



# ANKASAM

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# Taiwan-Ukraine Discussions on the Beijing-Washington Line



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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Serbia-Kosovo Tensions and the Franco-German Plan

In 2013, the Union of Serbian Municipalities, which came to the agenda after the signing of the Brussels Agreement, constitutes an important dimension of the Kosovo Crisis. This structure, which was envisioned to be established in Kosovo, has become one of the factors shaping the current crisis. In the recent escalation of tensions between Serbia and Kosovo, the fact that the Union of Serbian Municipalities has not

yet been established has disturbed Belgrade and made Kosovo Serbs uneasy. On the other hand, actors such as the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) have recently put pressure on the Pristina administration to establish the Union of Serbian Municipalities.[1]

In 2022, after the tension between Belgrade



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and Pristina reached its peak as a result of the license plate crisis, the EU and the US intervened with their representatives sent to the region and put pressure on the parties to return to the dialogue process. At this point, just like in previous periods, an agreement came to the agenda.

In order to overcome the current tensions, a so-called Franco-German Plan was put forward, which required both Serbia and Kosovo to make certain concessions and commitments to guarantee their rights.

According to the details of the plan leaked to the press, Kosovo is requested to establish the Union of Serbian Municipalities, while Belgrade is requested to respect Kosovo's territorial integrity and remove obstacles to its integration with international institutions.

The fact that the Franco-German Plan for the establishment of the Union of Serbian Municipalities, which is one of the most controversial issues, was on the agenda and that Serbia, in particular, approached this plan positively, affected the atmosphere. Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti, on the other hand, made his position on the establishment of the Union of Serbian Municipalities clear. Kurti openly opposed the establishment of the Union of Serbian Municipalities. Kurti stated that it would be similar to the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina and would jeopardize Kosovo's territorial integrity.[2]

At this point, it is seen that the EU and the US put pressure on the Kosovo Government. In a statement, Kurti said that Kosovo was warned that the West would reduce its support for Kosovo if Kosovo was not constructive in the dialogue with Serbia.[3]

As a result of the pressure, Kurti stated that the Union of Serbian Municipalities of Kosovo could be established under certain conditions. The first of these conditions is that the structure to be established must be in accordance with the Kosovo Constitution. On the other hand, he stated that Kosovo accepted the plan in principle and underlined that this plan constituted a basis for the progress of the dialogue.[4]

When Serbia's approach to this plan is analyzed, it is seen that it adopts a more constructive attitude. It is possible to say that Serbia, which has been emphasizing its relations with Western actors, especially as a result of the balance policy it has followed in the recent period, has approached this plan more moderately.

There are several reasons behind Belgrade's approach. The first one is that Serbia wants to improve its image in the West in the current conjuncture. The country wants to become a regional power with the support of Western actors. In other words, Serbia wants to become a regional leader by getting rid of its current problems in the region.

On the other hand, it is understood that the West is supporting Serbia more than ever on the Union of Serbian Municipalities. [5] In particular, it can be argued that the West, which wants to break Russia's influence, has taken such a step to keep Serbia on its side. Therefore, Serbia wants the Union of Serbian Municipalities to be established without missing the opportunity and has recently adopted a more constructive attitude. Another reason is Serbia's integration process with the EU. Moreover, Serbia wants to get rid of its isolation in the Balkans, where the EU's room for maneuver has increased.

Although Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has approached the negotiations on the plan positively, he has faced some domestic political challenges. Vucic, who presented the details of the plan in the Serbian Parliament session on Kosovo, is facing criticism from the nationalist community, especially from the representatives of the far-right parties. In fact, "traitor" slogans were raised during and after the session.[6]

On the other hand, hundreds of citizens gathered in front of the Serbian Presidential building to protest against Vucic and this plan. The demonstrators argued that Vucic had betrayed Serbia, and chants of traitor were heard again.

All these developments in Serbia reveal the difficult situation in which the Vucic administration finds itself. Although it has a positive attitude towards the Union of Serbian Municipalities, the condition that Serbia should not prevent Kosovo's participation in international institutions forces Serbia's hand. Indeed, different segments of society argue that this plan is in the nature of "capitulation".

It can be said that Serbia is trying to leave a positive impression in foreign policy, especially in the eyes of Western actors. While some consider this plan to be a historic opportunity, Vucic seems to be trying to take advantage of the current situation and turn the developments into an advantage. It can be predicted that Vucic, who has reviewed his relations with the EU, will

continue this approach. However, it is not possible to talk about the same situation in domestic politics. Therefore, it can be predicted that debates and differences will become more evident in Serbian politics.

In this process, the Kosovo Question has become part of the rivalry between Western actors and Russia. Considering the role of the US in Kosovo's independence and Russia's allied relations with Serbia, this situation becomes even more understandable. The recent attempts by Western actors to "impose" a solution by putting pressure on the parties can also be seen in the context of this rivalry. This is because the West is trying to narrow Russia's room for maneuver in the region in the shadow of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War.

Despite the West's expectations, it can be stated that Russia will try to create difficulties by using its sphere of influence in the region.[7] This is because Serbia's rapprochement with the West disturbs Moscow. Therefore, it can be said that Russia, worried about the US influence in the region, will act in partnership with China and create difficulties in Kosovo. In fact, Russian Ambassador to Serbia Aleksandar Bocan Harchenko claimed that a "fair" solution to Kosovo cannot be reached without Russia and China.[8]

Based on this assessment, it can be argued that the plan in question is not a solution in essence. Because while the plan is imposed on the parties; it also brings along some risks. The first of these is that the structure to be created will be similar to the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, there is a possibility of "Daytonization" of Kosovo. On the other hand, it is obvious that Serbian public opinion is not in favor of making such concessions to Kosovo. In other words, even if Kosovo establishes the Union of Serbian Municipalities, Serbian recognition and the removal of obstacles to membership in international organizations are not guaranteed for Kosovo. In this sense, it can be argued that this plan, which Western actors are trying to impose, will only form the basis for the next agreement and will only postpone the problems for a while.

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[5] "Vučić: Zahtevi Evropljana i SAD za formiranje ZSO nikada nisu bili snažniji", Tanjug, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/14577/vucic-zahtevi-evropljana-i-sad-za-formiranje-zso-nikada-nisu-bili-snazniji/vest>, (Date of Accession: 18.02.2023).

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[7] Nenad Kulačin, "Može li Rusija da spriječi dogovor Beograd i Prištine?" Al Jazeera Balkans, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2023/2/5/moze-li-rusija-da-sprijeci-dogovor-beograd-i-pristine>, (Date of Accession: 18.02.2023).

[8] "Bocan-Harčenko: Rusija je podrška Beogradu-nema pravednog rešenja za KIM bez nas i Kine", Tanjug, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/13549/bocan-harcenko-rusija-je-podrska-beogradu-nema-pravednog-resenja-za-kim-bez-nas-i-kine/vest>, (Date of Accession: 18.02.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Albania's place in NATO's Ports Strategy

Located in the Western Balkans, Albania is a geopolitically important country. Because Albania's coast to the Mediterranean, the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic is an element that increases the interest in the country. Albania's Adriatic coast, in particular, serves as a gateway to the Mediterranean. In this context, Albania is an important place in terms of ensuring the connection of the Balkans with the Mediterranean. This characteristic of Albania has already led to the country becoming the first Western Balkan country to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2009. These points show that Albania has a significant place in NATO's ports strategy.

On the other hand, the Russia-Ukraine War, which started on February 24, 2022, has led to serious changes in the security architecture of Continental Europe. In this context, Albania has started to develop policies aimed at playing a more active role in NATO. In May 2022, Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama proposed the Pashaliman Naval Base to NATO. The base is known as the only Soviet Union base in the Mediterranean during the 1950s, a period when the communist administration in Albania was allied with Moscow.[1]

As can be understood, Albania follows a policy that strives to increase its importance within NATO through ports. However, Albania has an important



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place in NATO's Balkans and Adriatic strategy. At this stage, attention should be drawn to the Port of Porto Romano, located in the city of Durres in Albania. Since 2022, there have been talks between Albania and NATO on the deployment of a military base at this port.[2] Therefore, NATO is showing interest in the port in order to produce more effective policies, especially in the Adriatic.

On the other hand, on February 9, 2023, Admiral Rob Bauer, Chair of the NATO Military Committee, praised Albania for its contribution to regional and international security, especially in the context of the eastern flank of the alliance's territory. Bauer also pointed out that the Tirana administration has made vital contributions to NATO, noting that the Albanian Armed Forces have not only participated in NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) and NATO's mission in Iraq, but also sent troops to multinational battle groups in Latvia and Bulgaria.[3]

On the other hand, on February 22, 2023, Rama announced that Tirana is continuing negotiations with NATO regarding the Porto Romano Port under construction. Rama stated that most of the port will operate commercially, but NATO may use part of the port in order to strengthen Europe's security. Moreover, Rama emphasized that the Port of Porto Romano will be the largest port in the country. Finally, Rama stated that the port is a very strategic base due to Albania's geographical location and that the port could allow the deployment of troops in parts of Europe that do not currently have such access, very quickly.[4]

Another point that should be noted is related to the contribution that Albania can make to the energy security of NATO member countries. Because after the start of the war in Ukraine, energy security has become the number one agenda item in transatlantic relations. In this context, the Vlore Terminal, which is being built in Albania, may come to the fore in the context of LNG in the future.

