially the Afghan Problem, both because of its peacemaker role, which emphasizes mediation diplomacy, and because of its understanding of front-line diplomacy in the face of crises.

Based on all this information, if we need to refer to the final declaration of the Samarkand Summit, it can be said that the most important development is the adoption of the “2022-2026 OTS Strategy Document.” Thus, OTS has shaped the first roadmap for the 2040 Vision Document. In fact, the other elements reflected in the final declaration of the summit focus on two main issues. The first of these is to maintain the regional peace and security environment and to ensure stability. The second is the effort to intensify economic and energy-based cooperation.

First of all, if we look at the main recommendations put forward by the OTS in the context of regional security and peace searches, the most important point is that the OTS attaches importance to regional cooperation is to underline the importance given to the consultation meetings held between the Heads of State of Central Asia.[19] Because this situation can be interpreted as an indication that the OTS also attaches great value to Tajikistan. In fact, the declaration emphasized the need to solve the border problems between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by peaceful means.[20] In other words, OTS wants a stable Central Asia.

Similarly, the declaration called for the mutual recognition of the problems between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the territories recognized by international law by the states.[21] This is closely related to the special attention paid to the safety of corridors. Because a stable Turkish world needs a secure Caucasus where peace prevails.

One of the most important security problems of the region is the Afghan Problem. In Fact, in the Samarkand declaration, referring to the proposal of the President of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev at the Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia,[22] the establishment of a commission coordinated with the UN was called for the establishment of an inclusive government and it was stated that the initiative to establish a “High-Level International Afghanistan Negotiation Group” for this purpose was welcomed.[23] Moreover, the OTS members reflected their will to cooperate in international organizations within the scope of the fight against separatism, extremism and terrorism in the text.[24]

In the economic dimension, as well as in the speeches of the leaders, the importance of the Trans-Caspian International Corridor was highlighted. In addition, it would not be right to think of the “2023-2027 Energy Cooperation Program” adopted at the summit independently of the corridor. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the Trans-Caspian International Corridor is not only a transit corridor, it is also important as an energy corridor.

In addition, the declaration also drew attention to the importance of the agreement signed on the “Simplified Customs Corridor.”[25] Therefore, it can be mentioned that there is a strong will on economic integration, which is one of the main goals of the summit. Moreover, the International Combined Freight Transport Agreement has revealed the will of the Turkic World, which focuses on corridors, to be the bridge that establishes the connection between Asia and Europe.[26] In fact, satisfaction with the adoption of the “OTS Trade Facilitation Strategy” was reflected in the declaration and the desire to conclude the Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement with the OTS Member States was emphasized.[27]

As a result, the OTS Samarkand Summit hosted by Mirziyoyev revealed to the whole world that the integration processes of the Turkic World are gaining momentum. In this sense, the Turkic World is positioned as the peace making actor of the world, which wants to be dragged into chaos by instabilities and crises. In this context, the OTS member countries, which have demonstrated their will to strengthen the connection between Asia and Europe in the context of economic cooperation and corridors, have reflected their approach to the Samarkand Declaration, which sees dialogue as a guarantee of peace in the face of crises. It has been decided that the Summit of the Heads of State of the OTS in 2023 will be held in Kazakhstan. It is foreseeable that in the process leading up to this summit, the OTS countries will strengthen their relations with each other, their regions and the world and continue to take the concrete steps necessary for the organization to turn into a full-fledged international organization.

[1] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, “Organization of Turkic States Samarkand Summit: “Towards Common Development and Prosperity” in the Turkish World”, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/organization-of-turkic-states-samarkand-summit-towards-common-development-and-prosperity-in-the-turkish-world/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[2] Baghdad Amreyev, “Daha Güçlü, Bütünleşmiş ve Birleşmiş Türk Dünyasına Doğru”, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, <https://www.turkkon.org/assets/pdf/haberler/turk-devletleri-teskilati-genel-sekreteri-tarafindan-kaleme-alinan-makale-daha-guclu-daha-butunlesmis-ve-da-ha-birlesmis-turk-dunyasina-dogru-2676-163.pdf>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022), s. 1-2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] “Özbekistan Cumhurbaşkanı Mirziyoyev, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Zirvesi’nde Konuştu”, TRT Avaz, <https://www.trtavaz.com.tr/haber/tur/avasyadan/ozbekistan-cumhurbaskani-mirziyoyev-turk-devletleri-teskilati-zirvesinde-konus/636e021401a30a0740130bb7>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[5] “Address by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States”, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://president.uz/en/lists/view/5687>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[6] “Aliyev, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı 9’uncu Zirvesi’nde Konuştu”, Star Gazetesi, <https://www.star.com.tr/dunya/aliyev-turk-devletleri-teskilati-9uncu-zirvesinde-konustu-haber-1748521/>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[7] Ibid.

