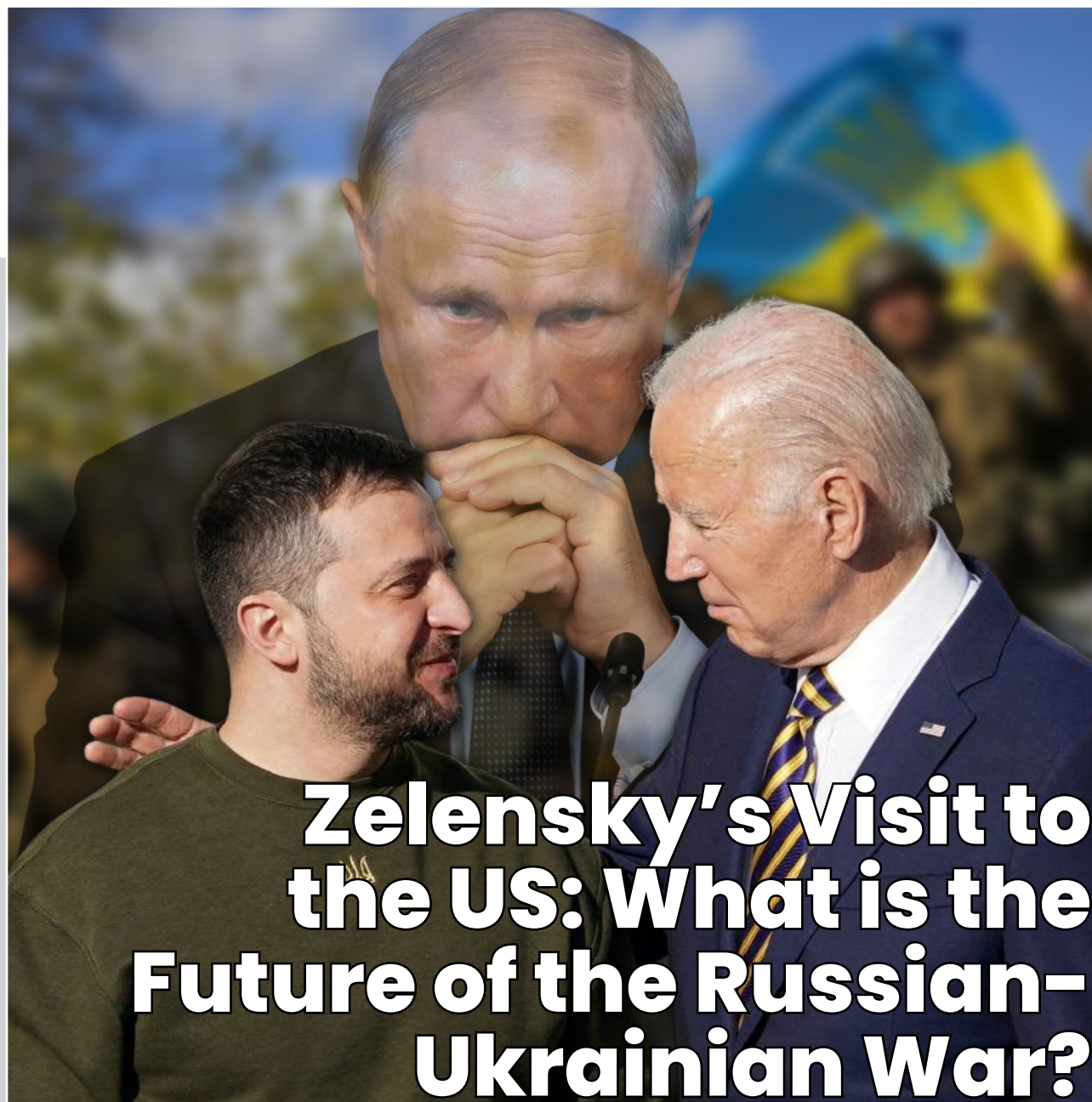




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EU-Vietnam Relations: Stable Partnership

Bilateral relations between Vietnam and the European Union (EU) have continued since the parties established diplomatic ties in 1996. [1] There are formal agreements between the parties in the economic, commercial, and political fields. That is why Vietnam is a solid and

reliable partner of the EU in Southeast Asia.[2] Vietnam, which receives support from the EU on all kinds of issues, frequently holds meetings with EU countries. In this context, between 9 and 16 December 2022, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh went to Europe to attend the



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45th anniversary of the Southeast Asian Nations Association (ASEAN)-EU relations and to make official visits to Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Belgium.[3]

Economy and trade were prominent topics in the negotiations. Currently, a large part of Vietnam-EU relations consists of commercial relations. Trading relations between the states have been developing rapidly and effectively in the past. The EU has been the second-largest overseas market for Vietnamese products for years and is also Vietnam's fourth-largest trading partner after China, South Korea, and the United States (US).[4] Recently, Vietnam's main export countries in the EU market include the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Poland.[5]

The Vietnam-EU Free Trade Agreement signed between Vietnam and the EU on June 30, 2019, is a new milestone for cooperation and development. At the same time, the agreement demonstrates Vietnam's determination to integrate into the world economy despite the complex and unpredictable developments in the world's economic and political situation.[6] The EU has been making efforts for the economic and trade liberalization of Vietnam for a long time. Besides the free trade agreement, the EU also supports Vietnam with concessional loans and grants.[7]

On December 10, 2022, Vietnamese Prime Minister Chinh met with his Dutch counterpart, Mark Rutte. Among EU countries, the Netherlands has special importance for Vietnam. It is also Vietnam's second-largest trading partner in Europe and the largest investor in the EU. During this visit, the Prime Minister of Vietnam also contacted important economic institutions, participated in the Vietnam-Netherlands Business Forum, and signed bilateral cooperation agreements.[8]

Prime Minister of Vietnam Chinh, who went to Luxembourg after the Netherlands, met with the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Fernand Etgen. With a total capital of \$2,6 billion, Luxembourg is the EU's third largest investor in Vietnam, as well as one of the first countries to ratify the EU-Vietnam Investment Protection Agreement. As it can be understood from here, one of the countries with strong economic cooperation with Vietnam is Luxembourg. Chinh visited the Luxembourg Stock Exchange, signed various memorandums of understanding on cooperation between the two countries, and took steps to strengthen the economic ties between the parties by participating in the Vietnam-Luxembourg Economic Forum.[9]

On December 15, 2022, Vietnamese Prime Minister Chinh, who met with Princess Astrid of Belgium and President of the Belgian Senate Stephanie D'Hose, reached a consensus on strengthening bilateral investments and commercial partnerships. Subsequently, Princess Astrid emphasized that she attaches importance to the comprehensive cooperation between the parties and hopes to develop this cooperation.[10]

Another issue discussed in the talks was peace and stability. Among the reasons why Vietnam attaches importance to relations with the EU is that it wants to get the support of the EU in the conflict regarding the South China Sea. Pham Thu Hang, the Vice Spokeswoman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated on December 10, 2022, that Vietnam and EU countries should make active and practical contributions to the maintenance of peace, stability, and legal order at sea.[11]

The South China Sea, which is one of the most important maritime trade routes in the world and has rich hydrocarbon reserves, is characterized as one of the regions closest to war due to the sovereignty claims of the regional states over the resources. Mainly China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan have claims in the South China Sea.[12] The resources here are likely to create enormous economic opportunities for smaller countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. It is possible for China to increase its energy security by supporting its growing economy through these resources. The governments of countries that claim huge oil reserves and natural gas fields compete to monopolize them.[13]

Threats to peace and stability in the region arising from conflicts between neighbouring states in the South China Sea cause the EU to worry as it has the potential to hinder international trade.[14] The EU, which doesn't want to face such problems, tries to play a role in the solution of the problem by offering incentives and investments to the regional states.[15] Vietnam attaches importance to the support that will come from the EU in the conflicts in the South China Sea, as it wants the EU to continue its investments in its country and needs the help of the EU in the operation of international law when the problem erupts.

As a result, relations between Vietnam and the EU continue in various fields and are getting stronger day by day. In this sense, Vietnam-EU relations are a concrete indicator of the stable partnership developing between East and West.

[1] Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam, Guide to the EU-Vietnam Trade and Investment Agreements, Hanoi, 2019, p. 12.

[2] "The European Union and Vietnam", European Union External Action, shorturl.at/ijky8, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[3] "Prime Minister of Vietnam to Meet Swedish Counterpart at EU-ASEAN Summit", Scand Asia, <https://scandasia.com/vietnam-prime-minister-to-meet-with-swedish-counterpart-at-the-eu-asean-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[4] Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam, op. cit., p. 12.

[5] "Bilateral Relation Between Vietnam and the EU", General Department of Vietnam Customs, http://evfta.moit.gov.vn/default.aspx?page=news&do=detail&category_id=13caec66-a1f8-4b9c-9066-b25657f4d36d&id=fe64a293-2b69-4c37-b1e0-cdd062451769, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Delegation of the European Union to Vietnam, op. cit., p. 16.

[8] "PM Starts Official Visit to Netherlands", Vietnam Net, <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnam-news-headlines-december-11-2089854.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[9] "Luxembourg Press Highlights Vietnamese PM's Visit", Vietnam Net, <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnam-news-headlines-december-11-2089854.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[10] "PM Pham Minh Chinh Meets Senate President, Princess of Belgium", Vietnam Plus, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/pm-pham-minh-chinh-meets-senate-president-princess-of-belgium/245624.vnp>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[11] "Vietnam Appeals for Cooperation, Contributions to Peace, Stability, Legal Order at Sea", Vietnam Net, <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnam-news-headlines-december-11-2089854.html>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).

[12] Kübra Çoban Hastunç, "Güney Çin Denizi'nde Avrupa Birliği'nin Dönüştürücü Rolü: Bölgesel Entegrasyon Yoluyla Alternatif Çatışma Çözümü Mekanizmaları", Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi, 21(1), 2022, p. 96.

[13] Hastunç, op. cit, p. 99.



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Putin Visits Minsk: The Choice of Belarus

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Belarus on December 19, 2022, and his meeting with President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko drew attention both in terms of timing and the course of the Ukrainian War.

As it is known, Belarus has had very close military and political relations with Russia beyond being a neighbour, the country is considered by the international media as Russia's "closest ally." However, the meetings of the two leaders have always been hosted by Moscow, especially after the Russian-Ukrainian War. On December 19, 2022, Putin's visit to Minsk to meet with Lukashenko, contrary to the usual prac-

tice, brought the visit to the international agenda. Nitekim Analysts suggest that the purpose of this visit may be to formally involve Belarus in the Ukrainian war.[1]

Since the 2020 Protests, the President of Belarus has been criticized by Belarusians for his pro-Russian policies. In addition to these critics, Lukashenko's support for the Moscow regime after the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian War resulted in the inclusion of Belarus in the sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) against Russia. Nevertheless, Lukashenko's government has preferred exclusion from Euro-Atlantic politics to sever relations with Russia.



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At the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Belarus was expected to directly participate in the war due to the close relations between the two countries.[2] However, Belarus has not officially joined the war in Ukraine, even though the Belarusian President still supports Moscow. Undoubtedly, participation in the war would have very different consequences compared to military cooperation.

First of all, it is necessary to assess Belarus' military power. According to the Global Fire Power index, which quantifies military power, Belarus' military power in 2022 ranks 52nd among 142 countries. In the same index, Russia ranks 2nd and Ukraine 22nd.[3] From various perspectives, Belarus cannot contribute much militarily to Russia.

If Russia wants to involve Belarus in the war in Ukraine, its aim would be to encircle Ukraine from the north, i.e. to exploit Belarus' geographical position. This is evidenced by the fact that Russia and Belarus have already surprisingly started military exercises on Belarus' border with Ukraine. In addition, Belarus' humanitarian power is also expected to be used in this scenario.

As expected, Lukashenko is well aware that if Belarus is dragged into the war, it will suffer. For this reason, the Belarusian leader often expresses his opposition to war and his desire for the war in Ukraine to end as soon as possible.[4] Belarus's already small population would be further reduced if the country joined the war.

It is also known that Belarusians do not want to participate in the war. Therefore, such a decision by Belarus could lead to a public reaction far beyond the 2020 protests. In short, the Minsk government believes that involvement in the Ukrainian war would not be good for the country and for them.

On the other hand, if Belarus is involved in the war, it is clear that the country would not open fire against Ukraine alone. According to the US Institute for the Study of War (ISW), the Kremlin has tried to conceal Putin's intention to pressure Lukashenko to make more concessions on integration with Russia.[5] Thus, although Lukashenko has managed to stay out of the war for ten months, there are questions about his ability to do so at Moscow's insistence.

Following the Russian leader's meeting with Lukashenko in Minsk, Ukraine's response was not delayed. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky addressed European leaders, particularly the UK, and demanded that these countries increase military aid to Ukraine. Ukraine has also repeatedly warned in recent days that Russian

forces may be preparing a new offensive aimed at once again seizing Kyiv, just 85 miles from the Belarusian border, or at blocking the flow of Western weapons and Polish aid to Ukraine." [6]

As a result, Putin's visit to the Belarusian President in Minsk after three and a half years attracted attention. Political analysts have suggested that Putin's visit was an attempt to change the attitude of Belarus, which has not been directly involved in the war in Ukraine since its outbreak. This would change the course of events for both Kyiv and Minsk. If Belarus joins the war, there could be uprisings in the country. On the other hand, a new front would open in Ukraine from the north. That is why Kyiv is calling on its European allies for additional assistance.

[1] Pjotr Sauer, "Putin's Mission to Minsk Raises Fears He Will Drag Belarus into Ukraine War", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/19/belarus-ukraine-war-putin-meets-lukashenko>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[2] Maria Yeryoma, "Does Belarus' Military Have The Capacity to Attack Ukraine?", The Kyiv Independent, <https://kyivindependent.com/regional/Does-Belarus-military-have-the-capacity-to-attack-Ukraine>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[3] "2022 Belarus Military Strength", GFP, https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=belarus, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[4] Artyom Shraibman, "Won't Get Fooled Again: Is Lukashenko Trying to Distance Himself From Russia?", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/87140>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[5] "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, December 19", Institute for the Study of War, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-19>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[6] Anatoly Kurmanaev vd, "Putin Visits Belarus, Stirring New Concern on Future of Ukraine War", The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/world/europe/belarus-putin-kyiv.html>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).



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A Reading on Japan's New National Security and Defense Documents

The Government of Japan approved three new defence and security plans on December 16, 2022: "National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy and Defense Development Programme."^[1] Thus, the Tokyo administration has taken an important step towards fulfilling its commitment to increase its military spending to 2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).^[2] This is a historic step. For Japan, which

has followed a passive policy since the Second World War, to suddenly turn to such high defence expenditures and transition to an active defence policy is a revolution for Tokyo.

The three published documents are the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the Defense Buildup Program (DBP), respectively. The NSS generally



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includes the United Kingdom (UK), France, Germany, Italy, Canada, the United States (US), Australia, India, South Korea, New Zealand, and Southeast Asian countries.^[3] With these three documents, Japan lays out a new security and defence strategy and defence development plan. As part of its National Security Strategy, the Tokyo government has indicated that over the next decade it will undertake strategic overhauls in areas such as defence, economic security, diplomacy, cybersecurity, and intelligence.

DBP, known as the Medium-Term Defense Program, lays out plans for total defence spending and major equipment procurement volumes for the next five years. The DBP document plans to increase Japan's defence spending to about \$320 billion (43 trillion yen) over five years (between 2023 and 2027).^[4] In other words, it is expected to reach 80 billion dollars annually by 2027.

Japan has close ties with the US and borders three countries it sees as rivals. These are China, Russia, and North Korea. North Korea is perceived as a major source of concern after firing ballistic missiles over Japan. This threat identification is also reflected in the documents.

Japan characterizes Russia as "a dangerous country that easily violates the rules of international law due to its aggression against Ukraine."^[5] The Tokyo administration described Russia's activities around Japan and its cooperation with China, which it saw as a direct and clear threat to Europe, as a strong security concern. In this respect, Russia is a country that claims rights to the Cyrillic Islands near Japan and has deployed missile systems on some of the islands there, posing a threat to Japan. However, Russia, which is currently engaged in a war in Ukraine, is unlikely to clash with a much larger and more powerful state like Japan. Tokyo, therefore, believes that Russia, which provides it with important supplies of natural gas and oil, is not the biggest threat in the region.

China, on the other hand, plans to become the world's superpower by 2050 and is increasing its military capacity and defence spending every year. As the main trading partner of many countries in the world, China is expanding its influence. The most important and striking part of the three documents is how Japan will deal with a rising China. In the National Security Strategy Paper, China was described by Tokyo as the "biggest strategic challenge."