Based on this point, "Excelerate Energy", a US-based LNG company, has signed an agreement for an LNG terminal in Vlore, in southwestern Albania, which has not yet been put into operation. Oliver Simpson, vice president of the company, stated that the LNG terminal in Vlore is of critical importance for ensuring energy security for many European countries along the route of the Southern Gas Corridor.[5] Therefore, Albania is very important for NATO member countries to ensure their energy security and diversify their resources. This could be interpreted as another reason why NATO is interested in Tirana.

In addition to all these, it is seen that Albania's integration process with the West is carried out through NATO rather than the EU. Because Tirana has not been able to make the desired progress in terms of EU membership, but in July 2022, accession negotiations between the parties to the bloc began. Given this, NATO's importance in Albania's integration with the West can be more clearly understood.

Consequently, it can be argued that Albania's importance towards NATO will increase in the future. In this context, the Tirana administration will strive to play a significant role in the alliance's strategies in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

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[3] "NATO Praises Albania for Role in Regional, European Stability", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/nato-praises-albania-for-role-in-regional-european-stability/>, (Date of Accession: 07.03.2023).

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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Taiwan-Ukraine Discussions on the Beijing-Washington Line

It is obvious that the global power struggle has gained momentum after the Russian-Ukrainian War that started on February 24, 2022. As a reflection of this situation, the Taiwan Problem has also formed the idea that hot conflict may occur in the Asia-Pacific Region, especially after the visit of the then Speaker of the United States of America (USA) House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan on August 2, 2022.

The United States, which has repaired the damage in trans-Atlantic relations by succeeding in consolidating continental Europe against Russia in the aforementioned process, is also trying to get Europe's support against China. In this sense, it can be argued that the Washington administration is trying to destabilize the traditional other, Russia, which stands out in the context of its search for multipolarity, and China, which is considered as a



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potential hegemon, by challenging the unipolar world order it built after the Cold War. In other words, while the US strengthens its relations with its allies; it also wants to limit and isolate its competitors.

It can be stated that the most important advantage of the US is the difference in methods in the relations between Moscow and Beijing with the West. Because while Russia is trying to impose its "great power" status on the West with a confrontational character; China, on the other hand, is trying to gain this status by using mutual economic dependencies with the West and especially with Europe. This is the reason why, during the Russian-Ukrainian War, Beijing did not support Moscow at the level expected by the Kremlin.

Although allegations have been made by the United States that China is providing arms to Russia, Chinese President Xi Jinping conveyed his discomfort with the prolongation of the war to Russian President Vladimir Putin during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Samarkand Leaders' Summit hosted by Uzbekistan in September 2022.[1] Since this period, actors such as Germany and France, which have been trying to balance the pressure of the United States, which wants the war to be prolonged, and who want the war to end as soon as possible, have made some demands for Beijing to mediate.

Finally, on the first anniversary of the war, China published a roadmap for achieving peace. In this road map, the most important emphasis made by Beijing was the first article to include support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. [2] It is possible to say that this article caused a serious disturbance in Moscow.

Essentially, the Chinese government's emphasis on territorial integrity can be considered as an effort at discursive coherence. Because Beijing believes that the West is acting hypocritically in its Taiwan policy in line with the "One China Principle". As a matter of fact, on March 8, 2023, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang made statements pointing out that the United States acted hypocritically on Ukraine and Taiwan issues. In this context, Qin used the following expressions in his evaluation of the subject:[3]

"The Chinese people are asking reasonable questions. Why does the U.S. talk about respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity when it comes to Ukraine and not China's sovereignty and territorial integrity when it comes to Taiwan and China? Why have they been selling weapons to Taiwan for a long time, in violation of the August 17, 1982 treaty, while demanding that China not provide arms to Russia?"

For Beijing, this emphasis on consistency is substantial. Because it is stated that the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, plans to visit Taiwan like his successor, Pelosi.[4] Therefore, it can be argued that the U.S. lured Russia into a trap by encouraging the country in question about its Western orientation in Ukraine and provoked China in order to drag China into an aggressive actor position in the Taiwan Issue. Beijing, on the other hand, expects the "One China Principle" to be respected.

Qin's statements are very important in terms of revealing that China is cautious, trying to prevent Europe from siding with the United States by drawing attention to the discursive consistency and in a sense, it is a subject not to be dragged into the status of an aggressive state by focusing on diplomacy. Therefore, China wants to offset the pressure on Taiwan by referring to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states. This search for balance seems to make Moscow feel more alone on Ukraine. Because the emphasis on territorial integrity and sovereignty indicates that at some point, China, like the collective West, sees Russia as an aggressor state.

As a result, the US wants to isolate Russia and China in order to maintain its hegemony and the unipolar world order within this framework. The war in Ukraine has met Washington's expectations for the isolation of Moscow from the world. At the point of isolation of China, Taiwan's trump card is used and the US continues to play on China's soft stomach, or in other words, to test its nerve endings. It seems that; China is also aware of the game to be established. For this reason, it exhibits an approach that emphasizes discursive consistency. For this reason, the status that China is trying to achieve in the international system as a potential hegemonic power is not confrontational; it can be predicted that it will maintain its desire to win with a cooperation-centered approach that emphasizes interdependence.



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## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# India's Growing Interest in Central Asia

At a time of changing global equations, India is deepening its relations with Eurasian actors. In particular, relations with regional and global actors such as Europe, Russia and Japan encourage India's transformation into a global actor. India, which has become one of the major economic and demographic powers in the world today, wants to increase its gains by pursuing a policy of balance rather than taking sides in various conflicts. One of the latest

examples of this is that in the conjuncture created by the Russia-Ukraine War, India attracted Western capital while receiving significant amounts of cheap energy from Russia.

Seeking to act with a global vision, India primarily wants to strengthen its relations with countries and actors in its immediate neighborhood. In addition to this idea, it can be said that re-



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gional equations and dynamics are effective in determining New Delhi’s policy. In particular, India, which has recently established contacts and held talks with the Taliban, is expanding the geographical area where it wants to deepen its relations.

In this context, Central Asia is one of the regions where India has recently intensified its relations. The relations between the Central Asian capitals and New Delhi are developing in a multidimensional framework. The most prominent topics in this process are economy, infrastructure, corridors and security.

It will be recalled that on December 19, 2021, the 3rd Meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in New Delhi. During the talks attended by the foreign ministers of six states, it was expressed that the process of utilizing the 1 billion dollar fund received in 2020 for infrastructure should be accelerated.[1] Another important development following the meeting was the announcement that the Dushanbe-Chortut Highway Project, built by India in Tajikistan, will be completed in December 2022.[2]

This situation reveals that India wants to be an important alternative in terms of infrastructure. In this process, economic relations have also played a decisive role in the relations between the parties. In addition to enabling the parties to reach new markets, India will also be able to benefit from the energy resources of Central Asia through this route.

Undoubtedly, infrastructure is also linked to corridors. Within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, China has made significant contributions to the infrastructure of the countries involved in this initiative. In this process, railways and highways are among the main areas where investments have been made. India is also participating in the construction of transportation routes. One of the objectives here is to ensure that the corridors to be realized are uninterrupted and utilized to their full potential. For this reason, New Delhi is also paying attention to various infrastructure works, especially transportation and transport, in order to implement the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). In particular, India needs to develop various projects and establish stable relations in Central Asia in order to reach Russia at the least cost and to use the INSTC to its full potential.

In addition to all these, security can be mentioned in the rapprochement process between countries. This is because the actors shaping the threat perceptions of these states are similar. Considering that states other than Turkmenistan are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), it can be said that they are concerned about similar threat sources. In particular, Afghanistan is an important source of threat for both Central Asia and India.

Various terrorist organizations are present in the region, including the so-called Khorasan Emirate (ISKP) of the terrorist organization State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Therefore, Central Asia and India have adopted a common position against radicalism, terrorism and separatism. In this context, India is trying to strengthen its relations with Central Asian states in a security-centered manner, making statements and conducting various military exercises.

On December 6, 2022, New Delhi hosted an Afghanistan-centered security and counter-terrorism meeting attended by senior security officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Ambassador of Turkmenistan.[3] Ruchira Kamboj, then India’s Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), emphasized on December 20, 2022 at a meeting of the UN Security Council’s

Counter-Terrorism Committee on Central Asia that the region is a “key partner” in global counter-terrorism efforts.[4] This shows the importance India attaches to Central Asia in terms of security both regionally and globally.

