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Europe's Search for Strategic Auto-
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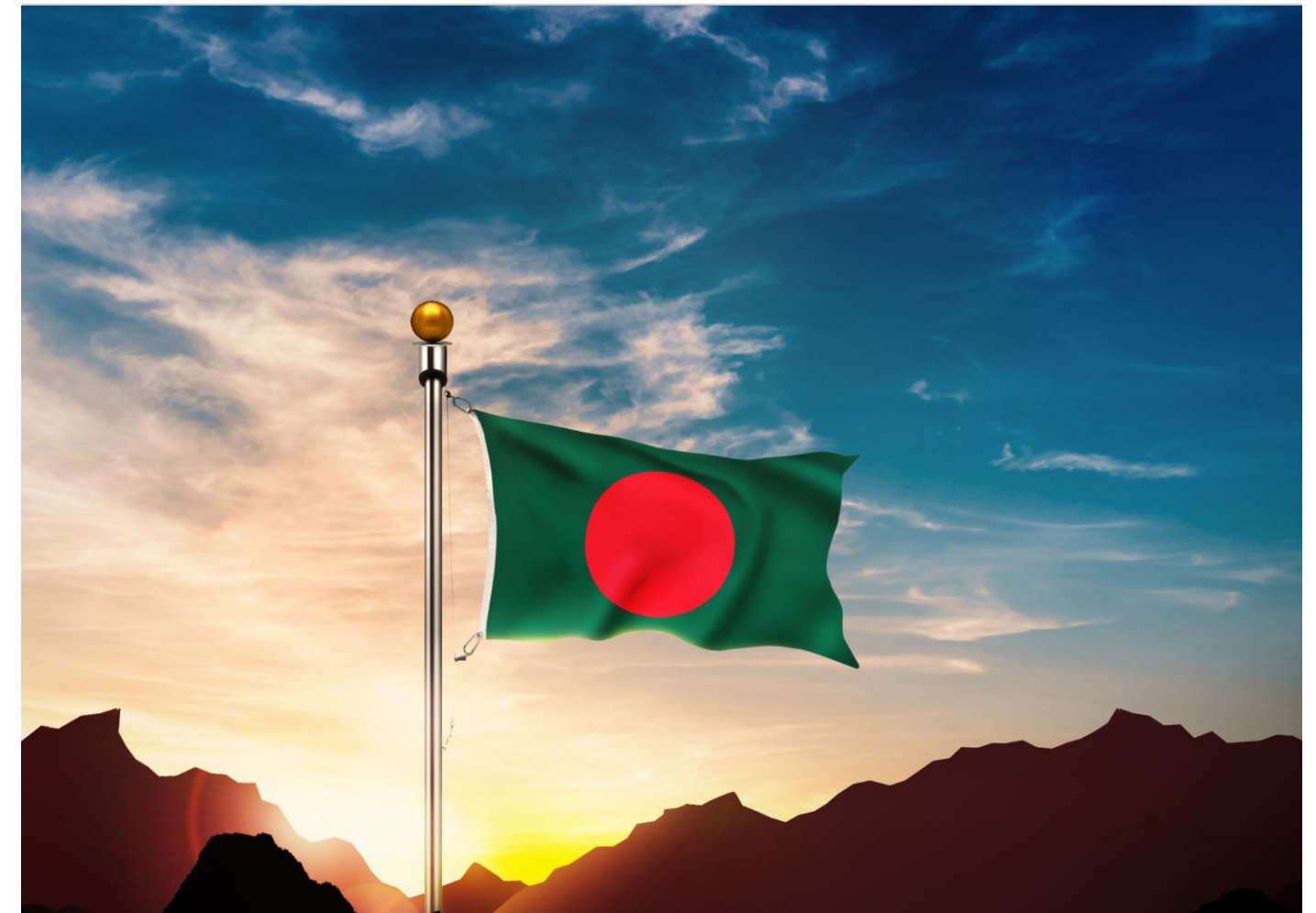
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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Clouds of Complexity in Bangladesh's Strategic Airspace

Assessments about Bangladesh indicate that the country may be dragged into a major strategic crisis, and recent developments seem to confirm these predictions. Visits to Bangladesh by Admiral Eileen Laubacher, the National Security Advisor to the President of the United

States (US), and Donald Lu, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia,[1] as well as Qin Gang, the Foreign Minister of China,[2] suggest that Bangladesh could become one of the battlegrounds for US-China competition.