[8] “Tokayev’den Türk Devletlerine: Birleşik Eğitim Sistemi Oluşturulmalı”, Haber 7, <https://www.haber7.com/dunya/haber/3276715-tokayevden-turk-devletlerine-birlesik-egitim-sistemi-olusturulmal-i>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[9] Ibid.

[10] “Kırgızistan Cumhurbaşkanı Caparov, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı 9. Zirvesi’nde konuştu Açıklaması”, Son Dakika, <https://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-kirgizistan-cumhurbaskani-caparov-turk-devletleri-15422043/>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[11] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı (TDT) Devlet Başkanları, Kırgız Cumhuriyeti’nin Ankara Büyükelçisi Kubanıçbek Ömüraliyev’i Teşkilatın Yeni Genel Sekreteri Olarak Atadı.”, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, [https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/turk-devletleri-teskilati-tdt-devlet-baskanlari-kirgiz-cumhuriyetinin-ankara-buyukelcisi-kubanicbek-omuraliyevi-teskilatin-yeni-genel-sekreteri-olarak-atadi\\_2677](https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/turk-devletleri-teskilati-tdt-devlet-baskanlari-kirgiz-cumhuriyetinin-ankara-buyukelcisi-kubanicbek-omuraliyevi-teskilatin-yeni-genel-sekreteri-olarak-atadi_2677), (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[12] ““Türk Yatırım Fonu’nun En Kısa Sürede Hayata Geçmesi Yararlı Olacaktır””, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/141633/-turk-yatirim-fonu-nun-en-kisa-surede-hayata-gecmesi-yararli-olacaktır>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[13] Ibid.

[14] Erol, op. cit.

[15] “OTS Declares 2023 as ‘Year of the Rise of Turkic Civilization’”, News.az, <https://news.az/news/ots-declares-2023-as-year-of-the-rise-of-turkic-civilization>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[16] “Eski Türkmenistan Devlet Başkanı Berdimuhamedov, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Zirvesi’nde Konuştu”, TRT Avaz, <https://www.trtavaz.com.tr/haber/tur/avasyadan/eski-turkmenistan-devlet-baskani-berdimuhamedov-turk-devletleri-teskilati-zirve/636e170d01a30a0740130bbe>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[17] “Macaristan Başbakanı Orban, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı 9. Zirvesi’nde Konuştu”, KonHaber, [https://www.konhaber.com/guncel/macaristan\\_basbakani\\_orban\\_turk\\_devletleri\\_teskilati\\_9\\_zirvesi\\_nde\\_konustu-1871306h](https://www.konhaber.com/guncel/macaristan_basbakani_orban_turk_devletleri_teskilati_9_zirvesi_nde_konustu-1871306h), (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[18] “Ersin Tatar: KKTC’nin Türk Devletleri Teşkilatına “Gözlemci Üye” Kabul Edilmesi “Olumlu Gelişme”, Anadolu Ajansı, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/ersin-tatar-kktnin-turk-devletleri-teskilatina-gozlemci-uye-kabul-edilmesi-olumlu-gelisme/2735379>, (Date of Accession: 11.11.2022).

[19] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Dokuzuncu Zirvesi Semerkant Bildirisi”, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, <https://www.turkkon.org/assets/pdf/haberler/semerkant-bildirisi-2679-164.pdf>, (Date of Accession: 12.11.2022), s. 2.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ahmad Khan Dawlatyar, “The Approach of CICA Countries to the Afghan Issue”, ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/the-approach-of-cica-countries-to-the-afghan-issue/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 12.11.2022).

[23] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Dokuzuncu...”, op. cit, s. 2-3.

[24] Ibid.

[25] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Dokuzuncu...”, op. cit, s. 5.

[26] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Dokuzuncu Zirvesi Semerkant’ta Gerçekleştirildi.”, Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı, [https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/turk-devletleri-teskilati-dokuzuncu-zirvesi-semerkantta-gerceklestirildi\\_2678](https://www.turkkon.org/tr/haberler/turk-devletleri-teskilati-dokuzuncu-zirvesi-semerkantta-gerceklestirildi_2678), (Date of Accession: 12.11.2022).