On the other hand, India has been conducting various military exercises with Central Asian states. The most notable ones are the military exercises with Kazakhstan between December 15-27, 2022 and with Uzbekistan between February 20 and March 5, 2023.[5].[6] It can be argued that these exercises are India’s way of developing a mutual win-win relationship with the Central Asian states while seeking to make these relations multidimensional.

In conclusion, India is a growing actor in world politics and economy. In order to transform into a global power, its policies are seen to spread to wider areas, starting from the nearby geography. For this reason, Central Asia is in a critical position for India. In this process, factors such as economic gains, access to Russia, gaining new markets, gaining an advantageous position in geopolitical competition and security motivate India. In addition, India sees it as a necessity to strengthen its relations with its immediate neighborhood, especially with Central Asia, in order to maintain its steady growth. Thus, improved relations between the parties will contribute to the prosperity, development, stability and security of both Central Asia and South Asia.

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[5] “Indo-Kazakhstan Joint Military Training Exercise Ends in Umroi”, The Meghalayan Bureau, <https://themeghalayan.com/indo-kazakhstan-joint-military-training-exercise-ends-in-umroi/>, (Date of Accession: 21.02.2023).

[6] “India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Drill Starts in Hills”, The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/india-uzbekistan-joint-military-drill-starts-in-hills/articleshow/98075813.cms>, (Date of Accession: 21.02.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Philippines in the USA-Japan-South Korea Triangle

The Asia-Pacific Region is a region where the fault lines of global security located and the main site of the new great competition. As a matter of fact, the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are trying to gain influence and presence in order to surround China and counter North Korea's nuclear activities. For this reason, the Western side, led by the USA, is trying to gain influence over the states of the region through joint exercises, alliances and organizations based on Western ideology.

At this point, it can be said that South Korea and Japan are the most important and consolidated allies of both the USA and NATO in the region. In this context, it can be argued that the West is trying to make new allies in the region

and to consolidate its current influence mainly through these two states. Because it is possible to say that the union on the Washington, Tokyo and Seoul lines constitutes the most proactive alliance of the region.

At this point, it can be argued that the Philippines is seen as an important ally for the West due to its Western-based structure, its geopolitical and geostrategic location, and the problems it has with Beijing over the South China Sea. As a matter of fact, the Philippines is already a state with a Western perspective. However, it can be said that Manila is trying to improve its dialogue with China by following a multi-vector foreign policy. Therefore, it can be deduced that the West wants the Philippines as an ally on its side and is trying to establish this



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through the USA-Japan-South Korea triangle. Because there are important developments related to this issue in the region.

The first is that the Philippines gave four military bases to the United States.[1] Also, Philippine National Defense Minister Carlito Galvez Jr.'s says that granting of US access to the Philippines' military bases was not intended for aggression, but only to increase its ability to defend itself against external threats. Galvez stated that they were not prepared for war, only trying to develop national defense strategies.[2]

The conflict with Beijing over the South China Sea is also effective in the said move of the Philippines. As a matter of fact, all these constitute a conjuncture that is beneficial for the USA and the West at the same time. Because Manila's current conflict is pushing it to the West. Taking advantage of this situation, Washington is trying to strengthen its influence and presence in the Asia-Pacific Region through the Philippines and at the same time try to surround China.

It can be said that military bases will disturb China and push it to make a counter move within the scope of its national security. At this point, it can be claimed that the bases in question will increase the American presence in the region, while at the same time escalating the struggle for influence.

Another important development experienced is that the US Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III visited the Philippines and South Korea on January 26, 2023 and discussed increasing their defense cooperation. At the same time, promoting regional stability is also on the agenda of these talks.[3] It can be stated that Washington is trying to use Seoul to have an impact on Manila.

Moreover, Austin had a phone call with Galvez on February 22, 2023, and the South China Sea was discussed in this meeting.[4] This shows the importance that the USA attaches to the South China Sea regarding the Philippines and that it is trying to draw Manila to its side through this issue.

On the other hand, on 17 February 2023, the delegations of South Korea and the Philippines held a meeting and it was emphasized that bilateral relations should be developed on many issues with the theme of security and defense.[5] The situation in question reveals the role played by South Korea in the West's acquisition of new allies in the region.

In this context, an example that can be examined through Japan is the meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. As a matter of fact, this meeting is also based on defense and security. At the same

time, the danger felt by China was also discussed in this meeting. It was also agreed that Japanese troops would gain greater access to Philippine territory.[6]

At this point, the emphasis on the discourse of the Chinese threat can be read as the West trying to gain influence over the Philippines through Japan. In addition, Japan follows an increasingly proactive and pro-Western foreign policy. This increases the tension between Tokyo and Beijing. Indeed, Tokyo wants to expand the anti-Chinese side. Because, on this occasion, Tokyo aims to both increase its own influence and expand the operation area of the USA and NATO.

As a result, it can be said that the Philippines attracts the attention of the West. As a matter of fact, it is clear that the West aims to increase its influence over the Philippines through the USA, South Korea and Japan, and thus to expand its presence in the Asia-Pacific.

[1] "U.S. to Boost Military Role in The Philippines in Push to Counter China", The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/01/world/asia/philippines-united-states-military-bases.html#:~:text=The%20five%20existing%20sites%20where,Air%20Base%20in%20the%20south,> (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).

[2] Expanded US Access To Philippines Bases 'Not For Aggression', Defence Chief Says" Channel News Asia, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/expanded-us-access-philippines-bases-not-aggression-defence-chief-says-3320006>, (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).

[3] "Secretary of Defense Travels to Republic of Korea, Philippines", U.S. Department of Defense, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Advisories/Advisory/Article/3279581/secretary-of-defense-travels-to-republic-of-korea-philippines/>, (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).

[4] "Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's Call With Philippine Senior Undersecretary and Officer in Charge of the Department of National Defense Carlito Galvez", U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, <https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3306224/readout-of-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iiis-call-with-philippine-senior/>, (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).

[5] "Ph, S. Korea Hold Bilateral Talks, Reaffirm Strong Partnership", Philippine News Agency, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1195579>, (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).

[6] "Japan, Philippines Agree To Sharply Boost Defense Ties", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/japan-government-philippines-lloyd-austin-ferdinand-marcos-jr-fumio-kishida-f817df7f6b0131dcff3bbccb2b103c79>, (Date of Accession: 04.03.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Seeking Solutions to the Afghan Problem: Tashkent Summit

Although more than 1.5 years have passed since the date of 31 August 2021, when the United States (USA) withdrew from Afghanistan, the Taliban administration is not recognized by any state. When we look at the attacks of the terrorist organization Devlet'ül Iraq and al-Sham (DEAS), the actions of the Penshir Movement, the economic problems and the efforts of the political opposition, it is seen that the Afghan Problem continues. Undoubtedly, the instabilities centered on Afghanistan are not limited to this country; It also affects the regional states

deeply. For this reason, the states of the region want the Afghan Problem to be resolved through peaceful means and are trying to develop a collective stance on this issue.

It is known that the states of the region who want to take a common stance come together at the level of Foreign Ministers from time to time, and from time to time at the level of Heads of Intelligence or Afghanistan Special Representatives. The last meeting held in this direction was held in Tashkent on March 7, 2023.



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In addition to the host Uzbekistan, representatives from China, Russia, Iran, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan attended the meeting.[1]

At this point, first of all, it is necessary to mention why the Tashkent administration organized such a meeting. First of all, Uzbekistan borders Afghanistan. Therefore, he is worried that radicalization and terrorism will spread to his territory, especially to the Fergana Valley. In this sense, Uzbekistan, which believes that a method that isolates the Taliban administration from the international community will increase radicalization, believes that de facto relations with the Taliban should be developed by including Afghanistan in international projects and takes steps towards this.

Uzbekistan organized the "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities Conference", convened in line with the efforts of President Shevket Mirziyoyev, before the second Taliban era began,[2] and it has revealed that it approaches the issue from the perspective of regional security and interregional cooperation. In addition, the Tashkent administration is making an effort to include Afghanistan in international cooperation and projects through the Tirmiz-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabil-Peshawar Railway Project.[3]

On the other hand, Uzbekistan also suggested the establishment of an expert committee within the United Nations (UN) to deal with the Afghan Question, in line with the suggestion of Mr. Mirziyoyev. This has revealed that Tashkent approaches regional problems on the axis of the global security architecture.

At the regional level, the Tashkent administration contributes to conference diplomacy and already organizes some meetings. In a sense, Uzbekistan carries out an effective mediation diplomacy for the solution of the Afghan Problem. In this sense, in July 2022, it hosted the meeting titled "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development", which brought together the officials of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the leaders of the Taliban, and prevented the issue from falling off the agenda of the international community.[4] Therefore, it is possible to characterize the meeting on March 7, 2023 as the continuation of the mediation diplomacy carried out within the framework of the constructive attitude of Uzbekistan.