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The developments are being discussed by the Bangladeshi media in the context of their strategic implications. Attention is drawn to the inclusion of an amendment to the Burma Act by the US Senate, which would authorize military spending. Essentially, this law aims to support pro-democracy forces fighting against the coup in Myanmar. In this sense, the new initiative by the US is significant, as the resistance war led by the National Unity Government has reached a critical stage, resulting in the coup losing control of 52% of the territory. Other allies such as the US and the UK continue to support the armed resistance in Myanmar. The National Unity Government is expected to evolve into a parallel government in Myanmar, with unofficial relations with most members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is also expected that Western allies will recognize the National Unity Government as the legitimate government of Myanmar in the near future, as they seek to advance their agendas in Myanmar and strengthen their influence in neighboring countries.

Observers believe that major powers in countries along the Bay of Bengal are unwilling to compromise on their own agendas. The extent and depth of interests in the region are evident from China’s new Foreign Minister Qin Gang’s first overseas visit to Bangladesh. The depth of the conflict of interests between China and the US in the region was highlighted in an article written by Subir Bhowmik, a former regional correspondent for BBC and Reuters, on the day when Lu, the Deputy Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, left Bangladesh. In his article published in The Federal, Bhowmik stated the following:[3]

“The new year was marked by a new escalation in clashes between senior US and Chinese officials visiting Bangladesh and the Myanmar Army and rebel forces on Myanmar’s western border. The military junta in Myanmar used air power intensively and ruthlessly in these conflicts. The visits of Pentagon and US State Department officials to Bangladesh have fueled speculation that the US is actively considering the idea of imposing a no-fly zone over Myanmar, as in Bosnia, even if it does not directly intervene militarily to facilitate a return to democracy in Myanmar. It is thought that Bangladesh and India may need logistical support to enforce the no-fly zone. If the US implements the no-fly zone proposal, Bangladesh could be stuck in the middle of the Sino-US conflict.”

A Bosnian-style no-fly zone that NATO will enforce would help stabilize conflicts between civilians and ethnic armed groups. This could result in a similar outcome to the Myanmar Army’s defeat in Rakhine. The same may be true for the Provinces of Chin, Sagaing, and Kachin. Anti-government groups, the Arakan Army and Kachin Independence Army, have taken control of most of the provinces. The Myanmar Army continues to use air power to hold on to these states.

The bombing of Camp Victoria, co-managed by the Chinese National Front and Bamar PDF on the border with Mizoram State, India, has opened up the possibility of a massive influx of refugees into Mizoram, which is already home to more than 20,000 refugees. China’s concern is the destabilization of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor if the no-fly zone deals a major blow to the Myanmar Army.

The oil-gas pipeline, financed through Kyaukphyu Port, which is connected to China’s Yunnan Province, is being built along the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. If the junta in Myanmar is overthrown and the Myanmar Army is severely weakened, the United States and its allies could block China’s land-to-sea access to the Indian Ocean. Because encircling China is considered an important strategic goal of the USA.

Many risks may arise if Bangladesh finally says “no” to the US. Because global economic institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are under American influence, and the United Nations and related institutions have Western influence. More than 80% of Bangladesh’s exports are carried out through these organizations. Bangladesh’s economy is fundamentally dependent

on the coordination of the global system due to the country’s lack of significant energy resources and mineral reserves. Therefore, it is unclear whether Dhaka will act on the Sino-Russian axis by opposing the West or by joining it. However, it is not certain whether India will take a stand against the USA in Bangladesh. All these options may drag Bangladesh into political instability.

Moreover, the Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka gives a clear message that they will not accept the American presence in the Bay of Bengal, pointing out that Chinese influence may increase in Bangladesh. This is another scenario that could endanger Bangladesh.

As a result, parallel to the instability in Myanmar, Bangladesh also risks becoming a playground for the rivalry between the USA and China. It is possible to argue that any choice will have a certain cost.

[1] “What Donald Lu’s Visit Means for Bangladesh”, The Daily Star, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/what-donald-lus-visit-means-bangladesh-3221556>, (Date of Accession: 27.02.2023).

[2] “What Was Behind the Chinese Foreign Minister’s Midnight Stopover in Bangladesh?”, The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/what-was-behind-the-chinese-foreign-ministers-midnight-stopover-in-bangladesh/>, (Date of Accession: 11.01.2023).

[3] “ <https://www.thefederal.com/2023/01/10/what-donald-lus-visit-means-bangladesh/>”, Daily Nayadiganta, <https://tly/zpVw>, (Date of Accession: 24.01.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

EU Factor in Albania–Russia Relations

Albania, located in the Western Balkans, is a country of great geopolitical importance. The fact that Albania has a coastline on the Mediterranean, Ionian Sea and Adriatic increases the interest in the country. In this context, Albania has an important function in connecting the Balkans with the Mediterranean. In fact, this nature of the country has led to it being the first Western Balkan state to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2009.

The Western Balkans, however, has historically been a region of special interest to Russia. The main strategy of Moscow for the aforementioned region is to prevent the integration process of the Western Balkan countries with the

European Union (EU). But Albania's integration with the West rather than the EU; it should be underlined that it took place through NATO.