[27] “Türk Devletleri Teşkilatı Dokuzuncu...”, op. cit, s. 3-4.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Between Armenia-Iran: Is West's Proxy Actor Stepping Out of Its Role?

The Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan went to Tehran and held several important talks immediately after the trilateral meeting in Sochi, where he met with the Presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan. During these talks on November 1, 2022, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Armenia and Iran in the field of energy.

According to the memorandum signed at the Saadabad Palace in Tehran, the natural gas

and electricity swap agreement between the two states will be extended until 2030. Deputy Oil Minister of Iran Majid Cegeni explained this development by stating that Iran is currently exporting one million cubic meters of natural gas per day to Armenia, and that gas exports will be doubled with the new agreement.[1]

As those familiar with the matter may already know, according to the energy agreement signed between Armenia and Iran in 2004 and



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put into effect, natural gas and electricity exchange between two states was envisioned. In accordance with the swap method in the agreement, Armenia was supposed to buy natural gas from Iran, and to export electricity to Iran in return. This agreement was planned to be valid for a period of twenty years. The signing of a new agreement during Pashinyan's visit to Tehran, before the expiry of the twenty-year term of the said agreement, strikes the attention regarding both its timing and its provisions, as well as regional and global conjunctural conditions.

When this memorandum of understanding, which should be examined both technically and politically, is evaluated in terms of energy need and supply, we know as a fact that Armenia is a country deprived of natural gas deposits and that Iran has these resources. However, Iran is not the only country that supplies natural gas for Armenia. Russia stands as a more reasonable supplier than Iran in terms of both its natural gas capacity and the cost of the product. This is because the price of Russian natural gas is cheaper than that of Iran. However, it should be noted that there is no swap method applicable to the supply of Russian natural gas.

Although the swap method seems to be a more reasonable choice in terms of rationality and cost-benefit analysis, it does not seem very realistic considering Armenia's capacity and potential when it comes to electricity. It is also noteworthy that Iran will double its natural gas exports to Armenia. Thus, although Yerevan's energy dependence on Russia will decrease, it can be said that Iran will be more active in Armenia. The fact that Pashinyan went to Tehran right after the Sochi Summit hosted by the Russian President Vladimir Putin strengthens this possibility.

The Yerevan administration's policy of breaking the influence of Russia and getting closer to the West has resulted in the absence of expected support from Moscow during the second Karabakh War. In the post-war period, both the diplomatic success of the administration of Azerbaijan and the positive course of Russia-Türkiye relations might have brought up different options for the Pashinyan administration, which has a revisionist foreign policy desire or vision. One of these different options is the willingness of Yerevan to make Tehran, which is considered an important actor in the geopolitics of the region, a more effective position in the game.

The situation seems more or less normal up to this point. However, considering Armenia's relations with France and the United States (US), the issue becomes rather gray and open to discussion. It is well known that due to its foreign policy choices and moves in recent years, Armenia has taken a position in the Caucasus geopolitics as a proxy actor of the two Western states. In addition, it is a well-known fact that Iran is officially or unofficially considered as an enemy by the West, especially by the US. Thus, the question is clear: What will be the stance of Washington and Paris regarding Yerevan, which has indirectly improved its economic relations with Iran in a way that indirectly disables the sanctions, considering that Western states have imposed sanctions on Iran under the leadership of the United States?

Although this question is interpreted as predicting the future, the political consistency points to the need for Western states to review relations with Armenia. However, the extent to which President of France Emmanuel Macron and Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi will allow this raises serious concerns. Moreover, it will be understood in the following days whether the "Armenian state's relations and interests or the influence of Armenian diaspora" will be more decisive in the fate of the Armenians. However, there is a clear conclusion we get from this picture that although the West claims to act on certain values and principles in international politics, it is unlikely to give up on implementing its ambivalent and inconsistent policies.

[1] "Iran ile Ermenistan Enerji Alanında Mutabakat Zaptı İmzalandı", Mehr News, <https://tr.mehrnews.com/news/1905611/%C4%B0ran-ile-Ermenistan-enerji-alan%C4%B1nda-mutabakat-zapt%C4%B1-imzalad%C4%B1>, (Date of Accession: 03.11.2022).



# ANKASAM IN PRESS

## 11 November 2022

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

## 11 November 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's comments on Russia's move to withdraw from Kherson were published in Axar.az, one of the leading media outlets in Azerbaijan.

## 11 November 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations to Axar.az, one of the leading media outlets in Azerbaijan, regarding Russia's move to withdraw from Kherson were featured in Milli.az, another leading broadcaster in the country.



*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

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