The situation in question is rather that China is not considered a threat to Japan; it can be interpreted as a diplomatic language used to prevent tension between the parties. It is important for both sides that the country's national strategy document does not use harsh language against China, the world's second-largest economy. Therefore, this is how Japan's characterization of China as a "difficulty" should be viewed. Nevertheless, while China's actions and attitudes were described as an issue related to the international community in the National Security Strategy of 2013, it was described as the biggest strategic challenge in the document of 2022, which means that a change was made in Japan's security policies.

It can be said that there are other reasons behind Japan's characterization of China as a strategic challenge rather than a threat. The strong ties of Komeito, one of the coalition partners of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan, with China are the most important among these. Founded by members of a group known as the Soka Gakkai Movement, this party took important steps to normalize relations with China in 1972. This comment can be made since the party is thought to have had strong ties with Beijing since the period.

Another reason may be that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, leader of Japan's current ruling party LDP, has frequently stated that it is important to seek stable and positive relations with China. It is possible that such language was used because the Kishida administration did not want to provoke China and did not want to worsen existing relations. Moreover, defining another state as a threat in an important document such as a country's national security document can undoubtedly cause discontent in the country concerned. Therefore, it can be said that more reasonable expressions are preferred in order not to cause such discontent.

On the other hand, Japan's planned counterattack capability is expected to be implemented in 2026 at the earliest. For this reason, the timing/duration of the deployment of long-range Tomahawk missiles is likely to be important. Deployment of such weapons would be an abandonment of the policy of the Japanese Government of 1956, which prohibited the ability to counter-attack except as a final defensive measure. For this reason, the policy change is remarkable for the future of the region, Japan, and the world.

Japan has announced that it has entered a new era with the three documents it has announced. According to these new strategy documents, which are proof of the transition from a pacifist policy it has been pursuing since 1956 to a proactive strategy, Japan plans to double its defence expenditures and allocate a budget of 80 billion dollars every year until 2027. This demonstrates the importance Tokyo attaches to security.

As a result, it can be stated that three important documents announced by the Japanese Government are of strategic nature for the future of Japan and the region. At the same time, the published documents can also improve relations with the US. In this context, the launch of Japan-US drills against the recently frequent Russia-China drills may also be on the agenda.

[1] "Japon: la nouvelle stratégie renforcée de défense et de sécurité dévoilée", RFI, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/asie-pacifique/20221216-japon-la-nouvelle-strategie-renforcee-de-defense-et-de-securite-devoilee>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[2] "Le Japon approuve une révision majeure de sa doctrine de défense face à la Chine", Le Quotidien, <https://lequotidien.lu/monde/le-japon-approuve-une-revision-majeure-de-sa-doctrine-de-defense-face-a-la-chine/>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[3] "National Defense Strategy 2022", Japonya Savunma Bakanlığı, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/strategy/pdf/strategy_en.pdf, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[4] Alastair Gale-Chieko Tsuneoka, "Japan to Build a More Powerful Military, Citing China as Its No. 1 Menace", The Wall Street Journal, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/japan-to-build-a-more-powerful-military-citing-china-as-its-no-1-menace-11671177530>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[5] "National Defense Strategy...", op. cit.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

How the Adventure of Western Balkans to EU Membership Ends?

Bosnia and Herzegovina was accepted as an official candidate by the European Union (EU) leaders on 15 December 2022.[1] Bosnia and Herzegovina, which applied for candidacy in 2016, was approved six years later. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Albania have become candidate countries in 2005, 2010, 2012 and 2014, respectively. Kosovo, on the other

hand, applied for candidacy to the EU on 15 December 2022, stating that it will not be accepted yet.[2] Also North Macedonia and Albania, 2022; Serbia started membership negotiations with the EU in 2014 and Montenegro in 2012.

When the dates are examined, it is understood that the EU membership processes of the



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Western Balkan states, which are geographically integrated with the European continent, have turned into a long-term adventure. In this situation, the failure of the region to provide basic conditions such as democracy, rule of law, freedom of expression, fight against corruption and economic development, as well as the fact that the ethnic and border problems in the region turned into a deadlock.

On the other hand, some member states such as France and the Netherlands, which put forward many reasons such as immigration, organized crime, and smuggling, do not want the EU to expand further; some states also use veto rights due to specific issues. For example, the candidacy of North Macedonia was vetoed by Greece for a while due to the name crisis; Although it met all the conditions to start the accession negotiations, Bulgaria used its veto power for North Macedonia on the grounds that it did not fulfil the conditions of the good neighbourly and cooperation agreement.

The situation in question has led to an increase in distrust towards the EU in the eyes of the Western Balkan countries and the EU membership process to take on a stagnant and/or slow-progressing concept. However, in recent months, the EU's interest in the region has increased; It is noteworthy that the Berlin Process is being tried to be revived.

The threat to European security and Western values due to the Russia-Ukraine War was the driving force in the said movement. "We live in new geopolitical conditions, and in these new conditions, we need to stand together more than ever to defend our shared values and an international rules-based order," said Joseph Borell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy[3] while "The stability and prosperity of the region are inseparable from the stability and prosperity of Europe as a whole," said German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The expression shows that the feeling of "Europeanness" and "We" in the region is desired to be kept alive in today's geopolitical ruptures. Because, with the Russia-Ukraine War, the Moscow administration wanted to deepen its relations with the Slavic communities in the Western Balkans and accordingly, the potential of the region to become a competitive field has increased.

Russia's active involvement in the region and its use of conflict-prone ethnic groups in favour of its own interests is considered a situation that should be prevented in terms of EU security. As a matter of fact, while the EU supported the Kyiv administration financially and militarily against the Russian threat in the Ukraine War, it implemented sanctions targeting the Moscow administration; Bosnia and Herzegovina Serbs and Serbia have not accepted EU sanctions. Russia also does not recognize the independence of Kosovo and especially supports the Serbian nationalists who have increased their protests in the north of Kosovo as of August 2022. While mutual support strengthens anti-Europeanism in Serbia, while developing relations with Russia.

Another actor in the region that conflicts with the interests of the EU is China, which is defined as an economic and systemic competitor. Within the scope of the Belt-Road Project, China is increasing its influence in the Western Balkans day by day. Unlike the EU, China is expanding its investments in the region by not interfering in domestic politics and ignoring some aspects such as state aid, corruption or labor laws.[4] The fact that China does not see the issues, which are described as the weaknesses of the countries in the region, as an obstacle in the EU membership process, leads to the development of a relationship network in the region that the EU does not want.

In this context, the EU has started to act with a policy understanding that the closer it gets to the Western Balkan countries, the more it will protect the region from Russia and China. Of course, the fact that the EU Term President Czechia attaches importance to the development of relations with the region, and the German Government's advocacy that the EU should expand towards the Western Balkans has been an important factor affecting the Western Balkans policy of the Union.

The EU-Western Balkans Summit, which will contribute to the improvement of relations because of rapprochement, was held twice in 2022. The EU's close interest in the Western Balkans increases the motivation of the countries in the region in terms of accelerating the negotiation process and strengthening the sense of belonging to Europe. So, will the increasing rapprochement between the EU

and the Western Balkans fulfil the dreams of the Western Balkan countries to join the EU?

It is obvious that the current situation will increase the areas of cooperation between the two sides. However, considering the existence of policies that candidates must implement to become a full member of the EU; it is not yet expected that the countries of the region will face a process that will result in EU membership. Similarly, it is noteworthy that more emphasis was placed on mutual commitment in the final declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit held in Tirana, the capital of Albania, on 6 December 2022.

When the reasons why the membership will not be realized soon are examined, the problems experienced by the states of the region in terms of democratization draw attention, although they differ. In the 2021 Democracy Index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit, the democracies of North Macedonia and Montenegro deteriorate and are flawed democracies; Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are stated to be in the hybrid democracies category.[5]

The EU, which is currently in trouble with Hungary and Poland for violating values such as the rule of law, freedom of expression, violation of fundamental human rights and corruption,[6] it would not want to expand its borders towards a third country that will harm its interests.

Moreover, the existence of ethnic-based conflicts in the region since the dissolution of Yugoslavia is an obstacle to EU membership. The EU cannot act as a unit for the management and resolution of conflicts, nor can the countries of the region make concessions in the normalization of relations for EU membership today. Fulfilling the economic criteria, which is a step to be overcome in the realization of EU membership, is getting harder for the Western Balkans day by day due to the war in Ukraine and the resulting rising energy and food prices and rising inflation.

Under the conditions, the EU will need to keep alive the sense that the region belongs to Europe, based on the assumption that the EU membership of the Western Balkans cannot be realized in the short term and the importance of the region for European security continues to increase. Perhaps that is why the EU is developing its relations with the Western Balkans within the framework of the European Political Community, the project of French President Emmanuel Macron.

As a result, with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the Western Balkan countries adopted policies with a European perspective and wanted to become a de-facto EU member. The Union, on the other hand, sees the Western Balkans as part of Europe. However, the expansion of the EU borders into the region depends on the fulfilment of the current criteria of the Western Balkans and the resolution of political problems between some member states and the states of the region. Although the Russia-Ukraine War has increased interest in the region, it can be predicted that the EU membership adventure in the Western Balkans will not result in a positive outcome in the short term. The prolongation of the process may lead the Western Balkan countries, which want to attract the attention of the EU, to be more tolerant of the presence of Russia and China in the region.

[1] "EU Leaders Grant Bosnia EU Candidate Status", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-leaders-grant-bosnia-eu-candidate-status-2022-12-15/>, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).

[2] "Kosovo Formally Applies to Join EU", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kosovo-submits-eu-membership-application-2022-12-15/>, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).

[3] "HRVP Borrell: A Positive Dynamic for the EU Enlargement Process", European Union External Action, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hrvp-borrell-positive-dynamic-eu-enlargement-process_en, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).

[4]"China's Strategic Interests in the Western Balkans, European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)733558](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)733558), (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).

[5] "Democracy Index 2021: Less Than Half the World Lives in A Democracy", The Economist Intelligence Unity, <https://www.eiu.com/n/democracy-index-2021-less-than-half-the-world-lives-in-a-democracy/>, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).

[6]"Rule of Law in Poland and Hungary Has Worsened", European Parliament, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20200109IPR69907/rule-of-law-in-poland-and-hungary-has-worsened>, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Uzbekistan's Policy That Shapes the World

The Tashkent administration, under the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, is living in the "Third Renaissance" period. The "New Uzbekistan" movement developed in this context has three main objectives. The first of these is the center and the periphery; that is, the harmony between the state and the nation is built on solid foundations. In this context, Tashkent, which strengthens the state authority, aims to increase the welfare of the people with the steps it takes in political and economic issues.

Secondly, Uzbekistan pursues a peaceful and constructive foreign policy in its geography. Thanks to the regional foreign policy based on rational foundations, the country has managed to become one of the most important states

of Central Asia. In particular, the Tashkent administration, which resolved the problems with its neighbours through peaceful methods, became one of the most important forces in the development of Central Asia, increasing the standard of living and building a peace basin under the leadership of Mirziyoyev. As a matter of fact, Tashkent has become one of the integration centers in Central Asia.

On the other hand, Uzbekistan has shown to the whole world that it can take initiative in the face of various difficulties by following a pragmatist foreign policy in Afghanistan. In this context, Uzbekistan has become Afghanistan's gateway to the world with various conferences and has come to the forefront as one of the bridges



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between Central and South Asia. Thirdly, Tashkent, carrying out the construction process of "New Uzbekistan" under the leadership of Mirziyoyev, has adopted a foreign policy understanding that is open to the world. In this process, the country, which has adopted a multi-vector foreign policy, has further increased its prestige in the world. One of the structures in which Uzbekistan has gained significant respect in foreign policy in international organizations. Because many decisions proposed by Mirziyoyev within the scope of building a more just, prosperous, and peaceful world receive the support of all states on a global basis. This detail can be interpreted as an indicator of the prestige gained by the Tashkent administration for the last 30 years and especially since 2016.

One of the most important factors showing the prestige of Uzbekistan is the effect it has created in the United Nations (UN). At the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020, Mirziyoyev proposed the adoption of the resolution "On Strengthening the Role of Parliaments in Accelerating the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

The resolution put forward by Mirziyoyev and which he wants to be adopted aims to achieve success in the recovery after the Covid-19 outbreak in a comprehensive, sustainable, and consistent manner by ensuring that no one is left behind. In this context, Tashkent highlights the important role of parliaments in recommitting unity, solidarity, and multilateral cooperation.[1]

The UN General Assembly also makes various calls to states in this regard. In particular, the preparation of voluntary national reports, the support of parliaments in monitoring and reviewing the SDGs, their involvement in future activities, and ensuring national ownership and accountability are the main calling issues. The aim is to end the economic backwardness and poverty in the world.

Moreover, this process is not limited to parliaments only. Women are seen as one of the most important actors in the process of reaching the SDGs. In this context, it is aimed to encourage the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in legislative bodies and parliamentary processes with the point of achieving gender equality. This is a healthier societal order; therefore, it will ensure the effective use of a strong population based on the equality of women and men. Because it is known that societies in the world where the role of women comes to the fore are strong, productive, and effective.

One of the most important elements of society and development is youth. Ensuring the participation of young people in parliamentary processes is seen as an urgent issue. For countries to build a strong future, it is imperative that young people turn into consci-

ous, world-aware individuals who are effective in decision-making mechanisms. In particular, the agenda announced in 2015, which aims to end poverty by 2030, protect the planet and ensure that all people live in peace and prosperity, youth is the most important factor.[2]

The document prepared on this subject was written by 80 countries. Among these countries, there are especially Central Asian states, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Egypt, Spain, Indonesia, Italy, Qatar, China, Colombia, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Finland, France, Sweden, and Japan. This situation states that the prestige of Uzbekistan is not limited to Central Asia or the Asian continent; it shows that it reaches from Europe to Latin America.

In this context, the decision made a big impact on world politics and international organizations. Various UN agencies and organizations welcomed the decision. It is emphasized that the decision put forward by Mirziyoyev will be a critical roadmap for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs. It is stated that the document will also be effective in preparing for the SDG Summit, which will be held at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2023. As a matter of fact, on December 14, 2022, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution proposed by Mirziyoyev within the framework of his foresighted, proactive, and constructive foreign policy approach.[3]

As a result, Mirziyoyev's proposal shows the main priorities that Tashkent follows in world politics and foreign policy. The Tashkent administration aims for a world where everyone develops equally, and humanity lives in prosperity. For this reason, Uzbekistan supports the rapid, decisive, and complete implementation of the determined roadmap. It also reveals the importance of ensuring strong social unity by involving many segments of society, from women to young people. Moreover, Uzbekistan shows that it attaches importance to peaceful and common development. Because this is not the competition of rational and constructive thinking rising from Uzbekistan; it is an indicator of adopting a win-win approach. In addition to all these, it has brought a global dimension to the constructive, peaceful and pragmatist policy it pursued in Uzbekistan, Central Asia, and Afghanistan, making it available to all humanity. For this reason, it can be said that the constructive role of New Uzbekistan under the leadership of Mirziyoyev has come to the fore in solving the problems experienced anywhere in the world.

[1] "UN General Assembly Approves President Mirziyoyev's Initiative", Kuz.uz, <https://kun.uz/en/news/2022/12/16/un-general-assembly-approves-president-mirziyoyevs-initiative>, (Date of Accession: 27.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Allegations of Analysis Espionage against North Korea

North Korea has recently increased both ballistic missile tests and military activities. Moreover, Pyongyang's nuclear tests, as well as missile tests, gained momentum. These concerns deepen the security concerns and thus the security dilemma in the Asia-Pacific region.

The nuclear threat posed by the country in question was met in the form of isolating the country from the international system. Because the continuation of Pyongyang's activities also makes it difficult to solve this problem. As a matter of fact, the name of North Korea, which has been somewhat isolated from the global



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conjunction, has started to be mentioned more and more with illegal activities. As a matter of fact, the theft of cryptocurrencies and allegations of spying on the blockchain is one of them. However, the allegations of illegal activity emerging through Pyongyang are not limited to this. Because it is estimated that North Korea also carries out espionage activities in many other areas.