On the other hand, it is seen that there are not many pro-Russian political groups in Albania. Therefore, Russian influence in Albania was limited due to some political and cultural conditions. No Russian President or Prime Minister has visited Albania in the last thirty years. The friendship treaty signed between Russia and Albania in 2004 was never ratified either.[1] In this context, Russian influence in Albania is more limited than in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia in the Western Balkans. Moreover, Albania applied for EU membership in 2009 and



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received the status of candidate country in 2014. The EU started Albania's membership negotiations with an intergovernmental conference on 19 July 2022.[2]

On the other hand, it would be useful to talk about what kind of instruments Russia used against Albania. In this direction, the Kremlin invited Albania and North Macedonia to become members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2019, aiming both to increase their influence in the Balkans and to benefit from the extension of the EU membership processes of these two states. Because at that time, French President Emmanuel Macron vetoed the start of the EU accession negotiations of Albania and North Macedonia. In this context, Russian Ambassador to the EU Vladimir Chizhov stated that these two countries, whose membership processes were shelved by Brussels on 30 October 2019, could find more understanding in the EEU.[3]

As can be understood, the Kremlin saw the extension of Albania's EU membership process as an opportunity. However, Albania and Macedonia did not approach Russia's proposal positively in the aforementioned period. Because while Albania was a member of NATO at that time; North Macedonia also joined the alliance in 2020. In this context, it can be said that the development of the two states' integration processes with the West through NATO has rendered Russia's moves ineffective. Therefore, Tirana and Skopje considered NATO and the EU as complementary elements in their integration processes with the West, although they are different types of organizations. Therefore, the model offered by Russia was not seen as attractive by Albania.

Particularly, Albania's EU membership process seems to take a long time. One of the main factors affecting this was the EU's handling of the membership processes of Albania and North Macedonia together. Because Bulgaria's veto of North Macedonia's membership process until June 2022 due to problems arising from conflicts such as language, history and identity, indirectly led to the extension of Albania's accession.

Along with all this, on September 14, 2022, the United States Department of State, based on intelligence reports, claimed that the Kremlin has spent 300 million dollars since 2014 to interfere in the internal affairs of more than 20 countries. The Washington administration claimed that Moscow provided approximately 500,000 dollars in support to the centre-right Democratic Party (DP) in the country for the 2017 elections in Albania. The Socialist Party, headed by Edi Rama, who is currently the Prime Minister, won the election. This election was seen as a critical threshold for Albania to start negotiations with the EU. Because DP, at first, threatened to boycott the election.[4] Therefore, although Albania draws attention with

the limited Russian influence among the Western Balkan countries, it can be argued that Russia aims to prevent Albania's integration with the West.

On the other hand, the capital of Albania, Tirana, hosted the EU-Western Balkans Summit held on 6 December 2022. For this reason, Rama pointed out that the Russian influence in the Balkans is real and that the region should be united in the face of this danger.[5] At this point, it seems that the Russia-Ukraine War has accelerated the expansion of the EU towards the Western Balkan countries. In addition, the war increased the spirit of solidarity among the Western Balkan countries excluding Serbia.

As a result, Albania differs from other Western Balkan countries due to its membership in NATO. Already, the Tirana administration has made important progress in the process of integration with the West in general. But NATO, in the context of defense; the EU, on the other hand, should be evaluated within the framework of economy. In this sense, EU membership for Albania will directly affect the welfare of the people in a way. In this context, it can be argued that Russia's main motivation will be to prevent this. But the Kremlin's limited influence in Albania compared to other Western Balkan countries poses a formidable challenge to Moscow.

[1] "Western Balkans and the War in Ukraine", Warsaw Institute, <https://warsawinstitute.org/western-balkans-war-ukraine/>, (Date of Accession: 30.03.2023).

[2] "Albania", European Council Council of the European Union, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/albania/>, (Date of Accession: 30.03.2023).

[3] "Russian Representative to EU Invites N. Macedonia and Albania to Join EEU Instead", European Western Balkans, <https://european-westernbalkans.com/2019/10/30/russian-representative-to-eu-invites-n-macedonia-and-albania-to-join-eeu-instead/>, (Date of Accession: 30.03.2023).

[4] "Albania's Opposition Democrats to Probe Allegation Party Received \$500,000 From Russia", Bne Intelli News, <https://intellinews.com/albania-s-opposition-democrats-to-probe-allegation-party-received-500-000-from-russia-256484/?source=bosnia-and-herzegovina>, (Date of Accession: 30.03.2023).