It should be emphasized that before moving on to the content of the meeting and the messages given, it would be appropriate to address the actors' approach to the Afghan Question. First of all, it should be stated that China has a healthy dialogue with the Taliban in terms of de facto relations. As a matter of fact, the Beijing

administration, while trying to establish a presence in Afghanistan through various energy and infrastructure projects; On the other hand, it wants to expand the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is planned to be implemented under the Belt and Road Initiative, to include Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be said that the Beijing administration, like Tashkent, is trying to draw Afghanistan to the ground of international cooperation. At the same time, China, DAESH, etc. believes that terrorist organizations will gain power in a conjuncture where the authority of the Taliban disappears. For this reason, it attaches importance to cooperation with the Taliban.

Russia, on the other hand, is the main actor that has intensified its contacts with the Taliban recently. For this reason, the Moscow administration is trying to gain gains through projects in Afghanistan and sees the Taliban as an actor that can cooperate in the context of the fight against terrorism. In addition, Russia is in the desire to prevent the US from returning to the region by keeping good relations with the Taliban. Therefore, Moscow is located on a close line between Tashkent and Beijing.

Undoubtedly, Iran is one of the states most open to cooperation with the Taliban. Because Iran transferred Afghanistan's Tehran Embassy to the Taliban and a positive communication language was caught between the parties. It can be said that Iran, like Russia, has chosen to get closer to the Taliban on the axis of fighting against DAESH and anti-USA. In this sense, Tehran has a parallel approach with the other capitals mentioned.

Turkmenistan also carries out constructive diplomacy to draw Afghanistan to the ground of international cooperation through the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) Electricity Transmission Line and the Lapis-Lazuli Corridor. In this context, the priority of Ashgabat is regional security within the framework of the prevention of radicalization and the fight against terrorism. Therefore, the Ashgabat administration, which takes care to participate in such meetings that reflect the search for regional cooperation, wishes to overcome the Afghan Problem as soon as possible with humanitarian aid activities. Therefore, the approaches of Tashkent, Beijing, Moscow, Tehran and Ashgabat have great similarities.

One of the countries whose approach draws attention is Pakistan, which is among the participants of the meeting. In fact, traditionally, the Islamabad administration has developed good relations with the Taliban. During the American occupation, many Taliban leaders took refuge in Pakistan. As a matter of fact, the ideological roots of the Taliban are based on the Pakistan-based Diobendi



Madrasahs. However, cold winds have been blowing between the parties recently due to the increase in the attacks of the terrorist organization Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Pakistan and Islamabad's criticisms of the Taliban regarding the TTP. At the same time, Pakistan's rapprochement with the United States in the fight against terrorism and the use of U.S. drones flying over Afghanistan in Pakistani airspace are among the factors that escalate the tension between the parties.

However, Pakistan does not want to lose the Taliban completely. For this reason, various delegations from Pakistan go to Kabul from time to time and meet with the representatives of the Taliban. Therefore, Pakistan advocates peaceful resolution of the Afghan Question. It also contributes to diplomatic efforts towards this. The Tashkent Summit also confirms this. But at this point, there is a detail that should not be ignored. That is, he did not attend the meeting held in Moscow in the recent past on the grounds that Pakistan did not have a Special Envoy for Afghanistan. This indicates that Islamabad has begun to act cautiously in its pursuit of security-based cooperation with Russia in parallel with its rapprochement with Washington.

Tajikistan, on the other hand, is the country that is the most distant to the Taliban among the actors participating in the meeting. It supports the Panshir Movement, which is currently conducting an armed struggle against the Taliban. In this sense, although it is possible to say that the Dushanbe administration has understandable concerns in line with its national interests and threat perceptions, it can be stated that it makes it difficult for the region to develop a collective attitude with its current attitude.

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the Taliban were not invited to the meeting. This situation shows that despite the general tendency that wants to bring Afghanistan to the ground of cooperation and advocates dialogue with the Taliban, the states in the region expect the Taliban to fulfill the conditions of the international community. Already at the meeting, attention was drawn to the general demand of the international community for the establishment of an inclusive government that respects human rights in Afghanistan.[5] However, the moves that excluded the Taliban at the summit are not just the Taliban; At the same time, the reality of punishing the Afghan people was pointed out and the importance of humanitarian aid was underlined. For this reason, the Taliban officials stated that although they were not invited to the summit, all talks in the interest of Afghans were a positive step.[6]

As a result, Uzbekistan hosted this important meeting in order to contribute to the development of a constructive collective attitude centered on the cooperation of the regional states in the Afghan Question. Although there are some differences between the participating states, holding such a summit demonstrates an important search for a peaceful resolution of the issue. Although the process heralds that the actors will improve their de facto relations with the Taliban, there is no sign of recognition of the Taliban.

[1] "Uzbekistan Gathers Special Envoys of Afghanistan's Neighbors", AKI Press, [https://akipress.com/news:696851:Uzbekistan\\_gathers\\_special\\_envoys\\_of\\_Afghanistan\\_s\\_neighbors/](https://akipress.com/news:696851:Uzbekistan_gathers_special_envoys_of_Afghanistan_s_neighbors/), (Date of Accession: 08.03.2023).

[2] "Tashkent to Host Conference on Regional Connectivity", The Asia Today, <https://theasiatoday.org/news/central-asia/conference-titled-central-and-south-asia-regional-connectivity-challenges-and-opportunities-will-beheld-in-tashkent/>, (Date of Accession: 07.03.2023).

[3] Doğan Başaran, "Who is Uncomfortable with Uzbekistan's Constructive Role in Afghanistan?", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/who-is-uncomfortable-with-uzbekistans-constructive-role-in-afghanistan/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 08.03.2023).

[4] "تسا ھدربس ینام قودنص کی ھب ار ناتسن اغفا ھدش دودسم ریاخذ اکی رمآ | تفای نایاپ دنکشات تسشن", Shahrarnews, <https://l24.im/G5zSnw>, (Date of Accession: 08.03.2023).

[5] "Uzbekistan Gathers...", op.cit.

[6] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Northern Ireland Conflict

The Northern Ireland conflict first emerged in the 17th century for religious reasons. As is well known, Protestant Englishmen colonized Catholic Ireland under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell in 1653. Later on, in 1801, Ireland was incorporated into the Kingdom of Great Britain, by what is now the United Kingdom (the UK), following an unsuccessful uprising by the Irish nationalists. However, despite this merger, religious and cultural differences persisted and led to the Irish War of Independence in 1919. After the war, Ireland gained its independence in 1921 with the Anglo-Irish Treaty. However, according to the treaty, the Protestant-dominated region of Northern Ireland was left under the control of the United Kingdom.

Since the repartition of Ireland, in Northern Ireland, "separatist and unionist" factions emerged, which continue to exist to this day. The separatists are predominantly Catholics who support the reunification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland. Unionists, on the other hand, are largely composed of Protestants and are in favor of remaining in the UK.

Such polarization in Northern Ireland, soon known as the Northern Ireland Troubles, led to violence that began in the late 1960s and lasted until a ceasefire was declared between the sides in 1994. The acts of violence almost escalated into a civil war, with hot conflicts between unionist paramilitary organizations and the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

In 1998, four years after the ceasefire of 1994, separatists and unionists signed the Good Friday Agreement. The Agreement established new institutions for cooperation between the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland creating a system of shared government in Northern Ireland. Thus, European single market, which was introduced in the European Union (EU) in 1993 but could not be implemented amidst the turmoil between the sides in Northern Ireland, was brought into practice between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

As it may be recalled, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland became members of the EU concurrently in 1973. As European single market entered into force in the EU, in 1993, and became



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operational between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, after the end of the turmoil in Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland was included in this common market as a member of the United Kingdom.

Since the introduction of the common market system, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has been virtually invisible. Transit between the regions has been smooth, with no customs clearance. Many people living in Northern Ireland have been able to cross the Irish border to go to work every day, take vacations in the summer and visit relatives on special occasions. However, with the Brexit process that started in 2020, the UK's departure from the EU, and thus from European single market, raised the issue of how the borders between two Ireland should be managed. Hence, the most challenging dispute of the Brexit process.

Leading up to Brexit, the issue was addressed for the first time by the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Theresa May. According to the "Irish Backstop" submitted to parliament in 2019: if, at the end of the transition phase of Brexit, no agreement is reached on how the process in Northern Ireland will be managed, European single market legislation will remain in force until an agreement is finalized. The British Parliament rejected the bill three times and no consensus was reached.[1] Indeed, this process led to May's resignation.