It is said that one of them is by deceiving foreign analysts and getting various reports and analyses from them. At this point, it is claimed that North Korean spies disguised as authorized persons and sought opinions from Western analysts and experts, and then used these views in line with their own political goals. For example, United States (US) analyst Deniel DePetris received an e-mail from someone who introduced himself as Jenny Town, the director of 38 North, about the West's ideas about North Korea and the reaction in the Asia-Pacific region might be in possible developments. He received an e-mail and then, because of his research, he realized that the person who forwarded the e-mail to him was not Jenny Town. According to three cyber security researchers who later continued their research, it turned out that the person who introduced himself as Jenny Town was a North Korean spy.[1]

At this point, it can be said that the fact that Pyongyang has started to be mentioned over the allegations of crypto asset theft, as well as the allegations of analysis espionage, is due to the isolation of North Korea from the global conjuncture. Although being an actor excluded from the international system, North Korea is an actor that draws attention and pursues proactive policies both at the regional and global levels. Because it is very important how these policies are met both in the West and in the region

Another issue that needs to be evaluated on the subject is that North Korea's ballistic missile tests and nuclear tests may threaten regional security and cause discomfort for its ally China.

As mentioned, it can be said that this possibility is important for North Korea, which is expected to conduct a new nuclear test soon. Because Pyongyang and Beijing are allies geopolitically and geostrategically, although not geoeconomically, in their foreign policymaking and their ambitions to compete with Western hegemony. However, North Korea's concerns about regional security could undermine cooperation with China.

In addition, the alliance with Beijing and the close foreign policy lines of the two countries are of great importance for Pyongyang, which is not included in the global system. For this reason, it can be predicted that North Korea will not want to harm that union in the short term. For this reason, Pyongyang will closely monitor the impact of its current action and the new nuclear tests that will likely be carried out soon. This also applies to allegations of espionage.

In short, it can be said that North Korea, on the one hand, is trying to fund its nuclear activities with cyber-attacks, and on the other hand, it is trying to learn how the steps it has taken and is considering take will be met by both its allies and adversaries through espionage methods. In addition, it can be argued that the Pyongyang administration is trying to learn how Beijing will respond to the military operations it plans to carry out with the help of the data it will reach.

[1] "North Korean Cyber Spies Deploy New Tactic: Tricking Foreign Experts Into Writing Research for Them", The Aashi Shimbun, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14791681>, (Date of Accession: 17.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Zelensky's Visit to the US: What is the Future of the Russian-Ukrainian War?

December 2022 witnessed critical diplomatic developments regarding the future of the Russian-Ukrainian War that began on February 24, 2022. On December 19, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Belarusian capital Minsk and met with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, which was interpreted as Russia's intention to turn Belarus into a frontline country.[1] Indeed, such allegations are frequently raised. Because Moscow believes that the war is not going the way it wants it to go and therefore wants to confront the Ukrainian army with a new reality in which it will fight on two fronts. Minsk does not seem willing to do so. However, it is unclear how long Belarus can resist Russia's demands.

Against this backdrop, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky visited the United States (US) on December 21, 2022. After the visit came to the agenda, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov reacted to the visit by claiming that the West's continued supply of arms to Ukraine would lead to a "deepening" of the conflict.[2] Considering this reaction, it can be stated that Russia was uncomfortable with Zelensky's visit to the US.

At this point, it can be said that Zelensky's visit had four goals. The first is to ensure the continued flow of military, financial and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, which would have to fight both north and south in a scenario that would turn Belarus into a frontline country. This is because Ukraine's success in the war depends on Western support.



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The second is mostly related to the defence capacity of the country in the military context. Because the most important problem that Ukraine has faced since the beginning of the war is the lack of air defence systems. For this reason, Zelensky has stated that the Patriot air defence systems included in the \$2 billion aid package announced by US President Joe Biden are of critical importance for them.[3] Kyiv believes that this shortcoming needs to be addressed.

Thirdly, it can be stated that the President of Ukraine aims to make various demands regarding the containment of Russia. In this context, Zelensky demanded increased pressure on Moscow, implying that his country is positioned as a Western actor and that this situation will continue after the war, and addressing Biden's perspective on the global power struggle through the "Democracies-Otocracies" distinction, he said, "Your money is not charity, it is an investment in the global security and democracy." [4]

It can be argued that the fourth purpose of the visit is to challenge Russia and to give morale to the Ukrainian people. Because Zelensky clearly conveyed the message that Kyiv is not alone. This is also the reason why the President of Ukraine, in his address to the US Congress, said "Ukraine will never surrender." [5] In other words, Zelensky wanted to rally the home front while also declaring to Russia, "We will not be defeated."

On the other hand, Washington, which hosted Zelensky, has two goals regarding this hospitality. First, the US is in favour of prolonging the Russian-Ukrainian war. The prolongation of the war is made possible by increasing Ukraine's military capacity. This is the reason for the aid.

In this sense, the Biden administration is taking steps to increase Kyiv's defence capacity through support for Ukraine. Thus, the US ensures that the threat perception of Russia remains alive throughout Continental Europe, which strengthens the culture of solidarity in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is a US-led security alliance. Undoubtedly, this is meant to secure the US's global hegemony in Europe. Biden, in a joint press conference with Zelensky, stated that "Putin thought that he would weaken NATO, but instead he strengthened NATO" [6] and thus implied that the war made it easier for Washington to achieve its global interests.

It can be said that the second aim of the US is to restore the image that it lost in Afghanistan by supporting Zelensky. It can be argued that when the US withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021, there was a view that it victimized its Afghan counterparts who assisted it during the operation period and did not protect its partners. In other words, the US is attempting to dispel this notion by aiding Ukraine and reassuring its allies.

In conclusion, at a time when Russia wanted to drag Ukraine into a two-front war through Belarus, Zelensky visited the US and gave the message to both Moscow and his people that they were not alone. Considering the statements made during the visit, it can be predicted that the US will continue to support Ukraine and that aid to the Kyiv administration will be brought to the forefront through values such as supporting democracies. It can be argued that through this support, Washington aims both to prolong the war and to gain the trust of its allies. The priority of Kyiv is to ensure the continuity of military aid, especially for the country's air defence.

[1]Pjotr Sauer, "Putin's Mission to Minsk Raises Fears He Will Drag Belarus into Ukraine War", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/19/belarus-ukraine-war-putin-meets-lukashenko>, (Date of Accession: 22.12.2022).

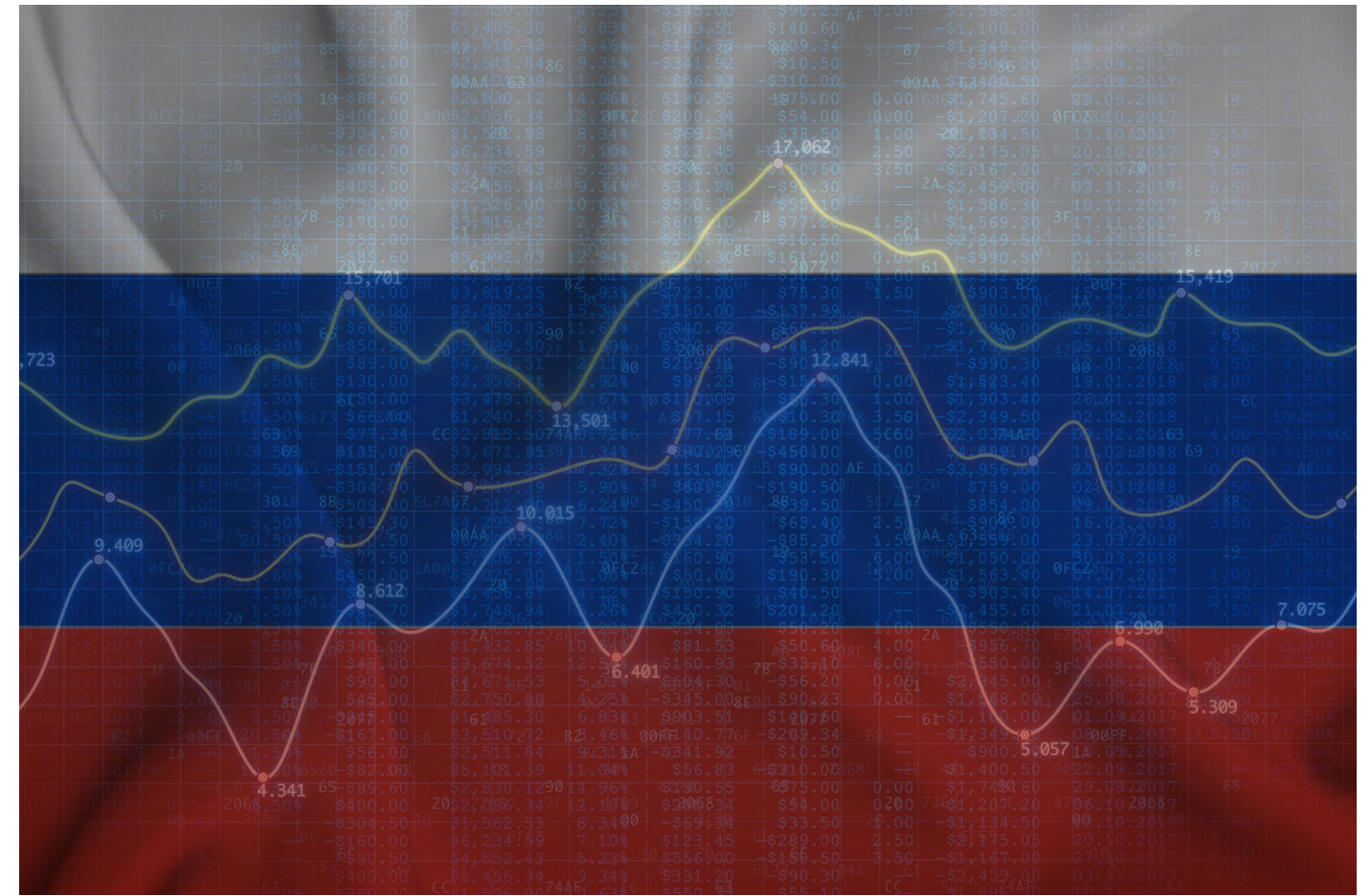
[2] "First Response to Zelenski's visit to the US from the Kremlin!", Hurriyet, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/zelenskinin-abd-ziyaretine-kremlinden-ilk-tepki-42191141>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[3] "Ukrainian President Zelenski in the USA", NTV, https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/dunya/ukrayna-devlet-baskani-zelenski-abdde, d2tkNwoFJ0mVH-sASIU-bg/FA4Om2baUui_ESS-gJWA, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6] "Remarks by President Biden and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine in Joint Press Conference", U. S. Embassy in Ukraine, <https://ua.usembassy.gov/remarks-by-president-biden-and-president-volodymyr-zelenskyy-of-ukraine-in-joint-press-conference/>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

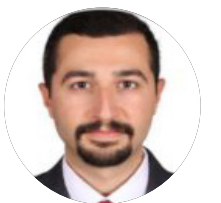


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Fluctuation in Russia's Policy on Crypto Assets

Russia has taken different stances on crypto assets and blockchain technology. Firstly, the Moscow administration has argued that crypto assets should not be accepted as a legal means of payment; the significant increase in the investor base of crypto assets in 2017 and 2018 caused the related assets to come to the agenda of the mainstream media for the first time. For this reason, Russian President Vladimir

Putin made a statement in January 2018 and stated that the initiative on the regulation of related assets is in the Central Bank of Russia. [1] In addition, Putin stated that the assets concerned could not be a store of value since they were not based on any physical assets. Nevertheless, he stated that the related assets have various benefits in performing financial transactions, that it would not make sense to ban



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the assets in question by the state, and that the risks related to the related assets should be taken by investors.

The breaking point in Russia's stance on crypto assets has been its financial isolation by Western countries over its invasion of Ukraine. After this stage, Russian authorities, who are looking for alternative international payment systems and liquidity channels, have started to make more frequent and positive statements regarding crypto assets. Another consequence of the financial isolation has been that many crypto asset users, who do not want to be exposed to sanctions, have stopped receiving services from existing crypto asset service providers and started using "decentralized" and "uncensored" financial protocols.

The defence of Russia's use of distributed data retention networks, which can be freely transacted "without the need for approval", in the current conjuncture is like a double-edged knife. On the other hand, it ensures that occupied Ukraine receives financial support easily and efficiently. As a matter of fact, "stable" crypto assets were used by the United Nations (UN) when sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine.[2]

The Central Bank of Russia supports a ban on crypto asset miners operating within the country from selling the crypto assets they mine on the domestic market. Because the sale of related crypto assets in the domestic market will cause the monetary liquidity in the country to shift to firms that are foreign; this will have a negative, if not great, effect on Russia's monetary sovereignty. As a matter of fact, with the amendments to the law enacted by the Russian or State Duma in November 2022, the fact that crypto assets can only be realized by "national" intermediary firms or institutions has come to the agenda.

Russia approaches distributed data retention technologies as an "open door" means of payment that it can use in its foreign trade. The Kremlin does not support the use of related assets by citizens as an investment tool. The Central Bank of Russia

has announced that it has begun work to create an alternative international payment standard based on distributed data retention. Again, the Central Bank of Russia has announced that all digital asset uses can be made possible in trade with "friendly" countries.[3] The Russian Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Russia have agreed on the use of crypto assets for international payments following a disagreement since the Moscow administration was subjected to severe financial isolation.[4] Putin directly supports the mentioned international payment standard.[5] The Russian leader accuses the current international payment systems of being "monopolistic."

Otherwise, although Russia strives to establish and use an alternative international payment system based on distributed data retention technology, NATO member countries, especially the United States (US), exert pressure on companies and institutions that carry out transactions with Russia or have a high potential to perform transactions or subject the relevant institutions and organizations directly to sanctions. It is doubtful how successful the crypto asset-based alternative international payment standard targeted by Russian institutions will be.

The central bank digital currency "digital ruble", which Russia is developing, is different and independent from the crypto assets and distributed data retention technologies mentioned in this article, both in terms of the purpose of use and the technology used.

Although the authorities have said that activities related to crypto assets will be banned in Russia for various periods, it does not seem possible for Moscow to ban all crypto asset activities in the country for various reasons. These factors are; (1) Russia's exploitation of the crypto asset mining sector without making it possible to access cheap electricity, (2) Moscow's liquidity from "decentralized" financial protocols, albeit a small amount as a result of the heavy financial isolation it has been subjected to, (3) the search and effort to establish an alternative international payment system to SWIFT to solve the prob-

lem of "double spending" (4) Russian citizens are expected to be crypto due to the policies of the Russian state restricting financial freedom, is the formation of sensitivity in public opinion on the subject due to its adaptation to assets.

As a result, throughout the process, the Kremlin has had a fluctuating stance on crypto assets and blockchain technology. The Central Bank of Russia has explicitly stated that the crypto assets of "public" blockchains should be restricted, and that physical assets should be "tokenized" in the infrastructure of distributed data retention technologies in accordance with the closed economic policy. The crypto asset mining sector, which is concentrated in Russia, has turned into a financial "export item" in accordance with the latest legal regulations in the country. The "digital ruble" that the Central Bank of Russia is developing has no direct relation to the country's policy regarding crypto assets and distributed data retention technologies.

[1] "Putin Says Legislative Regulation of Cryptocurrency Market May Be Needed", TASS, <https://tass.com/economy/984740>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[2] "UN to Send Displaced Ukrainians USDC to Convert into Local Currencies", Fortune, <https://fortune.com/crypto/2022/12/15/un-crypto-aid-ukrainian-refugees-stablecoin-usdc-stellar/>, (Date of Accession 23.12.2022).

[3] Lubomir Tassev, "Bank of Russia to Test International Crypto Payments With Companies", News Bitcoin, <https://news.bitcoin.com/bank-of-russia-to-test-international-crypto-payments-with-companies/>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[4] "ЦБ и Минфин договорились разрешить трансграничные расчеты в криптовалютах", Kommersant, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5572328>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[5] "Artificial Intelligence Conference", Kremlin, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69927>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Rishi Sunak's Plan to Prevent Albanian Migrants

Recently, it is seen that the relations between the United Kingdom (UK) and Albania have been strained. The main reason for this is the illegal entry of Albanian migrants into the UK through the English Channel. In particular, the fact that more than half of the irregular migration to the UK consists of Albanians causes London to focus on the issue. Moreover, the fact that the Conservative Government in the UK has a harsh policy against irregular migration also escalates the tension between the parties.

In the UK, the Conservative Party, unlike the main opposition Labour Party, comes to the fore with

harsh measures on irregular migration. It can be said that the Conservative Party's policy is in a continuum, regardless of Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, and Rishi Sunak. All three Prime Ministers have adopted a common approach to irregular migration in general and Albanian migrants. However, the fact that Sunak is not an ethnic Briton compared to the other two Prime Ministers leads him to pursue harsher policies on irregular migration to procure acceptance himself.