[5] "Russian Influence is Real, Rama: Our Region Must be United with the EU", Euronews Albania, <https://euronews.al/en/russian-influence-is-real-rama-our-region-should-be-united-with-the-eu/>, (Date of Accession: 30.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Upcoming Greek Elections: The SYRIZA-PASOK Coalition?

On March 28, 2023, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced that general elections would be held on May 21, 2023. In his statement on the subject, Mitsotakis stated that the elections would be renewed on July 2, 2023 if no party could obtain the majority in the parliament to form a government on its own.[1]

According to the system in the country in question, the party that received 45 percent of the votes in the first stage of the elections could form a government alone; if no party can

reach this rate, the elections are renewed and the first party in the renewed elections is authorized to form a coalition government.[2] Looking at the public opinion polls, it seems certain that the elections will go to the second round. Because no party is expected to receive 45 percent of the vote. This indicates that the New Democracy Party led by Mitsotakis will come to an end on its own.

At this point, it should be noted that; in the surveys conducted in September 2022, the vote of the New Democracy Party was 34.5 percent; it was deter-



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mined that the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) had 26.5 percent and the Movement for Change (PASOK) 12 percent.[3] However, it has been observed that there have been some changes in voter tendencies in the intervening time. As a matter of fact, as of March 2023, surveys are published stating that the difference between the New Democracy Party and SYRIZA has decreased to 2.9 points.[4] This shows that there is a tough election competition in Greece.

In fact, until the last months, it was thought that there was no serious obstacle to the continuation of the New Democracy Party's power. In this sense, an idea has come to the fore that the internal and external conjuncture is in favor of the Mitsotakis administration.

To explain the situation in question, it is generally accepted that the Greek people would vote in favor of stability since Greece has largely overcome the effects of the economic crisis of the 2010s and is one of the European states least affected by the crises caused by the Russian-Ukrainian War. As a matter of fact, Greece's efforts to become an energy center after the Russia-Ukraine War and its success in promoting itself in the context of winter tourism have been considered as an important success.

In terms of foreign policy, it is known that Greece works in harmony with the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA). On the one hand, the Mitsotakis administration, which won the appreciation of the USA as an ardent supporter of the ceiling price application to Russia; on the other hand, it tried to legitimize its unlawful theses in the Eastern Mediterranean with the energy companies of the USA and EU member countries, and in a sense, it made relative progress in turning the international conjuncture in its favor with the bribes it gave. This includes Greece's close relations with actors such as Egypt and Israel in the Eastern Mediterranean and its cooperations with actors such as the USA, Germany and France within the scope of its armament policy within the framework of its military modernization claim. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the West does not want a change of power in Greece.

In such an atmosphere, as the election approached, the expectation that the New Democracy Party would increase its votes and reach the threshold of 45 percent and come to power alone constituted the dominant view. However, contrary to expectation, it is seen that SYRIZA quickly closed its vote gap. It is even possible for SYRIZA to become the first party after the campaign process accelerates.

It can be said that two developments were effective in changing the direction of the wind in the election atmosphere in Greece. The first of these is the eavesdropping scandal, which caused the pressure on Mitsotakis to increase both in domestic and foreign policy, and especially in the European Parliament. In Greece, the intelligence agency affiliated to the Prime Minister listened to the opposition politicians, which aroused wide repercussions and drew the reaction of both the domestic public and the international community.

Although the management of Mitsotakis stated that the eavesdropping developed outside of themselves, this possibility means that Mitsotakis could not control the institutions affiliated to it and it brings with it a loss of prestige. However, the more controversial aspect of the issue is the idea that this event could not have occurred independently of the Prime Minister. This led to the discussion of the allegations that Mitsotakis became authoritarian. It seems; SYRIZA and PASOK have increased their influence on the electorate on the occasion of this issue.

Another incident that has decreased the electoral support of the Mitsotakis administration is the train accident that took place on February 28, 2023 in Tempi, 26 km from Larisa, killing 57 people. Mitsotakis administration accepted the resignation of Transport Minister Kostas Karamanlis after the accident; although it wanted to eliminate the reaction against the government, it can be said that the collision of two trains on the same line in 2023 showed that the Athens administration could not make a significant progress in terms of railway modernization, and this led the undecided voters to the opposition.