Following May's resignation, Boris Johnson became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and drafted the Northern Ireland Protocol, which paved the way for the approval of the Brexit Agreement in 2020.[2] The Northern Ireland Protocol is designed to achieve the main objective of Brexit –the UK's departure from the European single market- while respecting the exceptionalism of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and the practices arising from it.

After leaving the EU, the UK will be a third country subject to customs controls in its trade with the EU. However, the border between the two Irish regions must remain open. A customs mechanism between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom therefore needs to be put in place. The protocol requires all goods entering or likely to enter Northern Ireland to comply with the EU customs protocols. Goods that do not fulfill this requirement will not be subject to the corresponding customs protocols. Thus, the UK will be able to successfully exit the European single market.

The 2020 Northern Ireland Protocol is also coherent with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. While the Good Friday Agreement does not include a clause to keep the border between Northern Ireland

and the Republic of Ireland open, the spirit of the agreement envisages strengthening ties between separatists and unionists in Northern Ireland. Therefore, closing the border would be contrary to this very spirit.

On the other hand, the draft legislation (Northern Ireland Protocol Bill) presented by Johnson in 2022, to amend the terms of the Protocol, created tensions between London and Brussels.[3] The draft provides for a dual regulatory regime allowing Northern Irish businesses to comply with either UK or EU standards for goods purchased in the UK and imported into Northern Ireland. Thus, there would be no need to establish a control mechanism to check whether goods coming from the UK into Northern Ireland cross the Irish border. However, Northern Ireland businesses strongly opposed the legislation, objecting that it would force them to opt between the UK and the EU. The EU, in turn, stated that the agreement was contrary to international law and urged Johnson to return to the Northern Ireland Protocol drafted in 2020.

Subsequently, in late 2022, Rishi Sunak became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and a new resolution process began. On February 27, 2023, the UK Government announced its decision to halt the progress of the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill in the UK Parliament and its intention to allow it to lapse at the end of the current session. [4] This was followed on the same day by the announcement of the Windsor Framework, which sets out the customs regime for Northern Ireland under Brexit.[5]

Under the Windsor Framework, two lanes will be created for goods entering the Northern Ireland borders from the UK. Green lane for goods that remain in Northern Ireland and red lane for goods that can be shipped to the EU, i.e. the Republic of Ireland. Control mechanisms and paperwork will be removed for products passing through the green lane. Products passing through the red lane will continue to be subject to control. This is intended to end the control mechanisms set out in the Northern Ireland Protocol, which in practice cover all goods that may enter the Republic of Ireland through Northern Ireland.

In addition, the Windsor Framework will introduce the "Stormont Brake", whereby the Northern Ireland Assembly, which makes the laws in Northern Ireland, will be able to object to new EU rules, particularly in relation to the single market. However, such an objection shall not be available for "trivial reasons", but shall be reserved only for "significantly different rules." [6]

Opposition parties in the UK have announced that they will endorse Sunak's bill. It is therefore considered virtually certain that the bill be adopted.[7] Yet the reaction of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Northern Ireland's largest unionist party, to the bill



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Expectations of the West from India and China

Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of Germany, visited India on February 25, 2023, met with his counterpart Narendra Modi and discussed various issues. The most important of these issues was the political solution to the Russia-Ukraine War. [1] Germany wants India to use its influence over Russia to end the war in Ukraine. In the past months, Scholz has made similar calls to China. Both India and China are considered to be the most prominent actors that can pre-

vent Russia from this war. After meeting with Scholz, Modi called for dialogue to end the Russia-Ukraine War and said that New Delhi was ready to contribute to the peace processes to be carried out.[2] While China has recently published an opinion document on the resolution of the Ukraine Crisis; India has also stepped up its contacts to achieve a ceasefire.



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As it will be remembered, in December 2022, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky had a phone call with Modi and asked him for help in the implementation of the 10-point peace plan.[3] Ukraine's expectation is that Modi will get this peace plan to be accepted by Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Whether it is under the mediation of India or China, it does not seem possible for Ukraine's 10-point peace plan to be accepted by Russia. For this reason, it is difficult to resolve the war through diplomacy under the current conditions. The conjuncture indicates that the war will continue for a while. India is deeply affected by this crisis. However, Modi does not have enough influence and credit to put pressure on Putin and change his decisions. Despite this, Ukraine expects India, which holds the G20 Presidency, to direct the international community by using this power.

Having made a phone call with Modi once again on January 23, 2023, Zelensky said that he counted on India's help in the implementation of the "peace formula".[4] Modi, on the other hand, reiterated his call for an "immediate cessation of hostilities" and a "return to dialogue and diplomacy". As New Delhi prepares to host the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting; One of the most significant agenda items is ending the war in Ukraine.

Ukraine asks China as well as India to mediate for peace. Indeed, Zelensky announced that he plans to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss the details of Beijing's peace plan.[5] The Ukrainian leader said he would like to believe that "China wants a just peace" and "will not give arms to Russia".[6]

The Beijing government also demanded that "the sovereignty of all countries be respected" in the peace plan it published. In other words, Beijing has emphasized that it defends the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Zelensky also said that this proposal is a sign that China is seeking peace. Nevertheless, he is not sure about it. This is because, as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi used during his last visit to Moscow, the relationship between China and Russia is as steady as a rock.[7]

It should be pointed out; significant differences began to emerge in the perspectives of India and China on Russia. For example, at a meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors under India's G20 Presidency on 26, 2023, a joint statement condemning Russia's war in Ukraine could not be published due to China's objections.[8] A similar situation was experienced at the G20 Leaders' Summit held in Bali, Indonesia in November 2022. At that time, China and Russia made reservations about the article condemning the war in Ukraine. At the last summit, India said in a statement that "despite the fact that most of the members condemned the war in Ukraine, there was no consensus on this issue".[9]

The notable thing is that by using the advantage of being in the G20 Presidency of India, he made attempts to reach a consensus so that the articles about the condemnation of the war in Ukraine should be included in the final declaration. In other words, India, aside from making reservations about this article, led the way for the adoption of the resolution. Therefore, New Delhi has difficulty understanding Moscow's national interests and reasons for war. Beijing, on the other hand, states that Moscow has legitimate security concerns. In this regard, the positions of India and China in Russia are different.

Although the G20 is an economic organization, Western powers are trying to use this structure for their political purposes and are pressing for India to strongly condemn Russia. As a justification for this, the mentioned economic organization claims that the war in Ukraine caused great damage to the global economy.

India, on the other hand, plays a role in the politicization of the G20 as required by its national interests. This is why New Delhi is in competition with Beijing. The aforementioned country also sees the Presidency of G20 as an opportunity to voice its own security concerns. In a nutshell, India and China are far from meeting the expectations of the West regarding the war in Ukraine. As can be understood, India and China maintain positive relations with Russia, even though they wish to end the war in Ukraine.

When the situation of the two countries is compared, it is possible to say that India's stance on the Ukraine Crisis is more uncertain. This is because China has published an opinion document on this issue. However, India's opinions on this issue are limited only by Modi's words that he is "against the war". Other than that, New Delhi doesn't seem to have any solution plans. That's why Zelensky shares his 10-point peace plans with his counterpart Modi.

[1] "Scholz Heads to India to Deepen Ties on Green Energy, Defense", Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-02-25/scholz-heads-to-india-to-deepen-ties-on-green-energy-defense#xj4y7vzkg>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[2] "India Calls for Dialogue to End Russia-Ukraine War", Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/india-calls-for-dialogue-to-end-russia-ukraine-war/2831190>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[3] "Ukraine President Zelensky Urges PM Modi To Implement His 10-Point 'Peace Formula' As G20 Host", ABP Live, <https://news.abplive.com/news/india/russia-ukraine-war-ukraine-president-zelenskyy-putin-pm-modi-10-point-peace-formula-g-20-summit-1571958>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[4] "Ukraine's Zelensky Seeks Indian Prime Minister Modi's Help with Peace Plan", CNN, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/26/india/india-modi-zelensky-phone-call-peace-intl-hnk>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[5] "Ukraine War: Zelensky Wants Xi Jinping Meeting Following China's Peace Plan", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64762219>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[6] "Zelenskiy Open to China's Peace Plan but Rejects Compromise With 'Sick' Putin", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/24/zelenskiy-open-to-chinas-peace-plan-but-rejects-compromise-with-sick-putin>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[7] "China And Russia Won't Be Swayed By Others, Beijing's Top Diplomat Tells Putin", SCMP, <https://bit.ly/3XQqLYM>, (Date of Accession: 28.02.2023).

[8] "No G20 Joint Statement as China Refuses to Condemn Russia's War In Ukraine", RFI, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20230226-no-g20-joint-statement-as-china-refuses-to-condemn-russia-s-war-in-ukraine>, (Date of Accession: 25.02.2023).

[9] Ibid.