On the other hand, the majority of those who entered the UK through the Channel are immigrants of Albanian origin. Looking at the statistical data,



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the UK Government points out that Albanians currently make up about 60% of the people crossing the English Channel. This figure is also striking in that it is 100 times higher than in 2021.[1] In addition, the financial difficulties of Albanians in recent years have increased emigration. In this context, the UK stands out as the country where Albanians try to migrate the most.

Predictably, this has made immigration from Albania the number one problem in Britain's migration policy. So much so that, on October 31, 2022, British Home Secretary Suella Braverman described the small boat crossings through the Channel as an invasion of the country's southern coast and suggested that "illegal immigration" was out of control.[2]

Before Braverman, his predecessor Priti Patel also made statements targeting Albanians on the issue of irregular migration. Therefore, the fact that ministers at the highest levels of the British bureaucracy made such statements increased the tension between the parties.

On the other hand, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama reacted strongly to Braverman's statements. Rama accused Braverman of stoking xenophobia and said it was insane for London to blame Albania for its immigration problems, adding that the situation was related to the UK's failed policy.[3] As can be seen, the two North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have been at odds due to irregular migration.

Along with all this, on 4 December 2022, British Immigration Secretary Robert Jenrick demanded that Albanians be banned from seeking asylum in the UK because they come from a considerably safe country.[4] These statements of the British Minister are remarkable in that they show the importance that London attaches to the problem. At this point, it can be argued that the main aim of the UK Government is to reduce the number of Albanian migrants to a minimum.

As can be understood, Albanian immigrants are the "focus" of London's migration policy. In this context, it can be claimed that the London administration, which is struggling with economic problems, is trying to divert attention from Albanian immigrants to another point. Furthermore, the Sunak government has been under intense pressure from Conservative MPs in the face of this problem. Recently, the development of the migration phenomenon in the UK through Albanians has led to reactions within the party. It is possible to evaluate Sunak's plan for Albanian immigrants within this framework.

In this context, Sunak announced on 13 December 2022 his five-point plan for the deportation of Albanian migrants by the end of 2023. According to the plan, a special unit of 400 specialists will be established to process requests from Albanians. In addition, British border guards are planned to be deployed in Albania under a new agreement with Tirana.[5]

When the five-point plan was examined, it was stated that a new, unified small-ship command would be created first, which would include the military, civilian forces, and intelligence. Second, irregular migrants will be prohibited from opening bank accounts. Third, refugees will no longer be housed in hotels, but in dormitories and military warehouses. Fourth, asylum workers will be made to understand that Albania is a safe country. Finally, at the beginning of 2023, London will introduce legislation to guarantee that people who come to the UK illegally will not be able to seek asylum in the country.[6]

As can be seen, the fact that Albanian migrants are the largest community entering the UK by 2022 has led London to take special measures. The plan of the Sunak is also a reflection of this. Moreover, Sunak's plan is likely to further increase the tension between the parties.

In conclusion, it can be said that the relations between Britain and Albania may be further strained in the context of "migration." The London administration should not be expected to change its harsh stance towards irregular migrants in general and Albanian migrants. Given all these considerations, it can be foreseen that London will aim to reduce the number of Albanian migrants entering the country through the Channel to a minimum.

[1] Flora Thompson, "Majority of Migrants Crossing Channel are Albanian-Reports", The Independent, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/priti-patel-channel-isu-albania-border-force-b2151836.html>, (Date of Accession:19.12.2022).

[2] "UK Minister Under Fire for Calling Migrants an Invasion", Associated Press, <https://apnews.com/article/british-politics-immigration-migration-europe-english-channel-6f72588f2685a1154b3eca633fe3ef66>, (Date of Accession:19.12.2022).

[3] "Albania's PM Says Britain is Becoming a 'Madhouse' as the country's Prince Leka Brands MPs 'Purely Xenophobic' After Suella Braverman Blamed Albanians for Rise in Number of Migrant Channel Crossings", Daily Mail, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11383587/Albanian-leader-puts-fast-track-removal-migrants-jeopardy-accuses-UK-bias.html>, (Date of Accession:19.12.2022).



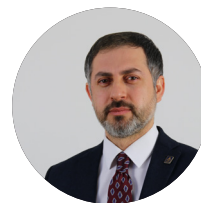
ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Potential Impact of Patriot Systems on the Ukrainian War

On December 21, 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky made his first foreign visit to Washington, D.C., following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. On the same day, the United States (US) announced a military aid package for Ukraine. With this package, the total amount of military aid provided by Wash-

ington to Kyiv will reach 21.9 billion dollars.[1]

In this context, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the following about the new military aid package of 1.8 billion dollars, in which he stated that they would provide Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine for the first time:[2]



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"We will continue to support Ukraine as much as we can so that Kyiv can continue to defend itself and be in the best position at the negotiating table when the time comes. Only Russia can end this war today. Until it does, we will stand by Ukraine."

Since the beginning of the war, Ukraine has purchased many Western air defence systems, ranging from Stringer missiles to advanced heat and radar homing systems. It is aimed to increase the defence capacity of Ukraine with these weapons. Patriots are a new phase. For the last few months, Ukrainian authorities have been requesting Patriots from the US. But for various reasons, the Washington administration and its allies did not respond positively to this request. The main advantage of these systems is the speed with which they can be made combat-ready and the ability to target several locations simultaneously.

Patriots are capable of shooting down not only aeroplanes and cruise missiles, but also ballistic missiles. Moreover, ballistic missiles have been Ukraine's biggest air defence challenge since the beginning of the war. In this sense, the ability of Patriot systems to shoot down ballistic missiles at up to 20 km will increase Kyiv's defence capacity.[3] Thus, the Patriots will replace the S-300s.

In addition, the following question comes to mind: Why is it that Ukraine has repeatedly asked for Patriot systems to be allocated to it for a long time, but the US is only now providing them? One of the reasons for this is that the US does not want the Russian Army to lose or win in the Russian-Ukrainian War, but rather to be worn down. In this sense, Ukraine's acquisition of Patriot systems would prolong the war and make it more difficult for Russia to achieve the expected victory.

Ukraine had a very strong air defence system before the war started. Over time, however, the number of S-300s and the missiles produced for them has declined. Ukraine could not produce new S-300s and could not find a country to buy them, and therefore faced serious problems. Therefore, the US Department of Defense believes that the Patriots are a "silver bullet" that will solve all of Ukraine's air defence problems. In this sense, the Patriots will complement the previous air defence capacity provided by the US to Ukraine, including NASAMS air defence systems; Hawk air defence system missiles and Stringer missiles.[4]

It is believed that the supply of Patriots to Ukraine will complicate the actions of the Russian Army. The Kremlin was therefore uncomfortable with the White House's decision. Moscow interpreted this decision as a provocation and an expansion of the US military intervention in Ukraine.

It will be recalled that in November 2022, Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia, warned the West about the Patriot issue, saying, "In such a situation, North Atlantic Treaty Organization personnel and Patriot systems will become legitimate targets of our military." [5] On December 15, 2022, Foreign Ministry of Russia Spokesperson Maria Zakharova stated that the Patriots would lead to an escalation of the conflict.[6]

It is currently envisaged that Ukraine will receive one battery of "Patriot" air defence systems. It is stated that this process may take several months. The training of Ukrainian military personnel who will use the systems is planned to take place in Germany. According to the Defense Minister of Ukraine, Ukrainian soldiers will soon be able to use the systems.

As a result, although it is difficult to say how the course of the war will progress until the Patriots are given to Ukraine, it can be argued that the balance on the ground will work in favour of the Kyiv administration after Ukraine supplies the Patriots.

[1] "США передают Украине новый пакет военной помощи на \$1,85 млрд с системой Patriot", TASS, <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/16656543>, (Date of Accession: 22.12.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Что такое системы ПВО "Пэтриот", которые США собираются передать Украине?", Delfi, <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/abroad/global/chto-takoe-sistemy-pvo-patriot-kotorye-ssha-sobirayutsya-peredat-ukraine.d?id=92088337>, (Date of Accession: 22.12.2022).

[4] "В Пентагоне допустили месяцы подготовки ВСУ к использованию ЗРК Patriot", VTB, https://www.rbc.ru/politics/22/12/2022/63a3720f9a794730b-e60cdb4?from=article_body, (Erişim Tarihi: 22.12.2022).

[5] "Песков назвал ненадежными сообщения о поставках Украине ЗРК Patriot", Kommersant, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5721200>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[6] "Война в Украине. Как комплекс "Пэтриот" облегчит жизнь Киеву и испортит настроение в Москве", BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-64050662>, (Date of Accession: 22.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Kyrgyzstan's Policy of Becoming a Center in Corridors and Reaching the Seas

Kyrgyzstan is a geographically small but geopolitically important country in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan neighbours China and has common borders with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. In addition, the country is in a geography close to South Asia. In this context, Bishkek is trying to take advantage of the recent de-

velopments in Eurasia and turn its geopolitical position into an advantage. One of Bishkek's priorities is access to the seas.

Kyrgyzstan, like other Central Asian states, is a landlocked state. Considering that most of the world trade is carried out at sea, this is a neg-



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ative situation for both Bishkek and other Central Asian capitals. Due to this, it is seen that states are trying to solve this problem by developing various relations and making agreements. For example, Tashkent plans to reach the sea through the ports of Pakistan by concluding an agreement with Islamabad.

Kyrgyzstan has also recently adopted two main policies. First, it wants to be China's gateway to the West within the scope of the Belt-Road Project. For this purpose, an agreement was signed for the construction of a 454 km long China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Line, which is planned to cost 4.5 billion dollars. Feasibility studies are already underway. In June 2023, the feasibility study will be completed, and the construction of the railway will start.[1] Thanks to this route, Kyrgyzstan will be able to use all its potential and become one of China's gateways to the West along with Kazakhstan.

Secondly, Bishkek wants the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Line to extend to Peshawar. Ulanbek Totuiaev, Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador to Pakistan, stated that the line should be extended to Peshawar through Afghanistan to improve trade relations with Pakistan.[2] This way, Kyrgyzstan will be able to reach the seas and will become an effective center on the north-south line as well as the east-west corridors. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan will gain access to Afghanistan and Pakistan market.

One of the goals of Kyrgyzstan is to present itself as a new alternative to China by reaching Afghanistan and Pakistan. Thus, the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Line will be used more actively, the geopolitical importance of the country will increase, and its gains will be maximized. In addition, Kyrgyzstan, which will reach Pakistan, will also reach the seas.

Totuiaev's statement is important in two respects. The first of these is Uzbekistan's agreement with Pakistan to implement the Trans-Afghan Corridor along the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabil-Peshawar route. Recently, it has been claimed that Tashkent will start negotiations with foreign investors in 2023 for the construction of the 765-kilometer railway line. The project, which is planned to last five years, is estimated to cost 4.6 billion dollars.[3] Totuiaev's statement during the process of Tashkent moving towards the project revealed that Bishkek did not want to be excluded from the project that would lead Central Asia to the seas through the shortest route.

Secondly, an important agreement was signed between Kyrgyzstan and AD Ports Group of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on December 15, 2022. According to the agreement, Kyrgyzstan was allocated an area of more than 300,000 square meters, i.e., about 32 hectares, in the UAE-owned Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (KEZAD), which is a free trade zone. Kyrgyzstan will be able to establish a customs zone and a logistics center on the allocated site.[4] Commenting on the agreement, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan Akylbek Japarov emphasized that Kyrgyzstan gained access to the seas.[5]

This agreement better explains why Bishkek wants to connect the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Line with the Trans-Afghan Corridor. Having reached an agreement with the UAE and gained access to the seas, Kyrgyzstan is trying to increase its gains by playing an active role in the process of reaching Peshawar. If Kyrgyzstan pursues a passive policy in terms of access to the seas, it will not be able to get the maximum benefit from both the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, the agreement with the UAE and the Pakistani market. This leads Bishkek to carry out a more effective strategy.

In conclusion, there are significant developments in Eurasia. One of the most important pillars of these developments is shaped within the framework of Central Asia and the Belt-Road Project. In this process, Kyrgyzstan wants to participate in regional projects with its multifaceted and multi-vector foreign policy and to benefit from the advantages of its geopolitical position. Regional states are taking

various initiatives and developing projects. Involvement in these projects will enable Bishkek to become a hub for corridors and reach the seas. Kyrgyzstan's agreement with the UAE shows that it attaches great importance to this. Undoubtedly, the completion and unification of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway and the Trans-Afghan Corridor will bring political, economic, and geopolitical gains to Bishkek.

[1] Navbahor Imamova, "Despite Skepticism, China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Deal Chugs Forward", Voice of America, <https://www.voanews.com/a/deguess-skepticism-china-kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-railway-deal-chugs-forward/6775799.html>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[2] "China-Central Asia Rail Project Should be Extended to Peshawar", The Express Tribune, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2391931/china-central-asia-rail-project-should-be-extended-to-peshawar>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[3] "Uzbekistan to Start Talks with Investors for Trans-Afghanistan Railway Line", AMU, <https://amu.tv/en/28680/>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[4] "Кыргызстан получает доступ к мор" — Акылбек жапаров заявил о подписании исторического соглашения", Economist, <https://economist.kg/novosti/2022/12/15/kyrgyzstan-poluchaet-dostup-morju-akylbek-zhaporov-zayavilo-podpisanii-oricheskogo-soglasheniya/>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[5] Tatyana Kudryavtseva, "Kyrgyzstan Signs Agreements with Two Arab Companies", 24 KG, https://24.kg/english/253501__Kyrgyzstan_signs_agreements_with_two_Arab_companies/, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Afghanistan Meeting in New Delhi: Factors Bringing India Closer to Central Asian States

The Taliban's domination of Afghanistan in August 2021 caused discomfort in the New Delhi administration. As a matter of fact, India's neighbor and rival Pakistan also thought that India would be the actor who lost the most

from developments in Afghanistan. For this reason, India closed its Embassy in Kabul during the said period and recalled its diplomats. However, it is observed that there has been a change in India's Afghanistan policy recently.



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Because the New Delhi administration attends meetings on Afghanistan on the one hand, and tries to start a new process in which India is at the center, on the other hand.

Currently, India is seeking an inclusive format that includes Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. To this end, New Delhi hosted the national security advisors of the Central Asian states on December 6, 2022. While the national security advisors of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan participated in the meeting; Turkmenistan was represented by the New Delhi Ambassador.[1]

In his speech during the opening of the meeting, National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval stated that terrorist activities in Afghanistan are worrying and that the United Nations (UN) members should refrain from helping terrorist organizations. Both Doval and other participants drew attention to the activities of terrorist organizations, drug trafficking and radicalization in Afghanistan. National Security Advisor of Uzbekistan Viktor Mahmudov emphasized that the isolation of Afghanistan would deepen the problems in the region, reflecting Tashkent's general approach to the Afghan Problem.[2]

The developments indicate that New Delhi is trying to act together with the Central Asian states regarding Afghanistan. There are various reasons for this. First of all, India has common concerns with the Central Asian states regarding Afghanistan. As it is known, after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan, the activities of radical terrorist organizations led to concerns about regional security. The concerns of the Central Asian states on this issue coincide with reservations of India.[3]

Terrorism is not the only thing that brings India closer to Central Asian states. At the same time, the actors are trying to act together against the possibility of increasing drug and arms smuggling. Although the Taliban has announced a ban on opium cultivation and trade in Afghanistan, it has not been able to prevent this problem. Moreover, the possibility of the weapons left by the USA during the withdrawal process from Afghanistan to fall into the hands of separatist structures also worries the actors. This creates the need for a collective approach.

Another issue that India and the states of the region agree on is the establishment of an internationally recognized state in Afghanistan. Indeed, this situation of the Taliban, which is not officially recognized by any state negatively affects aid and investments made to Afghanistan. The deepening of the economic problems in country may bring along immigration problem. Such a situation will adversely affect not only the Central Asian countries, but also India.

Currently, India wants to develop its relations with the Central Asian states in the fields of economy and energy. As a matter of fact, while the Beijing administration is trying to open up to Central Asia via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), New Delhi is trying to balance CPEC through Iran via Chabahar Port.[4] Afghanistan could also become an area of India-Central Asian cooperation here.

As a result, although the Taliban administration stated that there was no threat to the states of the region, the actors who met in New Delhi expressed that they perceived a threat from Afghanistan and emphasized the need to fight this threat through regional cooperation, including Afghanistan. However, this is not the only issue. Because Afghanistan is only one of the topics that play a critical role in the development of India-Central Asia cooperation.