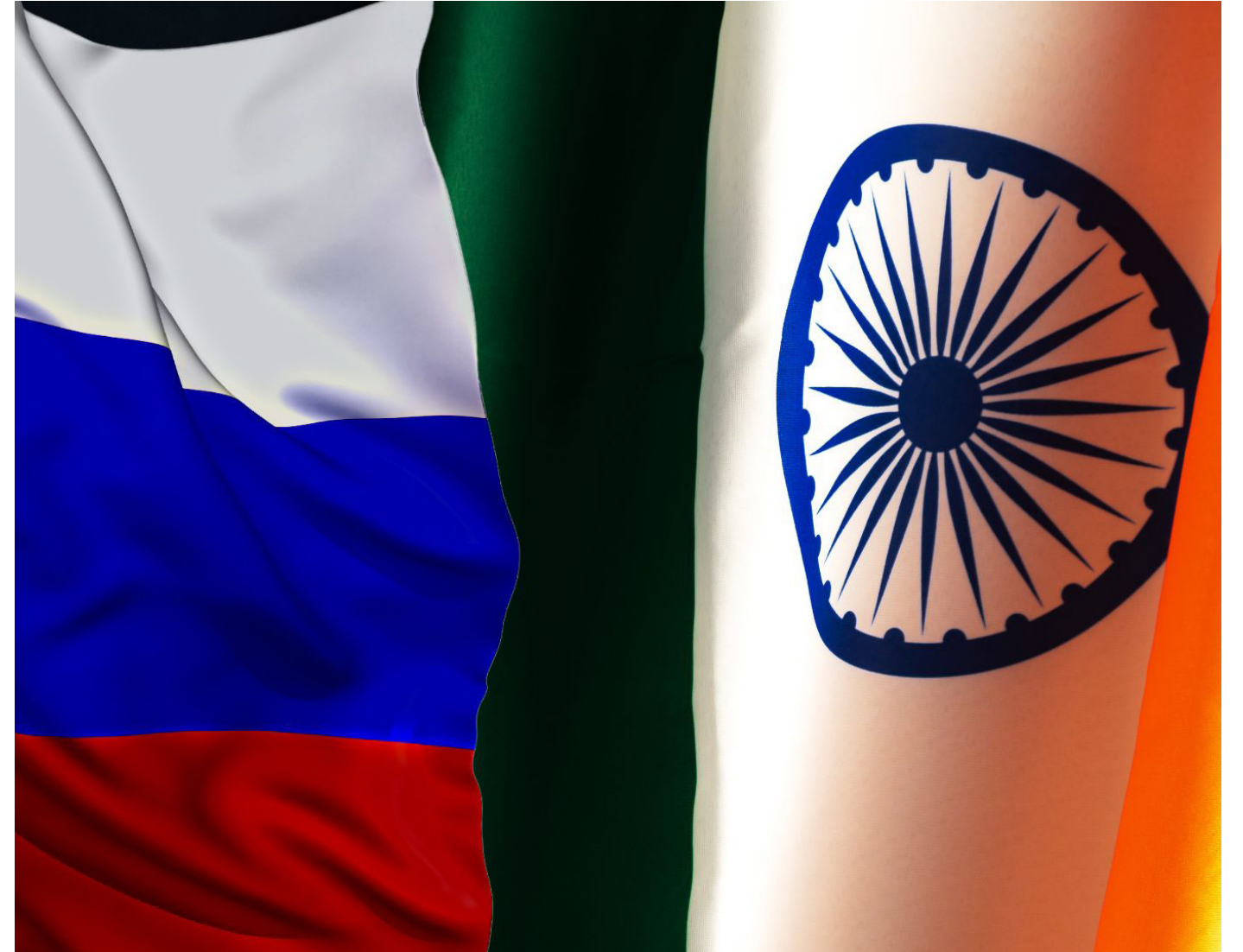
As a result, as the Greek elections approach, the wind is blowing in favor of the opposition. Although the New Democracy Party ranks first in the polls showing the trend of public opinion in the current situation, it is clear that SYRIZA is in an upward trend. Although it is not possible to complete the Greek elections in the first stage, the SYRIZA-PASOK coalition in the second round will not be a surprise.

[1] "Yunanistan'da Seçim Tarihi Açıklandı: 21 Mayıs", BBC Türkçe, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/cw09lnnzdrpo>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Ruling ND Maintains 8-pt Lead over SYRIZA", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1193824/ruling-nd-maintains-8-pt-lead-over-syriza/>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[4] "Poll finds ND's Lead over SYRIZA Slips to 2.9 Points", Ekathimerini, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1206700/poll-finds-nds-lead-over-syriza-slips-to-3-2-points/>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).



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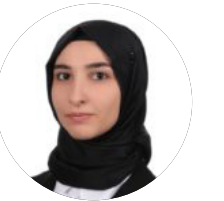
The Increasing Role of Energy in Russia-India Relations

India has significantly developed its versatile policy since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War. In this process, its relations with Russia also drew attention. There is a development in the relations between the two, especially in the energy dimension.