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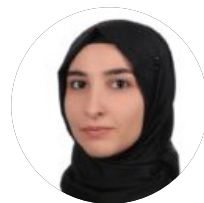
# Russia's Equation for Afghanistan Without Central Asia: The Five Format Proposal

In addition to being focused on the Ukraine War, Russia does not remain indifferent to regional developments and also makes various initiatives in the Asian geography. Especially within the scope of Afghanistan policy, Moscow has been taking an active stance recently. Undoubtedly, the instability of security and stability that emerged after the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from the region also affects Moscow. In this sense, Russia, which continues its dialogue with the Taliban, draws attention with the meetings it hosts.

The last move from the Moscow flank; it is a proposal to create a "Five Format" for the Afghan Question. On February 12, 2023, Russia's Special Envoy to Afghanistan and Director of the Second Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Zamir Kabulov, the situation in Afghanistan; he proposed the creation of a "Five Format" to solve it with the participation of Russia, China, Iran, India and Pakistan.[1] On February 14, 2023, it was reported that India warmly welcomed the proposal in question. Denis Alipov, the Russian Ambassador to New Delhi, made a statement that India wishes to cooperate closely with Russia in the solution of the Afghan Problem.[2]

Kabulov's proposal brought to mind the formation of the Moscow Format, which included Russia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to support the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan in 2017. While such a platform already exists; Moscow's proposal for a new "Five Format" reveals



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that Central Asian countries are wanted to be excluded. Russia's diplomatic initiatives and the formats it creates contain clues about its relations with the regional states as well as its Afghanistan policy. Afghanistan also took part in the Moscow Format, where the first negotiations were held in 2017. Afghanistan was not invited to the meeting on 16 November 2022.

When the absence of the Taliban administration at the meeting is evaluated within the framework of regional developments, it can be said that Moscow played a shaping role in the relations between the Central Asian countries and the Taliban. Thus, it can be expressed that in addition to providing a balance between them, it also aims to be a determinant on the policies of the Taliban. At the same time, the Taliban-West/USA connection can be considered as a factor affecting Russia's attitude. All these factors are decisive in the final decision on whether the Taliban should attend the meetings or not.

On the other hand, the Moscow Format, as it includes actors from the Asian geography, also gives the appearance of a quest that aims to shape the future of Afghanistan under the leadership of Russia and acts against the West. Considering the recent mobility of Central Asian countries in the international arena, the reasons why these countries are not included in the Five Format can be understood. Recently, reform processes have come to the fore in the countries of the region. At the same time Russia-Ukraine War, Europe's interest in the region intensified and Central Asia-West relations, especially energy, seem to have gained a new momentum. For this reason, Russia may have proposed the formation of an Asian countries that does not include Central Asian countries.

With this new format proposed by Moscow, it is expected that the tense relationship dynamic on the India-Pakistan line will not affect the partnership on Afghanistan. The two neighboring states are in competition in the Afghanistan equation, as in many other areas. Moscow's relations with both actors tend to expand and deepen. In the current situation, there are also signs of New Delhi's positive approach to the Five Format. Russia, on the other hand, is in an effort to bring the two rival countries together in the context of security and defense policies. Therefore, the Moscow administration is making statements that extremist groups pose great threat to the stability of the region.[3]

While Russia underlined the necessity of the Five Format with these explanations; it can also be said that the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) gives the message of what an important role it plays. At this point, the influence and attacks of the so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) of the terrorist organi-

zation Devlet al-Iraq and al-Sham (DEAS) have increased in the region. There are UN reports that certain countries were targeted by the terrorist organization and that preparations for an attack were made.

Russia, on the other hand, blames the USA for the increase in the effectiveness of DEAS. It is stated that the Five Format will also be beneficial in dealing with the Afghan Problem comprehensively, especially in terms of security and defense. Thus, the Kremlin may have wanted to send a strong message to the Central Asian countries about the effectiveness of the CSTO and its credibility.

Russia's goal of bringing India, Pakistan, Iran and China together serves the purpose of limiting the USA's region policies. Thus, it can be said that the Washington administration is trying to establish a regional togetherness that will reduce its influence in the region.

India, Pakistan and China have a decisive role as countries that tend to develop their relations and establish dialogue with the Taliban. Moscow is also trying to make this situation suitable for its own interests with a cooperation platform. It can be said that Kabulov's visits to Pakistan and Afghanistan in January 2023 had the same purpose and were in the nature of test the water.

As it is known, Iran and Pakistan have been taking important steps towards developing bilateral relations recently. On the other hand, Beijing has close relations with both Islamabad and Moscow. India and Pakistan are in the same environment within the scope of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. However, although it is thought that India's stance will be positive, Pakistan attended the National Security Advisors Meeting held in Moscow on February 8, 2023. Therefore, it can be said that it has revealed its stance on this issue. As a result, it is a matter of curiosity how the order that Moscow is trying to create will respond. Also it can be predicted that the reaction of the USA will be one of the determining factors.

[1] "Moscow Seeks to form Regional Group of Nations to Influence Kabul", Tolo News, <https://tolonews.com/node/182043>, (Date of Accession: 15.02.2023).

[2] "India Seeks Close Interaction with Russia on Afghanistan-Russian Ambassador", TASS, <https://tass.com/politics/1576405>, (Date of Accession: 15.02.2023).

[3] "Taliban Refute Russia's Terror Charges Against Afghanistan", Voice of America, <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-refute-russia-s-terror-charges-against-afghanistan/6963968.html>, (Date of Accession: 15.02.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# NATO's New Force Model

At the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit held in Madrid on 28-30 June 2022, the Heads of State and Government of the member states agreed that the new Strategic Concept[1] In addition to its acceptance, it also took decisions on other important issues for the future of the organization. One of these decisions from the summit statement[2] is the "New Force Model" in Article 9.[3] 2023 has been set as the target date for the implementation of the New Force Model, which will replace the NATO Response Force (NRF), which was adopted at the Prague Summit in 2002 and entered into force

in 2003 and aims to connect the forces at high readiness level with a common rotation plan.

The current NRF consists of a multinational joint force that can respond to any security problem in a very short time, from crisis management to collective defense. The structure of the NRF has been strengthened with the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which has been revised so that it can respond more quickly to changes in the security environment, with the decision taken at the 2014 Wales Summit.



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The NRF, consisting of land, sea, air and special forces components that the Alliance can deploy rapidly wherever it is needed, and consisting of approximately 40 thousand soldiers with a 15-day preparation period, was activated for the first time for the role of deterrence and defense after the Russia-Ukraine War, VJTF elements, NATO's eastern deployed in designated areas. Not only in responding to crises; NRF elements, which can also be deployed in disasters, were previously activated to support the evacuation of Afghans and their families working with NATO after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021.

It is envisaged that the new NATO Force Model will provide the opportunity to intervene on a much larger scale and at a higher level of readiness than the NRF, which is envisaged to replace it. It is aimed to create a larger talent pool with the New NATO Force Model, which will consist of highly prepared forces in the land, sea, air and cyber fields to be assigned to predetermined plans for the defense of the Alliance. According to the plan, which will enable NATO to respond to any unexpected situation in a very short time and allies to allocate more forces to NATO, over 100,000 in a 10-day period in the first phase, approximately 200,000 in a 10-30 day period in the second phase, and 30 in the third phase. It is planned to create a force of at least 500,000 people in a 180-day period.[4]

When asked at the press conference after the Military Committee Meeting in January 2023 about the latest situation regarding NATO's New Force Model, which is still under development with alliance member country proposals, General Christopher Cavoli, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces Europe (SACEUR), said: He gave a political answer that the member states will decide on the force model to be determined after it has been examined in a rigorous military logic. In addition, Cavoli emphasized the importance of determining the magnitude of the threat against which NATO forces will be deployed and determining what capability and how much is needed to carry out a plan.

It is thought that the core of the model, which is thought to be prepared based on the idea that this should be done with the forces in Europe, instead of waiting for reinforcements from across the Atlantic for a reaction in the event of a tension in the European continent, will be formed from the European alliance members.[5]

In this context, the subject is discussed with the Strategic Compass, which was approved by the EU Council and entered into force one month after the start of the Russia-Ukraine War on 21 March 2022 and aims at the strategic autonomy of the EU in the field of defense and security[6] should be considered together. For example, the Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5000 people, which is expected to be fully operational by 2025 after completing its preparations with the exercises to be held in the Strategic Compass, and in a way corresponds to the VJTF in NATO, was adapted to the New Force Model needs in terms of both quantity and quality, and the necessary command-control its integration into the New Force Model can be considered as an alternative.

The EU is not an alternative to NATO in the field of defense; With NATO's New Force Model, which is thought to ensure the functionalization of the Strategic Compass, which is often emphasized as complementary It is thought that it can be pre-deployed alternately on the eastern flank of.[7] In a sense, this means that the alliance will be able to respond in a very short time in the face of any possibility that may arise by realizing the principle of "deterrence, which is stated to be provided on land, sea and air with combat ready elements" specified in Article 21 of NATO's new Strategic Concept. Therefore, a large and permanent military presence, supported by the advance deployment of equipment and the strategic deployment of combat forces, comes to the fore as part of the new NATO Force Model.