[1] "تسا یعمج مادقا دنمزاین ناتسن اغفا رد یناسنا نارجب: هنام یاسآ یاهروشک یلم تینما نارواشم", Afinti, <https://www.afinti.com/202212061073>, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[2] "تسا هدننگ نارگن ناتسن اغفا رد یتسیرورت یاههکبش تیل اغف همادا: دنه", Azadiradio, <https://da.azadiradio.com/a/32164271.html>, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[3] "دناناتسن اغفا رد یتسیرورت یاههکبش تیل اغف نارگن هنام یاسآ یاهروشک و دنه", Independent, <https://l24.im/XjCh0v>, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[4] "دنه رد ناتسن اغفا ناگیاسمه یتینما تاماقم تسشن رد راهباج شقن رب دیکات", IRNA, <https://l24.im/wKzIj>, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).

[5] "دناناتسن اغفا رد یتسیرورت یاههکبش تیل اغف نارگن هنام یاسآ یاهروشک و دنه", Independent, <https://l24.im/XjCh0v>, (Date of Accession: 07.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Why does the Albanian-Serbian Conflict on the Kosovo-Serbia Line Deepens?

On 11 December 2022, the President of Serbia Alexander Vucic announced that he would request the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Kosovo Task Force (KFOR) to allow the deployment of Serbian soldiers and police to northern Kosovo, citing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1244.[1] Because, on 16 December 2022, Serbian Defense Minister Milos Vucevic stated that he formally requested KFOR to allow the return of some 1000 Serbian military personnel to Kosovo.[2]

Although this request was rejected by Washington, the recent escalation of conflicts in the north of Kosovo and Vucic's subsequent request for such a request have raised concerns on the European continent that the second war

will start between Serbs and Albanians in the Balkans.

The background of the tension between Kosovo and Serbia is that Albanians do not want to be dependent on Serbian rule. Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians are in the majority, seceded from Serbia and declared its independence in 2008 with the support of the West. However, this secession was not accepted by Serbia. Thus, the Kosovo-Serbia conflict, which destabilized the Balkans, began. The development of this conflict is shaped by three parameters: the relationship between the ethnic group and the state, the existence of a kin state, and ties with external actors.



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In addition to not being recognized by Serbia, Kosovo also faces the tendency of Kosovo Serbs to secede and unite with Serbia. Because Serbs remain a minority in the state where Albanians constitute the majority. In this context, Kosovo Serbs express that they do not want to compromise their national identity. Especially the Serbian minority gathered in Northern Mitrovica in the north of Kosovo insists on not applying the rules of the Kosovo Government and not accepting the state authority.

As a matter of fact, the beginning of the recent tension was marked by the decision to surrender Serbian license plates and IDs to receive Kosovo's national identity and license plates. This demand of the Pristina administration was considered a war against Serbs and protests started. Subsequently, with the detention of former Serbian police officer Dejan Pantic, the nationalist sentiments of Kosovo Serbs gathered in North Mitrovica, which became the center of Serbian resistance, were reinforced and they moved away from accepting state authority. Moreover, recent demonstrations have seen Kosovo Serbs trying to undermine the authority of the state. They have set up roadblocks at the borders of Leposavic, Zubin Potok and Zveçan Towns to prevent the passage of Kosovo officials, making it difficult to control Kosovo in the north.

At the same time, there are attempts to deter Kosovo Serbs who obey the rules of the state. For example, in Zubin Potok, a predominantly Serbian town, a car belonging to a Serbian citizen was burned by radical groups because it had Kosovo license plates. [3] Thus, the developments since August 2022 make it difficult to integrate Serbs and ensure Kosovo's integrity.

The fact that the Kosovo-Serbia line is a sensitive region open to the influence of external actors also affects the future of relations. As it is known, the US, which wants to establish influence in the region, has argued that Kosovo should be independent for the sake of European security. In this way, the US, acting together with the EU, played an active role in Kosovo's independence. Although the EU is divided on the issue of recognizing Kosovo's independence, today EULEX, together with KFOR, is trying to ensure state-building in Kosovo. This support from the West brings Kosovars closer to the EU and NATO in economic, political and social fields.

Russia, on the other hand, acts together with Serbia against the West and does not recognize Kosovo's independence. In fact, Russia supports not only Serbs in Serbia, but also Slavic nationalists throughout the region, with which it has close historical, religious and cultural ties. In this context, it strengthens Slavic nationalism by fueling the separatist sentiments of Kosovo Serbs. At the same time, it also wants to reinforce Serbia's anti-Western sentiments since Kosovo gained its independence with NATO support. In this way, Moscow gains Belgrade's support not only in the Balkans but also in the international community, as in the case of Serbia's fail-

ure to implement Western sanctions against Russia.

The approach of external actors to the Kosovo-Serbia tension, which started with the license plate and identity crisis and continued to deepen, has been in line with this network of relations. The Moscow administration accuses Pristina, Brussels and Washington of attempting to expel the Serbian population and Serbian social institutions from Kosovo and warns the international community that it must also respect the rights of Serbs in the region.

Moreover, it claims that the West is trying to start a civil war between Serbia and Kosovo in order to open a new front against Russia and threaten Russia.[4] The West, on the other hand, does not want an ethnic conflict between Serbia and Kosovo in terms of its regional and global interests and tries to prevent Russia from being active in the region through Serbia, which has influence over Kosovo Serbs, by exercising restraint. For this reason, the West emphasizes the need for dialogue between the parties and states that the presence of KFOR is important both in terms of protecting the rights of Kosovo Serbs and preventing Serbian forces from entering Kosovo.[5] It is also claimed that Russia wants to distract the West's attention from Ukraine by creating problems in the Balkans. [6]

As it can be understood, the Albanian-Serbian tension in the Western Balkans, which has always had a high potential for conflict, is also affected by the struggle between external actors actively involved in the conflict. Given this sensitivity and the involvement of multiple actors in the region, the impact of a possible war in the Balkans would be extremely destructive. However, with the social, political, and economic repercussions of the Ukraine War, it is thought that Europeans, in particular, will not allow a new war to start on the continent. However, the low probability of war does not mean that the conflict will end. In particular, the far-right group People's Patrols in Serbia is expected to make its presence felt more in the North of Kosovo.

In conclusion, Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008 did not solve the Albanian-Serbian ethnic conflict; on the contrary, it added a new dimension. Since then, Kosovo's struggle for recognition and against separatist Serbs has begun. Serbia's support for the Kosovo Serbs, together with Russia, created a suitable ground for the radicalization of nationalists in the north of the country. Serbia's direct aggressive policy against Kosovo is prevented by the presence of NATO and the EU, which are actively involved in the conflict. As can be seen from the parties involved, the Albanian-Serbian conflict is not only an ethnic problem but also has the potential to turn into a power struggle over ethnicity between actors with conflicting interests. In this context, it seems that external actors will need to be convinced before an Albanian-Serbian agreement is reached to normalize the conflict.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

On China's Increasing Influence in the Balkans

China's presence in the Western Balkans has been manifested in the economic dimension for many years, and the influence of the Beijing administration in the region has remained limited in this process. However, China has started to emerge as an important actor in the region in the last decade. This is, of course, one of the most important geopolitical issues

driving the European Union (EU). To increase its global influence, Beijing is becoming a key player in various sectors such as infrastructure, media, and energy in the Western Balkans, as in many regions. In addition, China's inter-institutional relations and economic influence in some Western Balkan countries appear to be growing. Beijing is also increasing its soft power



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through education and culture. On the other hand, the stagnation of the EU membership processes of the Western Balkan states and the fact that their development levels are not the same as other European countries facilitate the increase of China's influence in these countries.

The countries of the region are trying to cope with many economic and political problems, have difficulties in accessing European markets, face the issue of migration, face internal problems, and try to overcome the problem of insufficient investment. Moreover, the EU's negative attitude towards the Western Balkan states regarding membership opens space for China and similar countries.

China is advancing its relations with the countries of the Western Balkans bilaterally on the one hand and within the framework of the 16+1 with the countries of Eastern and Central Europe on the other. Although China prefers to develop its relations through diplomatic means at this point, it also communicates with non-governmental organizations, local structures and non-state institutions operating in the countries of the region.

In essence, this situation provides China with an opportunity to influence the local population and the people of the region. Yet China's growing influence is galvanizing the EU. Beijing's interests and Europe's strategic, security and economic interests conflict due to China's growing influence.

The prospect of China's growing global influence in the short and long term is driving the EU towards the Western Balkans region. The granting of candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina is one example.^[1] It is possible to foresee that such incidents may be observed more frequently in the future.

China has different policies and relations with countries in the region. There are advanced economic and political relations with some states and economic and strategic relations with others. In addition, China builds strong relationships with academia, research centers and private companies in the countries where it operates. This reveals Beijing's interest in the Western Balkans.

The ongoing war in Ukraine is deeply affecting China-Western Balkans relations. Because the war has the potential to affect regional dynamics due to both the sanctions imposed on Russia and the increasing threat from Russia. Therefore, EU countries will raise the issues of membership and candidacy more frequently to attract the states here to their side. As is well known, the relations between the countries of the region and the Union regarding EU membership have not progressed for almost a decade. However, the Ukraine war and the growing interests of China and Russia in the region are mobilizing the EU.

Serbia is China's most important ally in the Western Balkans. Even though the absence of a clear step from Europe on EU membership for nearly ten years has brought Belgrade closer to Beijing and Moscow, Serbia maintains a policy of staying in balance. However, it may be difficult to maintain this situation in the future. Because relations with Russia lead to a weakening of ties with Western countries. Therefore, there may be a process that will force Serbia to make a choice.

As is well known, Serbia has continued to maintain and expand economic, political, and social relations with China, while continuing negotiations with the EU. The development of these relations, which started with important infrastructure projects in Serbia by China, continues with ties in various fields. Chinese companies are active in many fields such as steel, tire production, energy, and renewable energy. Huawei, one of China's most important companies, has a significant research reach in the country. China's opening of the largest cultural center in the country can also be considered as an indicator of the level of bilateral cooperation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation is slightly different. China's investments in this country, which suffered greatly during and after independence in the 1990s, have been welcomed. The fact that a route for EU membership was not fully established by the European side also allowed China to increase its influence. The development of economic relations between the parties has also increased the Chinese influence in the country. One example is China's increasing presence in the country's energy sector in 2010 and beyond. Another example is the establishment of Confucius Institutes in two different cities and cooperation in the field of education.

Albania is a country with relatively weaker relations with China in the region. Yet this country had deep cooperation with China during the Cold War. However, as the population in Albania has become poorer due to communism, the Tirana administration has started looking for new investors and partners. Although China also has significant economic cooperation with Albania, due to its strategic and geopolitical interests, the Tirana government has moved closer to Western countries, especially the United States (US). Albania, which does not want to lose its place in the West, which has become even stronger after its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), therefore implements a balanced policy against China.

North Macedonia is one of the countries in the region cooperating with China. At this point, North Macedonia, which is strategically located on the southern route of the Belt and Road Project reaching Europe, could turn this feature into an advantage in its relations with China. Therefore, relations between the two countries are developing. This indicates that North Macedonia is ready to receive more investment and business interest from China.

On the other hand, Kosovo is one of the few countries not only in the Western Balkans but also worldwide where China has no economic footprint. China's condemnation of Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, which is an important issue for its ally Serbia, is a major obstacle to the development of relations. Also, the Pristina administration is not expected to improve its relations with Beijing due to its pro-Western attitude.

As a result, China's growing influence in the Western Balkans affects EU interests both positively and negatively. Negative situations have been mentioned above. Undoubtedly, in the Western Balkans, there is a complete absence of a suitable infrastructure for the admission of these non-EU member states to membership. For this reason, it can be seen as positive for the EU that China invests in infrastructure in these countries and gives loans to the countries of the region for various projects. In addition, the entry of these countries into the EU may be promising for China. Because the membership of these countries to the EU may open the door for China to further increase its influence in Europe.

[1] Anne Poncelet, "La Bosnie-Herzégovine reçoit le statut de pays candidat à l'adhésion à l'Union européenne", RTBF, <https://www.rtbf.be/article/la-bosnie-herzegovine-recoit-le-statut-de-pays-candidat-a-l-adhesion-a-l-union-europeenne-11123700>, (Date of Accession: 18.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

“The End Of The Golden Age” In The Britain-China Relations

The visit of China's President Xi Jinping to London in 2015 was described as the onset of a new “Golden Age” in the bilateral relations. While the prime ministerial election race was still going on, Rishi Sunak thought that this “Golden Age” in relations with China could be revitalized. However, after taking office Sunak realized that he can not actualize his individual thoughts about China as a “British Government Policy”. Thus, the Prime Minister declared that “Golden Age” with China ended.

One of the issues that the British Prime Minister was most criticized for was his inability to take a firm stance in relations with China. Even in the election race, Liz Truss's

hawkish attitude towards China was effective in getting ahead of her rival Sunak. When the Truss Government was overthrown, Sunak tried to follow a more cautious and balanced policy in Chinese politics. In this context, Sunak categorized China as a “systemic challenge” rather than a “threat”. Shortly after that, he said that the “Golden Age” was over.

This stance may be due to the fact that the UK actually wants to act together with the United States of America (USA) in many ways. Because Sunak has been optimistic towards China in the past. Due to this moderate aspect, it has been commented that



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the UK may differ from the USA in Chinese politics. However, when he took office, Sunak had to change his stance due to both the British state mind (pressure of intelligence and security institutions and traditional foreign policy interests) and external factors (pressure of the USA). In other words, the Prime Minister has adapted to the British foreign policy interests. Despite everything, Sunak argues that China's role in global relations should be acknowledged, it is necessary to stay away from Cold War rhetoric and to maintain engagement (dialogue) with Beijing at all times.[1] But at the same time, Sunak is trying to take a more combative stance against China as a result of pressure from radical sections in the party, some state institutions and the USA.

It would not be right to evaluate the dilemma of the British and Prime Minister Sunak's Chinese politics in a special sense, independently of the differences of opinion of the Continental Europe about China. While some European countries are trying to abate dependency on Chinese technologies and investments; others emphasize the importance of cooperating and maintaining dialogue with China. For example, after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron plans to go to Beijing next year. In short, while discussions about China continue in Europe; The UK is also affected by these changes in global politics.

Sunak sought to meet with Jinping, as did the leaders of Germany, France, and the United States, but failed. In November 2022, the British Prime Minister requested an appointment from Jinping on the sidelines of the G20 Summit; however, the Beijing administration turned down this request due to the tight schedule.

Jinping met with the leaders of major countries, as well as the Presidents of Mexico, Argentina, Senegal, the Netherlands, South Africa and Indonesia at the aforementioned summit. Despite this, he did not give Sunak an appointment due to “schedule jams”. This attitude is tantamount to underestimating, openly rejecting and criticizing Britain. The reason for this may be that the British Prime Minister could not take a clear stance in Chinese politics and turned to bloc politics with the USA. In other words, Sunak, like his predecessor Truss, tries to display a hawkish attitude towards China, and this policy is negatively received in Beijing. The biggest factor causing British-Chinese tension is the polarization in international politics. As a matter of fact, the global conjuncture also directs the relations between states. While the states (USA and Japan) that fought each other in the Second World War 70 years ago, today become allies and establish defensive alliances; Countries that were allies in

the same war (Britain and the Soviet Union-China) can be enemies to each other today. Because states have always been to “the other” since history; So they needed an enemy. In this way, they reinforced their national identity, strengthened morally and became socially interlocked.

Since the establishment of the United Nations (UN) system and the establishment of the status quo based on the sovereign equality of states, the UK has turned to cooperation with Continental Europe in order to survive; In recent years, it has started to create “new others” in order to realize its global interests.

With the BREXIT decision, it broke away from Continental Europe and turned to a more independent foreign policy, and then it started to revive the ideal of Global Britain by marginalizing Russia and China. The official declaration of China as the “other” has taken place in the recent past. In the report titled “Global Britain in the Age of Competition” published by the British Government in March 2021, the expression “China's rising power and increasing international initiatives” was used and thus China was indicated as a target. The important question here is this: While talking about the construction of the “Golden Age” in bilateral relations in 2015; How did China become the “other” in 2021?

Due to the announcement of China's Belt-Road Project in 2013 and the high amount of loans provided by the banks established to finance it, many states from Asia and Europe participated in the project until 2016. Britain was another Western power that fell into the “Chinese Dream”. Not long after this, developments such as the appointment of Donald Trump in the USA in 2017, the start of trade wars with China, and the banning of Chinese technology company Huawei from 5G networks, led the UK to follow similar steps. On the one hand, allegations that Chinese technology companies are being used for espionage and on the other hand, China's increasing military activities in the South China Sea have been the factors that led London to take a stance against Beijing.