On March 29, 2023, Russia's largest oil producer Rosneft and India's largest company Indian Oil Corp signed a futures agreement to sig-

nificantly increase oil supply and diversify oil grades delivered to India. The company stated that the agreement was signed by Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin during a study trip to India.[1]

It is known that the parties exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in the energy sector, including the possibility of making payments in national currencies. There are other ongoing projects that Rosneft is running in



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partnership with different Indian companies.[2] In addition to the increase in cooperation between companies, there has been a significant increase in oil exports between Moscow and New Delhi, which have recently improved their relations. Russia has become one of India's five largest trading partners.[3] In his statement on March 28, 2023, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Alexander Novak stated that his country's oil exports to India increased more than 22 times compared to the previous year.[4]

Before the Russia-Ukraine War, there were strong partnerships in the New Delhi-Moscow relations. It is known that there are deep ties between the parties, especially at the point of military relations. However, it is seen that the cooperation in the energy sector has deepened with the war. Although this situation emerged as a result of Russia's directing its energy resources to the Asian market in the face of sanctions, it is obvious that there was a rapprochement between the parties. It is possible to say that this closeness and partnership will continue.

In November 2022, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar also announced that they would continue to buy Russian oil during his visit to Moscow.[5] This trade is economically and strategically advantageous for India.

In addition, India buys oil at discounts of up to 35 dollars per barrel from pre-war prices. Moscow has also proposed payments in rupees using Russia's messaging system SPFS, making an offer that could make the trade more attractive to New Delhi.[6] However, it seems that no concrete steps have been taken in this regard.

Energy agreements between the parties have been increasing in recent years. However, the energy partnership also has a history. Making attempts to increase its investments in Russia, India acquired 100% shares of Imperial Energy Corporation of Russia, 26% shares of Vankorneft in Northern Russia, and Taas-Yuryakh oil fields in Siberia has bought, respectively, 29.9% in 2016.[7] Also, in September 2019, the parties launched a Vladivostok-Chennai Energy Corridor initiative to increase the energy partnership between the two countries. India has taken such an initiative to reduce its dependence on traditional fuel suppliers.[8]

Nowadays, it can be said that the deepened energy partnership with Moscow is an alternative to reduce dependency on the Gulf countries. As an energy-rich geography, it is considered important to develop cooperation in order not to be caught unprepared in case the Gulf countries use the energy card as a geopolitical tool. Moreover, the recent rapprochement of Gulf Pakistan has attracted attention. It can be said that in the face of the proximity of its regional rival, Pakistan, to the aforementioned countries, India is more oriented towards Russian energy.

Cooperation and partnerships also extend to high-level visits between the two countries. On December 6, 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited New Delhi and the parties held the first 2+2 dialogue. At the same time, an agreement was reached on taking steps to strengthen the Vladivostok-Chennai Energy Corridor.[9] Therefore, these partnerships seem to pave the way for new interactions.

The point reached in energy cooperation and strong military ties based on the past also affect India's stance on the Russia-Ukraine War. This makes New Delhi one of the most key and influential countries in the war process. Its relations with the Western World and the United States of America (USA), as well as its deepening ties with Russia, transform India into a more effective actor in the international arena.

It can also be evaluated that this position of India paved the way for it to mediate in the Russia-Ukraine War in the future. The fact that the New Delhi administration is holding the term presidency of the G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has also increased India's effectiveness in the international arena. Therefore, it will not be surprising that New Delhi uses these cyclical advantages.

Apparently; Russia will continue to be India's main arms and energy supplier. It can also be said that these factors will continue to play an important role in India's foreign policy steps. At the same time, the developments also contribute to the increase of New Delhi's visibility and influence in the international arena.

In summary, India maintains its stance towards conducting an independent foreign policy in the Russia-Ukraine War and tries to use all the advantages offered by the conjuncture. In the atmosphere created by the energy crisis, it has taken the opportunity to consolidate partnerships with Russia. Thus, New Delhi provides resource diversity and aims to get rid of dependencies. India's investments in the Russian oil and gas sector can also be read in this way. Russia, on the other hand, benefits from its dialogue with India, with which it has partnerships in various fields, as part of its strategy to channel its energy resources to the Asian market. As a result, it is clear that the global energy crisis will bring new breakthroughs in cooperation between the parties.

[1] "Russia's Rosneft Signs Deal to Boost Oil Supplies to India", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russias-rosneft-signs-deal-boost-oil-supplies-india-2023-03-29/>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[2] "Russia's Rosneft Signs Deal to Boost Oil Supplies to India", Economic Times, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/russias-rosneft-signs-deal-to-boost-oil-supplies-to-india/articleshow/99089218.cms>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Russia Says Oil Sales to India Soared 22-fold Last Year", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/28/russia-says-oil-sales-to-india-soared-22-fold-last-year>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[5] "India to Continue Buying Oil from Russia As Ties Deepen", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/8/india-to-continue-buying-oil-from-russia-as-ties-deepen>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[6] "Russia Remains India's Most Dependable Energy Partner", East Asia Forum, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/01/20/russia-remains-indias-most-dependable-energy-partner/>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[7] "Indian Companies Invest \$5 bln in Vankorneft and TAAS-Yuryakh Neftegazodobycha-ONGC", TASS, https://tass.com/economy/905972?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com,

[8] "India to Open Russian Energy Corridor to Cut Reliance on Traditional Suppliers", Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/india-to-open-russian-energy-corridor-to-cut-reliance-on-traditional-suppliers/articleshow/70930463.cms>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).