In the report, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO-PA) evaluated the effects of the new Strategic Concept on the alliance's strategy for the foreseeable future and offered ideas for implementing the strategic decisions of the Madrid Summit,[8] there are also statements about the New Force Model. In these statements, it is summarized that all European allies should ensure that adequate resources are allocated for the new Force Model and that with the implementation of the model, the alliance will be able to operate from all directions and from all areas (multidomain-land-air-sea-cyber-space)[9] stated that it will significantly increase its ability to respond to incoming threats.



To open a parenthesis regarding the “adequate resource allocation” among the proposals in the report, the share of the national budget allocated to defense, which NATO member countries have committed to comply with, is below 2%<sup>[10]</sup> will need to take action on the issue, as in the case of Germany.

As it can be understood, NATO's New Force Model differs from the existing NRF in terms of both scale and preparation times and the elements to be used (such as cyber) and that especially the countries that are members of both organizations can be extremely meticulous in agreeing on the model with the fear of duplication and It is considered that it may not reach the targeted year 2023 to give the model its final shape. It is considered that the issue will be among the important issues that will be on the agenda, such as the membership of Finland and Sweden, at the NATO Summit to be held in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, on 11-12 July 2023.

Despite all these goals, the numbers envisaged in the New Force Model seem too ambitious. Even in the case of Finland and Sweden's membership, it will not be easy to gather more than 100,000 soldiers in the 10-day period in the first stage, and around 200,000 in the 10-30-day period in the second stage. The deployment of some of the soldiers to Finland, which is bordering Russia in case of membership, after the reinforcement of NATO's eastern wing, with some of the foreseen number of soldiers, indicates a risky situation in terms of a possible hot conflict between Russia and NATO in the future.

On the other hand, while the USA, which prioritizes the Pacific, leaves the defense of Europe to the Europeans; It seems inevitable that doubts regarding the sustainability of the command and control of the New Force Model without the USA will come to the fore.

[1] “NATO 2022 Strategic Concept”, NATO, <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/>, (Date of Accession:08.03.2023).

[2] “Madrid Summit Declaration”, NATO, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_196951.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm), (Date of Accession:08.03.2023).

[3] “New NATO Force Model”, NATO, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220629-infographic-new-nato-force-model.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220629-infographic-new-nato-force-model.pdf), (Date of Accession:08.03.2023).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Sven Biscop, EGMONT Policy Brief, [https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2022/09/Sven-Biscop\\_PolicyBrief285\\_vFinal.pdf?type=pdf](https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2022/09/Sven-Biscop_PolicyBrief285_vFinal.pdf?type=pdf), (Date of Accession:08.03.2023).

[6] “A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence”, EU, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic\\_compass\\_en3\\_web.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf), (Date of Accession:10.03.2023).

[7] Biscop, op.cit.

[8] “Political Committee (PC) General Report”, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, <https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=/sites/default/files/2022-12/020%20PC%2022%20E%20rev.2%20fin%20-%20NEW%20STRATEGIC%20CONCEPT%20-%20VALASEK%20REPORT.pdf>, (Date of Accession:09.03.2023).

[9] Mehmet Fatih Ceylan, NATO Geçmiş, Günceli, Geleceği, Orion Kitabevi, Ankara 2022, p.167.

[10] “Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022)”, NATO, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220627-def-exp-2022-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220627-def-exp-2022-en.pdf), (Date of Accession:09.03.2023).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Deepening Relations in the GCA-Greece-Israel Triangle

Former Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides won the Presidential elections held in February 2023 in the Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus (GCA). The election is also important in terms of its reflections on the foreign policy of the GCA. On February 26, 2023, Christodoulides and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the relationship between the parties is of strategic importance.

Moreover, the two leaders are focused on further strengthening ties in areas such as the economy, defence, energy and tourism. Following the aforementioned meeting, Israel announced on February 27, 2023, that a summit with the leaders of Greece, the GCA and Israel is planned to be held by the end of 2023.<sup>[1]</sup>



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As can be understood, the relations between the GCA and Israel have recently increased to a strategic level. In this case, energy cooperation between the parties is very important. It can be said that the GCA, Israel and Greece act together in the Eastern Mediterranean on energy as well as defense.

On the other hand, the Euroasia Interconnector Project, which symbolizes the energy cooperation among the GCA, Israel and Greece, is of great importance in terms of deepening the ties between the parties.

The project is considered to be the longest submarine power cable in the world. The project is expected to provide a connection between electricity networks for 310 km from Israel to the GCA and from there to Greece for 898 km, that is, a total of 1208 km. In this context, the construction of the project is planned to be completed in 2025. In October 2022, the construction of the GCA-Crete section of the Euroasia Interconnector started.[2]

In this context, the Euroasia Interconnector Project, which is tried to be implemented by the GCA, Israel and Greece, is remarkable in that it shows that the cooperation among the parties is built on solid foundations. These three actors will be able to export natural gas to each other by this project. Considering the current war conjuncture in the world and the increasing importance of diversifying energy security, it can be stated that the relations among the parties will rise to higher levels on the occasion of the project.

One of the important features of the project is that its financing is provided by the EU. The main reason for Brussels to support this project is that it considers it will contribute to the energy security of the bloc. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated that the project will help the EU get rid of its energy dependency and that electrification from renewable energies will be achieved over time. Furthermore, Leyen stated that Israel has plenty of natural resources to produce renewable energy and that the GCA and Greece stand out as important actors in securing energy supply.[3]

On the other hand, the project is described by the GCA as a step that will end its own energy isolation. Israel, on the other hand, interprets the project as an opportunity for the country to receive electricity from European electricity networks in case of emergency.[4] Therefore, it can be argued that the project may create consequences that will make the parties dependent on each other in the field of energy. Moreover, it can be foreseen that increasing cooperation in the field of energy will be reflected in political developments.

In addition to all these, it is seen that Greece is trying to realize partnerships with various countries with submarine cable projects in the recent period. In addition to Tel Aviv, the Athens administration has agreed to implement similar projects with Riyadh and Cairo. Therefore, it can be said that submarine cable projects have come to the fore in Greece's relations with Middle Eastern countries in recent years. Therefore, Greece is implementing a policy that tries to present itself as a transit route in terms of energy.

On the other hand, the project with Israel differs from other initiatives due to the fact that the GCA is also involved as an actor. While developing its relations with countries that have coasts to the Mediterranean such as Greece, Israel and Egypt, it pays attention to including the GCA in the equation.

Furthermore, it is known that the developing relations between Israel, the GCA and Greece in the context of energy are also reflected in the political and security fields. The wiretapping scandal that erupted in Greece in July 2022, leaving Prime Minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis in a difficult position, can be given as an example. As it will be recalled, after the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) Chairman Nikos Androulakis was subjected to wiretapping, the head of the Greek Intelligence Agency, Panagiotis Kontoleon, resigned. The fact that this

wiretapping was carried out using the Israeli spyware "predator" has revealed that there is close cooperation between Tel Aviv and Athens in the intelligence dimension.[5]

To summarize briefly, it is observed that the cooperation in the field of energy on the GCA-Israel-Greece line has moved to different dimensions. Because energy agreements are long-term agreements and in a way reflect geopolitical preferences. This opens the door for the relations between the parties to be shaped in a multidimensional way.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the project will further strengthen the cooperation of the parties in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, this may lead the Greece-GCA duo to further integrate Israel into their Eastern Mediterranean and security policies.

[1] "Greece, Cyprus, Israel Plan Trilateral Leaders' Summit", JNS, <https://www.jns.org/greece-cyprus-israel-plan-trilateral-leaders-summit/>, (Date of Accession: 02.03.2023).