The biggest break here is Russia's intervention in Ukraine. Britain, like the concerns of Continental Europe, thinks that China can take similar steps for Taiwan. In fact, Liz Truss, the former British Foreign Secretary, ardently advocated that the whole of Europe should support Taiwan in order not to repeat the mistake made in Ukraine. Thus, Britain's China policy became identical with that of the United States. As a result, an unofficial Anglo-Saxon alliance and the Russian-Chinese axis emerged in the international system. Continental Europe is torn between the two.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Weapons Left by the USA in Afghanistan and Increasing Attacks by Terrorist Organizations in the Region

One of the most talked about issues during the United States of America's (USA) withdrawal from Afghanistan has been why this decision was taken. While some experts argue that the USA withdrew because it was defeated, others argue that Washington withdrew abruptly in order to create a climate of confusion and crisis in the region. Looking at the regional developments in the context of these debates, it is seen that although certain stability has been

achieved in Afghanistan in particular and in South Asia in general, the attacks of terrorist organizations continue.

The most important issue fueling the debate over the USA withdrawal is the fact that the withdrawing US Army left behind weapons worth approximately 7.1 billion dollars.[1] If these weapons fall into the hands of various terrorist organizations, it has the potential to negatively



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affect both Afghanistan and the region. Indeed, the recent terrorist attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan suggest that this may be the purpose of the USA.

As a matter of fact, the fact that the weapons left behind by the USA during its withdrawal were not destroyed or transferred to the next administration in a controlled manner facilitated the armament of terrorist organizations in the region. As a matter of fact, the so-called Khorasan Province (ISKP) of the terrorist organization State of Iraq and al-Sham (Daesh) has seized some of the weapons left by the USA. Weapons include rockets, machine guns and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).[2] This means that terrorist organizations in the region have increased their attack capacity.

The terrorist organization Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is believed to be another terrorist organization that seized the weapons. On November 16, 2022, a terrorist attack took place in the Lakki Marwat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. While six Pakistani police officers lost their lives in the attack, a statement on the[3] incident is quite interesting. On November 17, 2022, the Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Moazzam Jah Ansari, commenting on the incident, claimed that terrorist organizations had attacked Pakistan after receiving weapons left behind by the USA during its withdrawal.[4] A recent statement by the terrorist organization TTP also confirms this. The organization has announced that they can carry out attacks for a long time with the weapons and ammunition they have.[5]

On the other hand, it is known that the terrorist organization ISKP has recently intensified its attacks in Afghanistan. On September 5, 2022, ISKP attacked the Russian Embassy in Kabul and on December[6] 2, 2022, ISKP targeted the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul.[7] On December 12, 2022, the terrorist organization also attacked a hotel in Kabul where Chinese citizens were staying.

The most critical detail of these attacks is its timing. During the negotiations between the Islamabad administration and the terrorist organization TTP, Daesh's so-called Islamic State Province of Pakistan (ISPP) has intensified its attacks. As it is known, ISPP was separated from ISKP in 2019 and established in Pakistan. The ISPP and the ISKP are terrorist organizations with ties. Therefore, it can be said that they serve the same purpose. The ISPP claimed 15 attacks between January and November 2022. Eight of these attacks took place between September and October 2022. These date ranges cover the period of negotiations between Pakistan and the TTP.[8]

The reason why ISPP intensified its attacks during this period is that it wanted to attract terrorists who were uncomfortable with TTP's meeting with the Pakistani government. Moreover, as a newly established terrorist organization, the ISPP has been spreading propaganda through its attacks and wants to take advantage of the unrest in the region. Lastly, ISPP appears to have played the role of a "peace-breaking actor" in the Pakistan-TTP talks.[9] Given the strong ties between the ISKP and the ISPP, it can be argued that this organization has also been using weapons left by the USA.

As can be understood, the weapons left by the USA affect not only Afghanistan but also the whole of South Asia and cause instability. In fact, Major General Ajay Chandpuria of the Indian Army has stated that the American weapons used in Afghanistan were used by terrorists trying to infiltrate the Control Line. Therefore, it can be stated that these weapons increase the attack capacity of terrorist organizations.[10]

In conclusion, the weapons left by the USA in Afghanistan fell into the hands of terrorist organizations in the region, which has led to a deepening of the threat perception of regional states. Because these terrorist organizations target the stability and security of the region by using these weapons. At this point, it can be argued that the main plan behind the USA decision to withdraw is to create this power vacuum that will plunge the region into chaos.

[1]Jeff Seldin, "Pentagon Downplays \$7B in US Military Equipment Left in Afghanistan", Voice of America, <https://www.voanews.com/a/pentagon-downplays-7-billion-in-us-military-equipment-left-in-afghanistan/6549546.html>, (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).

[2]Nolan Fahrenkopf, "Taliban, Islamic State arm Themselves with Weapons US Left Behind", The Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/taliban-islamic-state-arm-themselves-with-weapons-us-left-behind-167960>, (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).



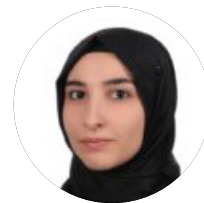
ANKASAM ANALYSIS

A UN Perspective on Counter-Terrorism in Central Asia

Central Asian countries are actors with experience in counter-terrorism. Each state in the region has a history of fighting radical groups. In the last year, terrorist activities and the freedom of action of extremist groups have increased. The countries of the region are taking some steps both within the framework of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and through bilateral cooperation. Attempts are also made on the subject within the scope of the United Nations (UN).

The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee held an open briefing on Central Asia on 20 December 2022. Special representatives of Central Asian



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countries and officials of the Anti-Terrorism Committee took part in the briefing held at the UN Headquarters. At the same time, representatives from the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and representatives from the SCO RATS Executive Board also participated.[1]

In recent years, terrorism-related attacks or incidents in the Central Asian region have attracted attention. This is due to the fact that radical groups at the regional level tend to expand their scope of action and activities. The geographical proximity of the region to the areas where terrorist activities take place is also one of the determining factors in this regard. The briefing focused on reassessing the evolution of terrorism and taking into account the current threat level. It can also be said that the meeting was an opportunity to inform the members of the committee about the measures taken by the Central Asian states against terrorism.[2]

It is stated in the published draft agenda document that the measures taken by Central Asian countries against terrorism and extremism suitable for terrorism will be included in line with the development of the terrorist threat in Central Asia and the relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. In the second session, it is planned to discuss international and regional cooperation mechanisms that aim to support the efforts of the states in the region and to promote good practices in the field of combating terrorism and violent extremism.[3] Indeed, as envisaged, these issues were emphasized at the meeting and feedback was received from the countries in the region.

In her opening remarks, Ruchira Kamboj, Permanent Ambassador of India to the UN, who chaired the meeting, underscored the Counter-Terrorism Committee's "long-standing constructive dialogue" with Central Asia, which she described as a "key partner" in international counterterrorism efforts.[4] These statements reveal the critical importance of Central Asian security for the UN.

The plan to organize an open briefing on Central Asia for the Counter-Terrorism Committee was agreed upon during the development of the Committee's approved list of annual thematic and regional briefings for 2022. It assesses the efforts of Central Asian states to strengthen their counter-terrorism capacities. At the same time, the committee identifies priority focus areas for the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate's initiatives in the region.

It can be said that the importance attached to Central Asia has increased due to the increasing extremism and the fight against terrorism at the global level. In this case, it can be said that the increase in activities directed towards the countries of the region and the efforts of local groups to expand their sphere of action are effective. The Committee's visits to the countries in the region have also increased. Two visits were made to Uzbekistan and an extensive visit was made to Kyrgyzstan. This detail is important in terms of showing the importance given to the fight against terrorism in Central Asia.

Countries in the region have also welcomed initiatives within the UN framework. Turkmenistan announced the implementation of the country's strategy for the prevention of violent extremism and counter-terrorism, as well as the "plan for the elimination of terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, extremism and extremist threats" pursuant to relevant UNSC resolutions. Tajikistan's Ambassador to the UN, Jonibek Hikmatov, also expressed support for cooperation, saying:[5]

"We believe that there is a growing need to develop innovative approaches, including modern methods, to jointly combat terrorism and the spread of extremist ideology."

It is known that the activities of local groups in the Central and South Asia region increased after the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan. The so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) of the terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has intensified its activities against Central Asian countries. ISKP engages in hostile actions against countries in dialogue with the Taliban. This includes propaganda activities. As a matter of fact, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have been made open targets and missile attacks have been

launched. The organization has serious activities against the countries in the region. Developing links with local groups also increases the threat posed by the organization to the countries in the region. It is known that radical local groups, particularly the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, have joined or pledged allegiance to DAESH. In addition, the growing sympathy of extremist individuals towards the organization should also be taken into account. Therefore, it seems essential to take measures against the rise of radicalization in the region. In this sense, this diplomatic step at the UN shows that the actors are aware of these risks.

After the Taliban came to power, there was concern that extremism and violence would spread to Central Asian countries. In addition to regional initiatives, there are also international efforts. Various reports indicate that the steps taken have yielded results. In July 2022, the UN published its fifteenth report on the scope of UN efforts to support member states against security threats. The report emphasized that significant progress has been made in Central Asia in strengthening international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation and coordination.[6]

In October 2022, an international high-level conference on "International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists" was held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. The conference aimed to prevent and detect the movement of extremists, including foreign terrorist fighters, illegal trafficking of small and light weapons, conventional munitions and explosives, nuclear and chemical means. It is also aimed at promoting international cooperation to improve border and customs controls.[7]

The aforementioned conference is part of the process on "Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism" launched in 2018. The first high-level international conference of the period, also called the "Dushanbe Process", was held in May 2018.[8]

As a result, Central Asia is seriously affected by regional developments and the Afghan conjuncture. With the increase of terrorism and security risks, efforts are being made to increase the studies and measures in this regard. Taking steps within the scope of the UN is important for diplomatic efforts. However, it does not seem possible to end the threats felt in the region in the short and medium term. However, it is also clear that international moves have yielded relative results. Moreover, the increasing importance of Central Asia in the eyes of the West is also reflected in initiatives on terrorism. Therefore, it is foreseeable that similar meetings and international conferences will be organized more frequently.

[1] "Counter-Terrorism Committee to Hold Open Briefing on Central Asia", UN, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/events/counter-terrorism-committee-hold-open-briefing-central-asia-0#:~:text=On%2020%20December%202022%2C%20the,region%20should%20not%20be%20underestimated,> (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).

[2] Aynı yer.

[3] "Open Briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on Central Asia", UN, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/files/agenda_of_the_ctc_open_briefing_on_central_asia_2022_16122022.pdf, (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).

[4] "Central Asia "Key Partner" in Global Counter-Terrorism Efforts: Ruchira Kamboj", The Print, <https://theprint.in/world/central-asia-key-partner-in-global-counter-terrorism-efforts-ruchira-kamboj/1274793/>, (Date of Accession: 21.12.2022).

[5] Ibid.

[6] "Open Briefing...", op. cit.

[7] "Opening of High-Level Conference on "International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists"", OSCE, <https://www.osce.org/countering-terrorism/529062>, (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).

[8] "High-Level Conference Stresses the Key Role of Borders Security and Cooperation to Address the Scourge of Terrorism in Central Asia and Beyond", OSCE, <https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-dushanbe/529263>, (Date of Accession: 19.12.2022).

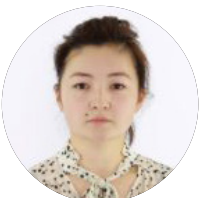


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Gerasimov's Confessions, Plans and Messages to Military Attachés

On February 24, 2022, Moscow launched a "special operation" to achieve its goals in Ukraine in a short period of time and has been fighting for more than 300 days. The nature and geography of this war have changed over time. Economic sanctions, the use of soft power, intelligence and especially information struggles have transformed the war into a hybrid war. Information sharing between the intelligence services of other regional powers and super-powers, aid to the Kiev regime and sanctions targeting Moscow have turned the Ukraine War

into a proxy war. As is well known, one of the leading figures of the Hybrid war strategy is the Chief of General Staff of Russia Valery Gerasimov. According to the Gerasimov Doctrine, in the 21st century, the boundaries between war and peace have disappeared or become blurred. Gerasimov also stated that in this doctrine, wars will be fought without officially declaring war and will go beyond the usual conventional war structure. In addition, Russia's Chief of the General Staff emphasized that the new wars will be information wars; conflicts will



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also occur in the economic, political and cyber spheres. Indeed, the war in Ukraine embodies this awe. It can even be said that Russia has achieved success in Syria, Georgia and Crimea by utilizing this doctrine. However, at this point in the Russia-Ukraine War, this doctrine is not helping the Kremlin to achieve its goals. On the contrary, Russia is failing on the ground. Therefore, Gerasimov's meeting with foreign military attachés on December 22, 2022 is very important.ⁱ

At this meeting, the Chief of the General Staff of Russia spoke about the stabilization of the situation on the contact line, the consequences of attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and the actions of Russian aviation. The issue of Western countries supplying arms and equipment to Kiev was also discussed. Gerasimov said that the "special operation" will continue until all the goals set by Russian President Vladimir Putin are achieved.ⁱⁱ

On the other hand, Moscow accused Kiev of "using terrorist methods" and "resorting to the tactics of nuclear terrorism by bombing the Zaporizhia Nuclear Power Plant". At the same time, it was emphasized that the Kinzhal hypersonic system, which was used for the first time in combat conditions, showed "high efficiency and invulnerability compared to the air defense systems deployed in Ukraine". Seeking to create the impression that things were going well, Gerasimov stated that Russian operational-tactical and military aviation flew about 150 sorties a day and destroyed more than 11,000 Ukrainian weapons and equipment.ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to mentioning that war in Ukraine, which they call "special operations", turned into hybrid and proxy warfare, Gerasimov also included foreign aid in his speech. He stated that the United States (US) and its allies provided military aid to Ukraine "to prolong the conflict", adding that the financial aid to Kiev amounted to approximately \$100 billion.^{iv} According to the Chief of the Russian General Staff, since the beginning of the operation, the West has sent more than 350 tanks, about 1,000 armored combat vehicles, some 700 artillery systems, 100 multiple rocket launchers, more than 5,300 portable air defense systems and 130,000 anti-tank weapons to Ukraine. Western countries have also supplied Ukraine with 4 airplanes and more than 30 helicopters, as well as at least 5,000 drones.

On the other hand, Gerasimov accused the USA and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of using these states as a tool to achieve their own interests in a way that would harm the security of European countries. According to him, these actions, on the one hand, increase tensions along the line of contact

with Russia and, on the other hand, reduce the level of security. In this context, Gerasimov stated that "NATO is trying to expand its influence beyond the Euro-Atlantic region."^v It is already known that one of the main reasons for Russia's declaration of war on Ukraine was NATO's expansion towards Russia's borders. Considering that it is besieged through the Black Sea geopolitics, the Moscow administration saw the war in Ukraine as a necessity to overcome the siege.

Moreover, Gerasimov also drew attention to Karabakh-centered developments. In this context, Russia's Chief of General Staff said, "The West is trying to strengthen its influence in the South Caucasus by making a fictitious preparation to solve the Karabakh conflict."^{vi}

Another issue raised by Gerasimov was statements about China, such as the demand for a multipolar world against the United States. The Chief of the General Staff of Russia stated that the United States is trying to destabilize the situation in the Asia-Pacific region by taking provocative steps against China in support of Taiwan's independence. In this context, Gerasimov stated that the cooperation between Russia and China against the USA is a natural reaction.^{vii}

Gerasimov also talked about future military exercises. In this context, the Chief of the Russian General Staff announced that the "West-2023" and the joint "Unity Shield-2023" exercises with Belarus will be held and that these exercises will be held with the participation of allied troops.^{viii}

The last issue that will be revealing about foreign policy and future moves is alliance relations. In this context, Gerasimov stated that the Ministry of Defense wishes to develop partnership and alliance relations with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and will continue to interact with the military units of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) states.^{ix}

ⁱ 'Продолжение СВО и западная помощь Киеву', TASS, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/16665549>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Japanese Defence Strategy: Adjusting to the Global Equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific?

On December 16, 2022, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the National Security Strategy created by the Japanese National Security Council was approved by the Council of Ministers.

In the document, where descriptions and determinations are made about the basic pillars of the international structure and order and the current position of Japan, it is stated that the international system has been shaken from its foundations and a new crossroads has been entered; on the other hand, Japan is emphasized to be in the most violent and complex

security environment in the post-World War II period. In the light of these current findings, the document, which states that it is of great importance to maintain and develop a free and open international order based on the rule of law, sheds light on Japan's preferences for the next period.