[9] "The India-Russia Strategic Partnership is Key to Indo-Pacific Stability", East Asia Forum, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/12/27/the-india-russia-strategic-partnership-is-key-to-indo-pacific-stability/#more-545835>, (Date of Accession: 31.03.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Japan's Proactive Foreign Policy: The Era of Polarization in Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific Region is one of the geographies where global security is most fragile and security concerns are felt. This situation encourages the states of the region to polarize and to establish pacts through security-based agreements. At the same time, the states in the region have to choose between the anti-Western states such as China, North Korea and the United States (USA)-based Western alliance due to these perceived security concerns and threat perceptions, and they increase their defence and military expenditures, especially in the context of their national security.

In this context, it can be argued that Japan is developing its relations and dialogues with the West and increasing the importance it attaches to its military power. As a matter of fact, it can be said that Japan has been implementing a more proactive and pro-Western policy. It can be stated that the most important reasons for the situation in question are the presence of China, which aims to challenge the rules-based international order, and North Korea, which has increased both nuclear and ballistic missile tests. At this point, it can be deduced that Japan, which has a pacifist constitution, is trying to reverse this situation.



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As a matter of fact, the Defense Agreement signed on January 11, 2023 between British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Kishida, who is in the UK for a tour that includes the G7 countries, France, Italy, Canada and the USA, is of great importance. Under this agreement, both countries will be able to deploy forces on each other's territory for training and other operations. In a statement made by Sunak's office, this agreement was described as "the most important defense agreement between the two countries in more than a century".[1]

Since the G7 Summit in 2023 will be held in Hiroshima,[2] Japan's bilateral relations and negotiations with the G7 countries have gained special importance. It can be said that this situation has an accelerating effect on Japan's proactive foreign policy production process.

In addition, it can be stated that Japan's being an important ally of both the USA and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the Asia-Pacific Region and being accepted as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is of critical importance.

On the other hand, in a statement on March 14, 2023, Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said that his country will host a tripartite meeting on March 16, 2023, with the participation of British Defense Minister Ben Wallace and Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto.[3] In this meeting, the ministers announced that they agreed to develop a new generation fighter jet by 2035. At the meeting, part of which was open to the media, Hamada said, "The fighter jet project will lay the foundations of cooperation for future generations and will make a significant contribution to strengthening global security." Wallace, on the other hand, said that the three countries will establish a "strong and successful" partnership in the future and that their "forward-looking programs" will produce prosperity for them. In the statement made by the Ministry of Defense of Japan, it was stated that all three countries adopted the principle of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".[4]

It can be argued that the situation in question is also beneficial for the West. It is known that the West is trying to gain influence in the Asia-Pacific at the point of containing China and limiting North Korea's nuclear activities. As a matter of fact, with this new policy, Japan is creating an area of action for the Western states in the region.

However, it can be argued that those activities will create negative consequences for the security equations in the region and increase the security dilemma in the region. At the same time, it can be deduced that these developments will provoke Pyongyang and Beijing. In fact, the possibility of a hot conflict in the region may come to the fore in the future.

As a result, it can be argued that the security equations in the Asia-Pacific have become increasingly complex, the polarization in the region has reached its maximum level and the security dilemmas have deepened. This causes the crisis in the region to deepen and makes the security environment fragile.

[1] "Japan, UK Sign 'Hugely Significant' Defence Deal", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/12/japan-uk-sign-hugely-significant-new-defence-deal/>, (Date of Accession:01.04.2023).

[2] "Human Security and Universal Health Coverage: Japan's Vision for The G7 Hiroshima Summit", The Lancet, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)00014-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)00014-4/fulltext), (Date of Accession:01.04.2023).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Uzbekistan as a Peacemaking Actor in the Afghan Question and the Amu Darya River Debates

The United States of America's (USA) withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the Taliban's return to the country after a 20-year hiatus shortly before the withdrawal brought the Afghan Question to a new stage. The second Taliban period, which can also be formulated as "Taliban 2.0", has begun in the country. However, despite the time that has passed, the Taliban government has not been officially recognized by any state.