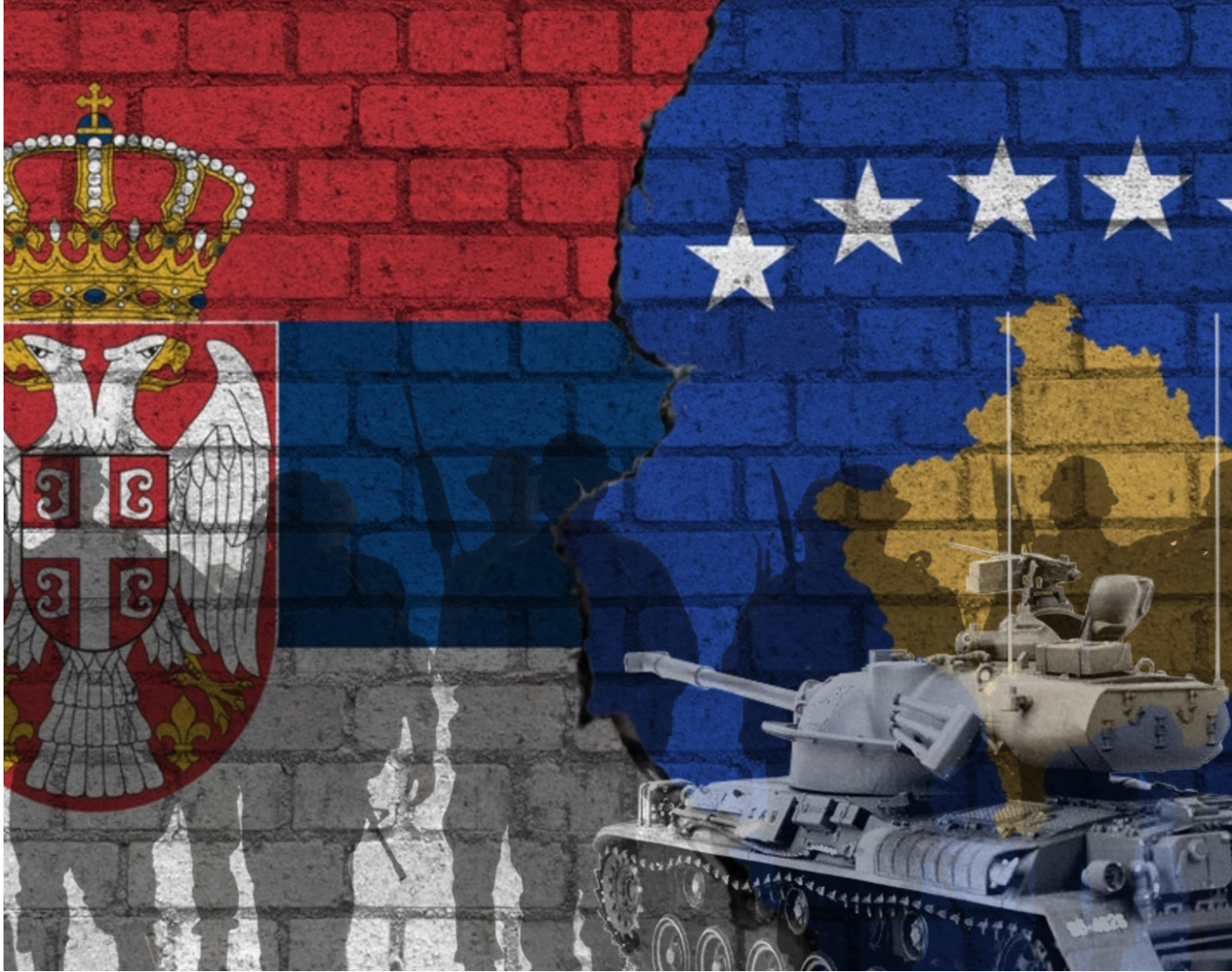
[2] "World's Longest Submarine Power Cable to Connect Greek, Cypriot and Israeli Power Grids", Greek City Times, <https://greekcity-times.com/2022/10/11/worlds-longest-cable-greek-cypriot-israeli/>, (Date of Accession: 02.03.2023).

[3] "Nadja Skopljak, Von der Leyen: Euroasia Interconnector to Help Free EU from Energy Dependence", Offshore Energy, <https://www.offshore-energy.biz/von-der-leyen-euroasia-interconnector-to-help-free-eu-from-energy-dependence/>, (Date of Accession: 02.03.2023).

[4] "Submarine Cable Euroasia Interconnector to be Finished by 2024", Balkan Green Energy News, <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/submarine-cable-euroasia-interconnector-to-be-finished-by-2024/>, (Date of Accession: 02.03.2023).

[5] "Agnes Szucs, EU Commission Monitors Closely Developments on Greek Wiretapping Scandal", Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/eu-commission-monitors-closely-developments-on-greek-wiretapping-scandal/2669219>, (Date of Accession: 02.03.2023).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Kosovo-Serbia Relations: Is Normalization Possible?

The ongoing tension between Kosovo and Serbia casts a shadow over political stability in the region. However, the Russia-Ukraine S-hunt also adversely affects the tension between the parties. Because the historical ties between Russians and Serbs still have an impact today. However, the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA), which come to the fore with their anti-Russian policies, have taken many steps to prevent the Russians' room for maneuver. In addition to its support for Ukraine, the EU, which aims to act jointly especially in foreign and security policies, is making efforts

to prevent possible Russian intervention in Kosovo-Serbia relations. The EU has made various moves to end the tension between the two actors and accelerate the normalization process. There are pressures and incentives exerted on the parties to solve the long-standing problems of Kosovo and Serbia, which do not recognize each other, and to accelerate the steps towards normalization.

The tensions reinforced by the Russian-Ukrainian War have brought the problems of sovereignty in the region to the agenda again, which



**Veli Can AKKAŞ**

has forced the USA and the EU to take various initiatives that can be described as a preventive diplomatic force against Russia. It can be said that the main driving force here is to prevent a possible Russian intervention.

After various initiatives, the parties made promising statements in the name of normalization. Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani, in his meeting with officials from the United States and the EU, stressed the inviolability of the borders, but showed that he is not completely against the process, stating that the opinion of the Kosovo Assembly is important for the normalization of relations with Serbia.[1]

As a result of the negotiations between the EU and the USA with the parties for normalization, both sides preferred to stay away from sharp policies due to economic reasons and the reasons for getting rid of political isolation. Although, Serbia has not been able to clearly demonstrate its participation in the sanctions imposed by the EU against Moscow since the Russian-Ukrainian War, it has wanted to reduce the EU's pressure by trying to prove its support for the Kiev administration.[2]

Kosovo and Serbia have painted an image that they are not opposed to the normalization process after being subjected to these pressures, but they do not want to sign a negative decision against their sovereignty. Therefore, they are in an effort to achieve their own goals by making various contacts with the EU and the USA, which desire to assume the role of mediator in this regard.[3] In this context, Kosovo's effort to solve the problem of recognition and its desire to secure its borders as an equal state is apparent. Pristina administration expects some EU states that do not recognize Kosovo to decide on recognition.[4]

As such, various incentives have been provided by the EU to avoid any problems on the way to integration and to accelerate the normalization steps. In this context, there have been statements from the EU that the work on visa-free travel of Kosovo citizens has gained momentum.[5] It is obvious that these steps of the Union are an effort to create motivation for the negotiations.

The Balkans, which have been an area of struggle for influence since the past, continue this feature under the current conditions. Since Kosovo and Serbia do not know each other, the tension between them has decreased in some periods, but the final conclusion cannot be reached.

In order to solve this problem and accelerate the normalization steps, European diplomats hold high-level meetings.[6] In this re-

gard, powerful actors in the region have made moves to bring the parties to the table. In this context, the establishment of the Union of Serbian Municipalities and the implementation of the EU plan, which were put forward for the solution of the problems, have been raised many times. In order to prevent any problems from growing in Europe, states have called for normalization. Especially Germany has stressed that it wants to see the Balkan countries among its ranks so that there is no obstacle in front of the road to European integration. In this context, the Berlin administration has also stated that the normalization of the Pristina-Belgrade line will bring quick results for the EU.[7]

Both Kosovo and Serbia have been adversely affected by the tensions. This problem, which often preoccupies the public opinion in the region, also casts a shadow on a possible peace. When we look at the historical background, the importance of diplomacy in the region where a lot of blood is shed is better understood day by day. In this context, Serbian Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy Nikola Selaković stressed the importance of peace, advocating for 100 years of negotiation rather than fighting for a day.[8]

It is understood from the meeting that tensions will not be easily allowed to grow. Parties emphasizing peace are likely to strengthen their bilateral relations with actors taking the initiative to ensure order in the region. However, there is a strong view that it is extremely important for Pristina that the Union of Serbian Municipalities should be subordinate to the Kosovo Constitution rather than the establishment of the Union of Serbian Municipalities as a separate entity from Kosovo in order to achieve normalization.[9] Considering the sovereignty debate in which these tensions are directly linked, the sensitivity underlying the approach in question is understood.

As a result, it can be stated that both Kosovo and Serbia have accepted the normalization process and therefore the dialogue in order not to interfere with the stability of the region, to increase their prestige in the international system and not to be excluded from European integration. The EU and the United States have come to the fore as the main actors encouraging normalization processes to limit Russia.

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# ANKASAM IN PRESS

## 13 March 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol made comments to AZ TV about the nuclear power plant in Metamor, Armenia.

## 16 March 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations of the Metamor Nuclear Power Plant were shared in the documentary titled "Metamor: Bomb the Hour" broadcast on AZ TV.

## 17 March 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the steps of Uzbekistan to strengthen cooperation in the Central Asian region to O'zbekiston 24 TV.



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

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