Looking at the document in general outline, the Tokyo administration, which considers further strengthening its alliance relations with the United States of America (USA) as a strategic step, looks at China, Russia and North Korea, which the US also considers in the category



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ry of the other and (or) enemy, from the same perspective. In this context, China is categorized as the biggest strategic threat, Russia and Russia-China rapprochement as a strong cause of concern, and North Korea as an imminent and serious threat, the document underlined that strategic diplomatic capabilities will be brought to the forefront.

The necessity of a strengthened defense architecture was also pointed out as the main condition for advancing or effectively using diplomatic capabilities. Therefore, it can be stated that Japan, which acted only with a defense approach after the Second World War, moved away from its traditional concept and evolved its defense understanding into the preventive / interventionist security understanding, which is the general acceptance of the period after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Thus, the signal was given that Japan would begin to take up arms.

This is the spirit of the official declaration and the text; Japan's determination of its strategy with a new vision by moving away from its traditional concept for the post-World War II period opens up the questions of "What does it mean for the global system, especially Asia-Pacific?" and "What kind of future awaits us?" In this analysis, evaluations are made on the questions in question.

Japan, which consists of about 7,000 islands, four of which are the main islands, and is therefore a maritime state by necessity, is a country deprived of underground riches despite its developed industry and technology. Another serious issue for Japan, which is forced to import hydrocarbon resources and minerals to make its industry sustainable, is demography. According to 2022 data, the ratio of the 0-14 age group to the general population in Japan, which has a population of 124 million, is 12.49%; 29.18% of the total population consists of the group over 65 years of age. In fact, the over-50 age group accounts for almost half of the general population. These indicators are flares of the aging problem.

When looking at the above data, on the one hand, it consists of islets, that is with geographical limitations; On the other hand, Japan, which is deprived of the underground riches it needs most in a limited geography, will also be deprived of labor in the short-term future. Therefore, the recently announced national security strategy for Japan, whose imperialist or expansionist initiatives in the Asia-Pacific and revisionist moves at the global level have been fixed by experience in the past, seems to be a necessity beyond being a situation that can be explained only by the movements in the global system and the positions of the actors.

Especially when moving on the basis of demographic data, it is observed that there is a tendency to experience serious tensions both in the world and in Japan. For example, by 2050, the populations of the countries that rank in the top 60 in the world's development scale and constitute 44% of the world's population are expected to decrease significantly. The same is also true of Japan. According to the World Bank and various international specialized organizations, Japan's population will experience a 25% decline in the 2040s. Compared to others, it is estimated that Japan will be the country that will experience the demographic crisis the most among the developed countries.

The expected demographic collapse on the one hand, and geographical fear on the other, are the two most important factors that will determine Japan's security doctrine and practices. At this point, considering that the Japanese islands, which are claimed to have a historical adventure of 30,000 years, face continuous occupations and that the official exit of the last invading USA, from this country was in 1952, it is not possible to claim that this fear is unfounded.

Considering the above data, as agreed by the overwhelming majority of experts in political and social sciences, that geographical and demographic problems will bring economic and political crises, Japanese decision-makers cannot intervene in fixed elements such as geography; however, it is not a prophecy to predict that it will take steps towards variable elements. This makes a revisionist and expansionist foreign policy option a rational choice for Japan, where it is not possible to achieve a natural increase in the population through the birth process and where the state will not tolerate immigration due to the limited area of its country.

Consequently, contrary to the experts who claim that the challenge to US hegemony in Asia-Pacific in the recent period is taking place from China; It is not too contrary to reality to claim that China cannot be a global leader due to its internal structural problems and basic dynamics, and to suggest that if a state is sought in the Asia Pacific that will influence the global trend, it will be Japan. The real question at this point is whether Japan will make this strategic breakthrough "with the United States or in spite of the United States." When analyzed through both its national security strategy and the current international conditions, it is seen that Japan will try to reach out to global trends in accordance with the spirit of alliance with the United States. However, the point that should not be forgotten is that political history does not note any permanent and eternal alliance, and that the actors strengthened by the hegemon began to reject hegemony after a while.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Kyrgyzstan's Efforts to Increase Information Security and Russia

The security of information and information environment is a factor that directly and actively affects the national security of states. Information security, which is the main component of national, regional and international security, stands out as one of the most discussed issues at the interstate level. Today, great importance is attached to ensuring information security and combating new problems and threats in this field. At the same time, attacks on critical national infrastructures are becoming increasingly complex. Because information and communication technologies; It is used more and more every day for the purpose of spreading ideas and committing cross-border crimes that violate human rights and freedoms. With the collapse of the bipolar world system, the need to ensure security and stability with new

tools has emerged. Central Asian states have faced various threats to their national security since their independence. Information security, one of them, has left behind ecology, energy and other aspects of international security and has become a part of national security.

Kyrgyzstan emerged as an independent actor in the world arena in 1991. During the independence period, the basic standards of information policy were determined in the legal framework with various regulations. This is particularly true of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan, Mass Media of July 2, 1992, Guarantees and Freedom of Access to Information dated December 5, 1997, Access to Information Held by Public Institutions and Local Authorities of December 28, 2006, Television No. 106 of June 2, 2008 and It is



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established by laws such as Radio Broadcasting. However, the textual analysis of the laws shows that none of them define the concept of “information security”.

Adoption of an additional legal framework has become necessary due to many theoretical shortcomings in the definition, components, elements and implementation mechanisms of information security. In this context, the National Security Concept was adopted on 12 June 2012. The document in question is a text that includes information security issues and defines internal and external threats.

In addition, the 2019-2023 Kyrgyzstan Information Security Concept was approved on May 3, 2019 in order to improve information security methods, evaluate threats to information security, and create an effective countermeasure system in the field of information. In this concept, it is stated that information security is one of the components of national security. In addition, it was emphasized that the protection of the national interests, vital foundations and value system of the country in question is an important need for sustainable development and the protection of individuals, society and the state.

The current stage of development of Kyrgyzstan has a direct impact on information security. At the same time, the increasing role of knowledge relations is a key component of the activities of public authorities and non-governmental organizations related to the creation, transformation and consumption of knowledge. Currently, projects and programs for the digital transformation of Kyrgyzstan are being implemented gradually at the state level.i

The role and influence of global media and communication mechanisms on the development of the economic, political and social situation in various countries of the world is gradually increasing. The radical changes that have taken place in countries with different economic and political environments in recent years point to the key role of new technologies in these processes to manage the masses, including the use of information and communication technologies. These; websites, social networks and mobile applications.

The widespread use of the Internet by the population of Kyrgyzstan also opens the door to its use to deliberately influence the domestic political situation to the detriment of the interests of the state. According to the 2018-2040 National Development Strategy approved by the Presidential Decree of Kyrgyzstan dated October 31, 2018 and numbered 221, the state aims to establish a system to ensure the cyber security of information and communication technologies and information systems, to respond to cyber threats and cyber incidents, and to will focus

on critical information security areas to prevent all kinds of extremism and terrorism.ii

However, the field of application of information technologies has a cross-border nature. Therefore, national measures to ensure information security are complemented by combined actions at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, as well as at the regional and global levels. In this context, Bishkek cooperates both bilaterally with other states and multilaterally with international organizations.

In this respect, interaction in the field of international information security is one of the priority areas of cooperation between the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), of which Kyrgyzstan is a member. As a matter of fact, systematic studies are carried out within the scope of international organizations to create a common conceptual framework and to bring together scientific approaches and practical information security fields.

On December 9, 2022, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadir Japarov and President of Russia Vladimir Putin made a joint statement on cooperation in the field of international information security. In the statement, it was stated that modern information and communication technologies are increasingly used for purposes incompatible with the goals of maintaining international peace, security and stability, and therefore, the unlawful application of these technologies poses an increasing threat to citizens, society and the state.iii

Considering the cross-border nature of information and communication technologies, the Parties believe that national measures to ensure information security should be complemented by consolidated actions at bilateral, multilateral, regional and global levels; because it states that an effective response to challenges and threats to information security requires the joint efforts of the entire international community. The agreement aims to develop common mechanisms to ensure information security and envisages the establishment of unified mechanisms to control and influence various information security situations.

In fact, this document was signed in Moscow, the capital of Russia, on February 25, 2021 and was approved by the Cogorku Kenesh in November of the same year. According to paragraph 6 of article 1 of the document, among the list of main threats to international information security is the expression “the dissemination of information harmful to the socio-political and socio-economic systems, spiritual, moral and cultural environ-



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

India in the Search for a Solution to the Afghan Issue

During the period when the United States of America (USA) and its allies were present in Afghanistan, India was one of the regional actors that increased its influence in the country. Even the building used as the Parliament of Afghanistan was built by India. In this process, New Delhi has conducted an effective public diplomacy as it sees Afghanistan as a gateway

to Central Asia. Moreover, India's aid activities and investments have been appreciated by the Afghan people. However, after the start of the second Taliban era, also called “Taliban 2.0” in August 2021, India closed its embassy in the country and distanced itself from the Taliban regime.



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New Delhi's approach was based on concerns about its national security. In this context, India had two main concerns. The first one is related to radical groups operating in Afghanistan. New Delhi thought that these groups would gain freedom of movement and feared that radicalization would spread to Indian Muslims, especially in Kashmir. It has therefore adopted an approach aimed at isolating the Taliban from the international community.

The second factor is the Taliban's close relations with Pakistan. New Delhi, which is at odds with Islamabad over the Kashmir issue, thought that Pakistan would gain strategic depth through Afghanistan. This in turn affected India's approach towards the Taliban.

Despite all these concerns, India has continued its diplomatic efforts to resolve the Afghan conflict peacefully and has sent messages on international platforms to promote an approach based on dialogue, not conflict. This constructive attitude centered on cooperation has brought about some changes in New Delhi's Afghanistan policy. Of course, the absence of developments in the context of radicalization and terrorism that would confirm India's fears in more than a year of Taliban rule also played a role in this change.

In this context, on August 12, 2022, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar announced that the Embassy of Afghanistan has started its activities and 12 diplomats other than the Ambassador have reached Kabul and started their duties.ⁱ Therefore, despite not recognizing the Taliban, the New Delhi administration has developed a constructive approach centered on cooperation and demonstrated that it attaches importance to diplomacy. As a result, India's humanitarian support to Afghanistan has increased, as has its emphasis on programs built on cooperation to keep the country from becoming isolated from the international world. In particular, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on the Trans-Afghan Corridor during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Leaders' Summit, which was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on September 15-16, 2022, demonstrated that New Delhi will work for a stable Afghanistan and prioritize cooperation projects.

As it can be understood, India has demonstrated that it believes that the Afghan Issue can be overcome through projects that will serve the interests of all states and increase mutual cooperation. This demonstrated India's prioritization of regional security, cooperation, prosperity and development.

At this moment, India appears to have accelerated its efforts to help Afghanistan develop. This is because the Taliban administration has announced that India is preparing to restart 20 projects in Afghanistan that were started in the past years but left unfinished.ⁱⁱ The statement reads, "Indian businessmen can invest in the housing sector, especially in the New Kabul City Project".ⁱⁱⁱ This indicates that the projects will not be limited to past initiatives. As a result, one could claim that India can play a critical role in Afghanistan's development and economic recovery through investments and initiatives.

Moreover, it is understood that India's constructive role in Afghanistan will not be limited to investments. Even if India does not formally recognize the Taliban, it sends the message that it has the potential to play a bridge role in the Taliban's communication with the international community through de facto relations with the Taliban. This is because, on the one hand, India is a key partner in the USA "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" and a member of QUAD, and on the other hand, it is a key actor in the SCO alongside China and Russia. It has strategic relations with Russia in particular.

In addition to all of this, India's constructive role in Afghanistan, when combined with Taliban-Pakistan relations, may indicate that the process in the Afghan conflict will not be restricted to the country in question, and may pave the way for regional cooperation. In other words, Afghanistan can also constitute an important cooperation ground for the normalization processes between Pakistan and India.

In conclusion, the new process in New Delhi's Afghanistan policy, which started with the activation of the Embassy in Kabul in August 2022, is likely to lead to developments that will serve the development of India's projects in the country and contribute to the solution of the Afghan Issue. Moreover, it can be predicted that Afghanistan-centered steps will play a constructive role in the face of regional problems, especially in India-Pakistan relations. In other words, Afghanistan could become a symbol of cooperation, rather than rivalry, between New Delhi and Islamabad. Modi's statements on the Trans-Afghan Corridor also point to this.

ⁱ "Team of Indian Diplomats Reached Embassy in Afghanistan EAM Jaishankar", The Week, <https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/national/2022/08/12/mds25-ka-jaishankar-afghanistan.html>, (Date of Accession: 02.12.2022).

ⁱⁱ "India May Restart 20 Projects in Afghanistan", News Drum, <https://newsdrum.in/international/india-may-restart-20-projects-in-afghanistan>, (Date of Accession: 02.12.2022).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

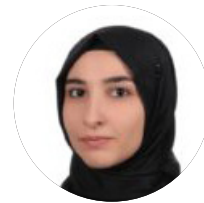


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Afghanistan–Pakistan Border Dispute and Recent Developments

The Durand Line, which was determined by the British in the past, has been a source of dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan for many years. There is no agreement between the two countries on the border line dividing the Pash-tuns. For this reason, conflicts occur from time to time. However, the Taliban has also been reacting to Pakistan's border fencing activities, citing threats to national security. Border problems therefore lead to strained relations and violent incidents.

The conflict that took place on December 11, 2022 is one of those incidents. The clashes, which left seven people dead and 30 wounded, revealed the current state of Afghanistan–Paki-stan border problems.[1] On December 15, 2022, authorities in Pakistan announced that Taliban forces had carried out a new cross-border ar-tillery bombardment against civilian targets. [2] The opening of fire near the Chaman bor-der crossing negatively affected activities and trade at the border.



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Developments on border issues are decisive in shaping both parties' policies towards one another. In fact, on December 18, 2022, Is-lamabad sent a delegation to Afghanistan to discuss the problems. However, the closure of border gates between the two countries, the developments between the terrorist organization Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamabad, and the work of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who has called for early elections against the current administration, are also reflected in the Afghanistan–Pakistan border issue.

Border disputes pit the Afghan and Pakistani governments against each other and relations between the two sides remain tense for this reason. Due to the recent clashes, the Chaman border crossing between the two countries was closed, but reopened shortly after-wards. The Chaman–Spin–Boldak border was previously closed due to similar clashes. Located approximately 120 km (74 miles) north-west of Ketta, the capital of Balochistan Province in southwest Pakistan, Chaman border crossing is one of the busiest crossing points between the two countries.[3] The fact that it cannot be kept closed for a long time reveals the density and importance of this border crossing. At the same time, it can also be said that this development sets an example for initiatives to solve problems.

The harmonious and positive course of Taliban–Pakistan relations is important not only for the parties but also for the regional balance. So, both administrations are in favor of not letting the problems escalate too much. The opening of the border crossing in a short time and Pakistan sending a delegation of mullahs to Afghanistan to discuss border conflicts are also evaluated in this context.

It seems that the religious orientation of the Taliban led Pakistan to send a delegation of mullahs. Thus, it was thought that a progress would be made towards reconciliation. It can be said that Islamabad is trying to find a solution and is trying to reconcile with the Taliban.

Afghanistan's dispute with Pakistan also led India to take a more active stance. Recognizing this, Islamabad is trying to reconcile with the Taliban. This is because the border dispute causes different disagreements between the parties.

One of these challenges can be seen in the ceasefire discussions between Islamabad and the terrorist organization TTP. The fact that TTP broke the ceasefire and continued its attacks has an impact on the border issue. This is also reflected in Taliban–Islamabad relations. Visits were made to Afghanistan to discuss the issue; however, no results were obtained. After the latest round of talks, the resumption of negotiations under the mediation of the Taliban is on the agenda. Muhammad Ali Saif, the spokesperson for the Gover-nor of Khyber Pahtunhwa, reported that negotiations resumed on 19 December 2022 following the attack on the anti-terrorism police headquarters in Bannu region.[4] Border tensions appear to be running parallel to the TTP–Islamabad negotiations.

On the other hand, there has been a recent increase in violence in Pakistan. In Balochistan province, for example, some stirrings are observed. It can also be said that the trend of violence has increased in the Khyber Pahtunhwa region. Recently, there was an attack on the Bargai Police Station. At the same time, although a renegotiation process is mentioned, the activities of TTP have increased. This situation raises concerns about the perception of security in the country.

There are estimates that attacks and terrorist activities will increase even more in the winter. In particular, it is emphasized that the western borders should be tightened, and that attacks in this region may grow.[5] As a matter of fact, the country is facing more and more serious security problems every day.

Considering that the tendency of violence in the country has increased, it is possible to say that the attacks will continue. On the other hand, the so-called Khorasan Province (ISKP) of the terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and Syria can be expected to intensify its attacks in Pakistan, given the Taliban and the actors it communicates with. Stirrings may also occur in the Balochistan region during the turmoil. Apart from certain known areas, reports of attacks or violence may also be received from other places. Therefore, it can be stated that the border problems with Afghanistan affect many areas from Pakistan's domestic politics to national security. India–Paki-stan rivalry and New Delhi's Afghanistan policy are also affected by these dynamics.

All these effects are factors that the parties are also aware of. As a result, it was suggested that dialogue and consultation would be

favoured to resolve border issues. Therefore, on December 20, 2022, the parties announced their agreement to resolve the issues through dialogues and bilateral contacts.[6]

All in all, Afghanistan-Pakistan border conflicts have an impact on many issues between the parties. However, both sides are avoiding major negativities and seek solutions. Pakistan's dispatch of a delegation to Afghanistan and the Taliban's intention to continue its role as mediator between the TTP and Islamabad indicate a mutual desire to avoid escalation. The problems faced by both administrations in domestic politics enable them to act in a more moderate manner on border disputes. However, this does not mean that border problems can be easily solved. This is because border clashes have become a routine for the parties.

[1]"Fresh Border Clashes Between Pakistan, Afghanistan's Taliban", VOA News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/fresh-border-clashes-between-pakistan-afghanistan-s-taliban-/6878079.html>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[2]"Fresh Border Clashes Between Pakistan, Afghanistan's Taliban", Voa News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/fresh-border-clashes-between-pakistan-afghanistan-s-taliban-/6878079.html>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[3]"Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Reopens After deadly Firing", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/13/pakistan-afghanistan-border-crossing-reopens-after-deadly-firing>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[4]"دش هتفرگرس زا ناغفا نابلاط تطاسو هب یناتسکاپ نابلاط کی رجت و ناتسکاپ یودرا تارکاذم", Azadi Radio, <https://da.azadiradio.com/a/32183827.html>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[5]"Pakistan May Witness Rise in Terror Attacks from Western Frontiers During Winters", The Print, <https://theprint.in/world/pakistan-may-witness-rise-in-terror-attacks-from-western-frontiers-during-winters/1272268/>, (Date of Accession: 20.12.2022).

[6]"Pakistan, Afghanistan Agree to Resolve Border Issues", Geo, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/459854-pak-afghan-authorities-agree-to-amicably-resolve-border-issues>, (Date of Accession: 21.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Seoul's Perceived Threat from Pyongyang and Seeking Security

2022, being the 74th anniversary of the establishment of North Korea, was recorded as the year that the country reached the highest threat level in the international arena. As a matter of fact, in 2022, Pyongyang increased its nuclear power more than ever before, and conducted dozens of short and long range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests. Moreover, it passed the law that declared itself as a nuclear power and caused nuclear concerns to reach the highest level with security concerns both in the Asia-Pacific region and globally.

As a matter of fact, this situation forced the Western alliance led by the United States of America (USA) to take many precautions and take moves to deter North Korea. In this respect, some exercises were held in cooperation with the USA, South Korea and Japan on the region, many harsh statements were made and Pyongyang was repeatedly condemned.

All these developments did not produce any result other than provoking North Korea more, in short, the policies of the West were ineffective. In addition, the United Nations Security Coun-



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oil (UNSC) tried to take sanction decisions against North Korea's nuclear activities, but these decisions were met with the veto of China and Russia. In short, the Western-based South Korea-Japan alliance, which was established under the leadership of the USA and the USA on the region, could not get what it wanted.

Based on those events, it can be determined that the threat posed by North Korea will not decrease in the near future, and that by 2023 it will even surpass the level of threat in 2022. As a matter of fact, current developments provide important examples to make this determination.

Firstly, on 16 December 2022, the North Korean State Official News Agency (KCNA) stated that the country was in the development phase of a new strategic weapon, that this weapon was a "high-thrust solid fuel" engine, and that this engine was under the supervision of Kim Jong Un and North Korea's Sohae Satellite. KCNA has also reported that it had been tested in a test conducted at the Launch Site. At the same time, it was stated that Pyongyang would accelerate its nuclear missile programs on the occasion of this test.[1]

Later, on December 18, 2022, the South Korean General Staff said that two medium-range ballistic missiles fired from the Tongchang-ri region of North Korea were detected. In the statement, it is stated that the missiles were fired in a high orbit and flew about 500 kilometers (km), and that South Korean and US intelligence analyzed the launch "taking into account the latest trends in North Korea's missile development".[2]

Then, on December 19, 2022, KCNA said that North Korea aimed to develop a "spy satellite" and that an important test was carried out by evaluating the process in question. Again in the same news, it was emphasized that this satellite was aimed to be completed in April 2023 if everything goes well.[3]

As it can be understood, Pyongyang does not decrease the quantity of its trials, but also increases the quality of its trials. Moreover, the country is designing new devices such as "spy satellite" and "high thrust solid fuel engine". As a matter of fact, all these give an idea that 2023 will be much more proactive for North Korea compared to 2022.

Due to both geographical conditions and geostrategic conjuncture, some states feel the danger posed by North Korea much more closely. This has pushed the states, which feel the danger more closely compared to their other stakeholders, and especially South Korea, which is one of these states, to new searches for deterring the North Korea, which it cannot deter through alliances

and exercises.

As a matter of fact, Seoul asked Beijing to increase its efforts to denuclearize Pyongyang and return it to negotiations, and said that North Korea's return to dialogue would be an important development in their "common interests". The request was made in an online meeting between South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.[4] At this point, it is quite remarkable that South Korea, which is in a Western-based alliance in the region, makes demands from China instead of the USA and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In addition, in a statement to the media, Eom Dong-hwan, Minister of the South Korean Defense Procurement Program Administration (DAPA), said that they have developed domestic weapons of war, defense and surveillance systems against North Korean threats. In addition, Eom stated that the domestic three-axis defense system, consisting of the Kill Chain preventive attack mechanism, the Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), and the Korea Major Punishment and Retaliation systems (KMPPR), is rapidly gaining importance.[5] This again means that South Korea aims to "take care of itself".

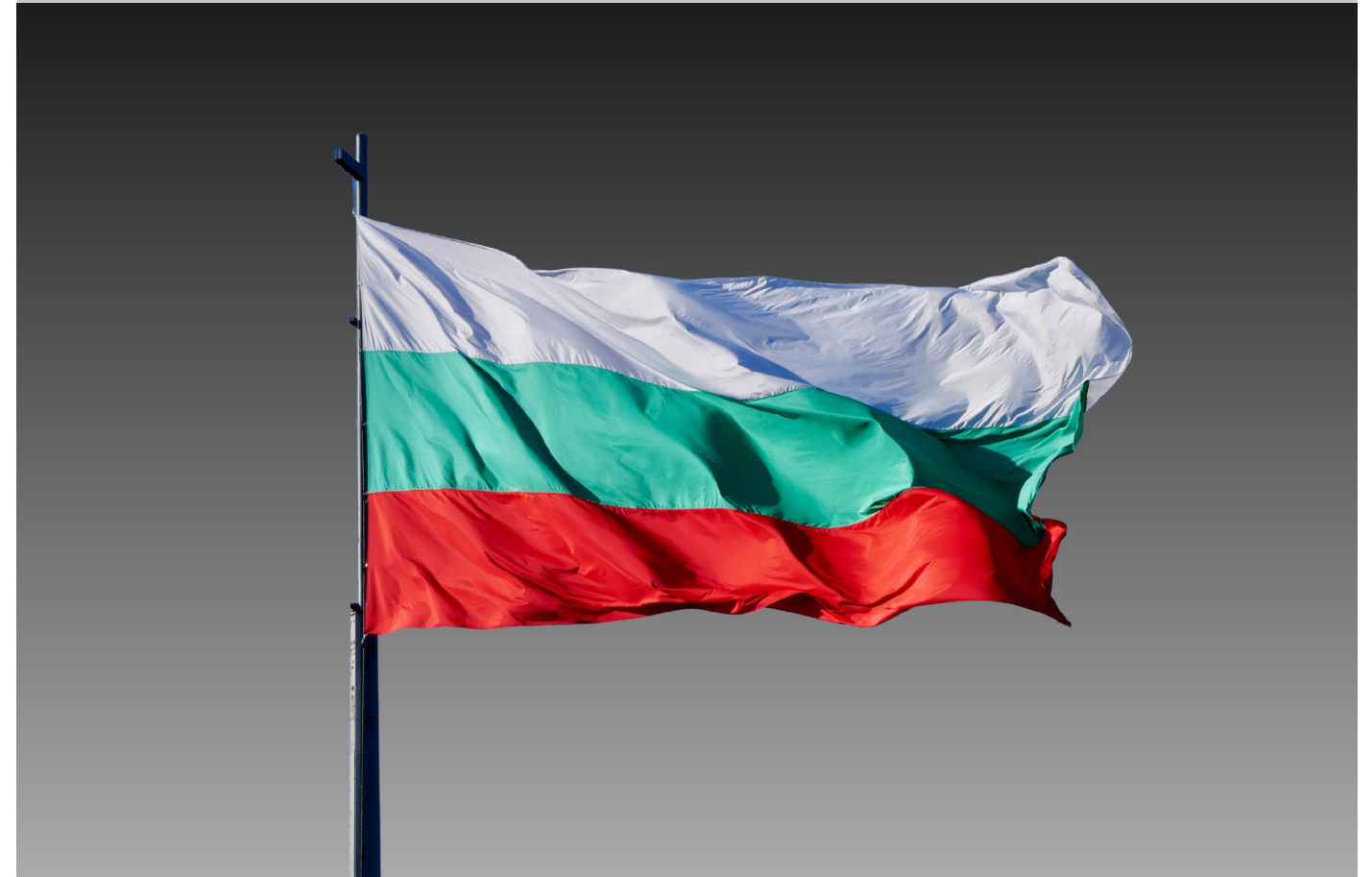
At the same time, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol asked the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to assist in denuclearization of North Korea and expressed his concerns about Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.[6]

As can be expected, South Korea is one of the countries that are disturbed by Pyongyang's actions. Because, ignoring the alliance it has established with Washington and Tokyo in the region as well as the UNSC, Seoul seeks help from China and the IAEA and tries to increase its own military capacity. As a result, Seoul seems to have focused on ensuring its own national security due to the threat it perceived from Pyongyang and positioned its national interests above its relations with the USA and the West.

[1] "North Korea Says It Tested "High-Thrust Solid-Fuel Motor", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/16/north-korea-says-it-tested-high-thrust-solid-fuel-motor>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[2] "North Korea Fires 2 Ballistic Missiles: Seoul's Military", Channel News Asia, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/north-korea-fires-2-ballistic-missiles-seouls-military-3152991>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).

[3] "North Korea Confirms "Important" Spy Satellite Test for April Launch", Channel News Asia, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/north-korea-confirms-important-spy-satellite-test-april-launch-3153841>, (Date of Accession: 23.12.2022).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Bulgaria's Changing Security Paradigm Regarding the Russia-Ukraine War

Bulgaria, one of the former Eastern Bloc countries, has been one of Russia's closest allies throughout history. In the historical process, Sofia has attracted attention as one of Moscow's most important partners, especially in the Balkans. Despite all, Bulgaria has become one of the states where Russia's relations have deteriorated significantly during the process that started with the Russia-Ukraine War on February 24, 2022.

Bulgaria and Russia have much in common in terms of history, culture and religion. Bulgaria is separating from the former Soviet satellite states with which Russia has bad relations in the current process. Namely, the Union of So-

viet Socialist Republics (USSR) did not leave in Bulgaria the painful memories it left in countries such as Poland and Hungary.

As can be understood, Bulgaria is different from many states that gained their independence within the USSR. During the period of the Russian Empire, Moscow played an important role in the independence process of Bulgaria and played an important role in the nation-consciousness of this country. Moreover, these two peoples have established a strong bond of affection between them for centuries under the influence of being Slavic and Orthodox. In this context, even after the dissolution of the USSR, close relations between the parties continued



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to a certain extent. However, the war is important in that it symbolizes a breaking point between the two countries.

Sofia has been one of the countries in the Balkans that have reacted the most to the war. So much so that with the process, the relations between the parties have become more tense than ever in history. During the tenure of former Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, Sofia participated in sanctions against Moscow, as a result of which Russia cut off natural gas supplies to Bulgaria in April 2022. This situation has left Bulgaria, which is heavily dependent on Russia for energy, in a very difficult situation.

On the other hand, the fact that Bulgaria, which has been considered one of Russia's traditional allies throughout history, has joined the sanctions against Moscow and has taken actions that expel Russian diplomats from its country is very remarkable in terms of showing Moscow's diminishing influence on Sofia.

In addition to all this, Bulgaria has displayed an image within the West that refrains from providing arms to Ukraine by pursuing a policy of balance to a certain extent. However, on November 3, 2022, the Bulgarian Parliament decided to send weapons to Ukraine. In the 240-member parliament, 175 deputies approved the aid to Kyiv, while 49 deputies opposed it.[1]

On the other hand, the positioning of the political parties in Bulgaria towards the decision taken by the parliament is extremely important. The Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) was the party that proposed to send arms to Ukraine and was thus accepted as the architect of the aid. The We Continue to Change (PP) Party, co-chaired by former Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, and its closest ally, Democratic Bulgaria (DB), have also supported the aid. In particular, the PP and DB do not agree to a coalition with GERB in any way because they are uncomfortable with the policies pursued by GERB's leader, former Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, during his Premiership. However, the fact that the three parties met on a common ground on Ukraine was a remarkable development.

On the other hand, with the decision taken by the Bulgarian Parliament on December 9, 2022, Sofia provided arms to Kyiv for the first time. However, the list of weapons remains secret. Bulgarian government officials, however, have indicated that Sofia will mainly send light weapons and ammunition.[2] Until this aid, Bulgaria was one of only two countries in the European Union (EU) that did not send weapons to Ukraine along with Hungary. Thus, Sofia, in a way, has now got rid of this label. In addition to all this, the weapons to be sent to Kyiv are symbolic rather than weapons that will change the course of the war. On the other

hand, this situation is extremely important in terms of symbolizing Bulgaria's changing security paradigm for the war.

In addition, the approval of sending arms aid to Ukraine in accordance with GERB's proposal has caused great debate in the Bulgarian Parliament. Although the aid passed overwhelmingly in parliament, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and the Revival (Vazrazhdane) party in particular reacted strongly to the decision. On December 20, 2022, BSP leader Kornelia Nineveh stated that her party would appeal to the Constitutional Court if President Rumen Radev did not veto weapons to be sent to Kyiv.[3] What these two parties have in common is that they are pro-Russian. In this context, the BSP and Revival continue their initiatives to prevent arms aid to Ukraine in the post-parliamentary process.

On the other hand, on December 23, 2022, the President of Bulgaria made the following statement:[4]

"Unfortunately, the warmongers in parliament decided on military aid to Ukraine by an overwhelming majority. Thus, they obliged the Caretaker government to conclude a contract with Ukraine for such assistance."

As can be seen, Radev is positioned against arms aid to Kyiv. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the Bulgarian President avoids the escalation of relations with Russia. In this context, it can be said that there are three fronts in Bulgaria. These are the Parliament, the Caretaker Government and the President. In Parliament, GERB, PP and DB are the parties that are the architects of arms aid to Kyiv. What all three parties have in common is that they are pro "Western." These parties advocate that Sofia act in full harmony with international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU.

On the other hand, the caretaker government in Bulgaria, which took office in August 2022, has followed a rather "neutral" policy regarding the war in Ukraine. The caretaker government was careful not to confront Moscow directly, especially until the Bulgarian Parliament decided. Moreover, the caretaker government has even held talks to supply natural gas from Russia. It can therefore be argued that the caretaker government was forced to reluctantly accept arms aid to Ukraine.

The third front is represented by the President of Bulgaria. Radev came to prominence especially because of the lack of a stable government in the country and political instabilities. In addition to all this, the President of Bulgaria is known as a former pro-Moscow soldier. Therefore, it is possible to say that Radev's refusal to accept this aid is not a surprise development.

ANKASAM IN PRESS

26 December 2022

The President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM), Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's speech titled "Regional Connectivity Through Eurasian and Global Perspective: Challenges and Way Forward" in the Symposium "Geo-Economic Dimensions of IOR-Opportunities for Region and Beyond" held by NIMA in Pakistan was shared by The News International.

29 December 2022

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

30 December 2022

The President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM), Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's speech titled "Regional Connectivity Through Eurasian and Global Perspective: Challenges and Way Forward" in the Symposium "Geo-Economic Dimensions of IOR-Opportunities for Region and Beyond" held by NIMA in Pakistan was shared by DAWN.



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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ANKASAM JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I.