The problem of recognition makes it difficult to attract investment and deliver humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. Accordingly, the employment problem in Afghanistan is deepening, leading first to an economic crisis and then to a humanitarian crisis. The increase in economic and social problems also creates space for terrorist organizations. In particular, it is known that the terrorist organization State of Iraq and al-Sham (DAESH), which is trying to create a



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lebensraum for itself after its defeat in Syria and Iraq, has a presence in Afghanistan. This situation threatens Afghanistan in particular and the regional security environment in general.

Uzbekistan is one of the actors that is aware of the risks posed by the regional security environment and stands out with its constructive attitude towards the solution of these problems. The Tashkent administration is concerned that the problems in the neighboring country may spill over into its own territory in the context of radicalization and terrorism, and due to these concerns, it aims to strengthen the regional security environment by developing policies aimed at regional cooperation and prosperity.

Uzbekistan's approach is based on two concerns. The first is that some Uzbekistan-based terrorist organizations have crossed into Afghanistan and declared allegiance to the terrorist organization DAESH. The second is the possibility that the Fergana Valley, where a certain stability and reconciliation has been achieved through peaceful policies for many years, may be affected by radicalization and thus create an environment of regional chaos.

For these reasons, Tashkent does not officially recognize the Taliban but develops de facto relations with them. In this sense, on the one hand, Uzbekistan is trying to draw the Taliban to the ground of regional dialogue and cooperation; on the other hand, it is taking initiatives to contribute to the welfare of the Afghan people by involving Afghanistan in various projects. In addition, Uzbekistan continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

Moreover, Tashkent pays attention to the formation of a regional consensus in the course of this strategy. At a time when global rivalries and conflicts are on the rise, Uzbekistan's approach can be characterized as an antidote to instability that aims to build bridges of cooperation.

As part of this approach, the Tashkent administration periodically organizes meetings-conferences where regional states come together; from time to time, it participates in summits organized by other actors where the Afghan Question is discussed and makes concrete proposals for developing a constructive attitude.

In the course of this approach, Uzbekistan does not consider the issue only in the regional dimension and considers that the Afghan Question concerns the whole world due to various reasons such as terrorism, radicalization and migration. In this context, Tashkent is also taking various steps to keep the issue on the agenda of the international society. The most tangible example of this is the proposal of the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to establish a commission on Afghanistan within the United Nations (UN).[1]

At this point, it should be underlined that Uzbekistan, within the framework of Mr. Mirziyoyev's visionary leadership on the Afghan Question, operated conference diplomacy even before the Taliban's second term began and, in a sense, carried out a preemptive diplomacy in the face of crises. As a matter of fact, the "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities Conference" held in Tashkent on July 15-16, 2021 is an example of such a conference.[2]

Similarly, Uzbekistan, which wanted to remind the international community of the continued problems in Afghanistan at a time when the international community was focusing on the Russia-Ukraine War and did not refrain from developing a responsible attitude in this sense, as the Chair-in-Office of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), hosted a conference titled "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development" in July 2022, bringing together SCO member states and the Taliban: Security and Economic Development" in July 2022, bringing together SCO member states and the Taliban.[3] Finally, Uzbekistan hosted the "Tashkent Summit" on March 7, 2023, with representatives from China, Russia, Iran, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan.[4]

All these meetings clearly demonstrate Tashkent's constructive attitude towards the solution of the Afghan problem. Moreover, Uzbekistan wants to include Afghanistan in regional cooperation projects such as the "Timriz-Mazar-i-Sharif-Peshawar Railway Project" and

thus open the door to investments that will contribute to the welfare of the Afghan carpet.

In addition, it is very important that Uzbekistan maintains this constructive approach despite having some disagreements on Afghanistan. This is because such a stance of Tashkent despite its disagreements clearly demonstrates the importance that the Government of Uzbekistan under the leadership of Mr. Mirziyoyev attaches to regional and global security and peace.

Obviously, Uzbekistan also takes a dialogue-centered perspective on conflicts. That is the reason for the visit of an Uzbek delegation under the leadership of Mr. Mirziyoyev's Special Representative for Foreign Policy Abdulaziz Kamilov to Afghanistan on March 22, 2023. In Kabul, the delegation held meetings with Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Birader, Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaki and Defense Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid.[5]

It can be noted that various areas of cooperation, ranging from regional security to economics, were discussed in the talks between the parties. However, the most important issue discussed was the Taliban's construction of a canal on the Amu Darya River. The Tashkent administration believes that the construction of the canal will change the flow of water in the river and this will negatively affect Uzbek farmers. Although it is known that such issues cause serious crises in today's conditions where the importance of water is increasing day by day, Uzbekistan has put forward a stance that puts dialogue at the center of the Amu Darya issue. As a result of this constructive approach, the Taliban have already announced their readiness to cooperate to complete the canal "in accordance with international norms and taking full account of privileges".[6]

On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, as a reflection of its sensitivity to not deepening the areas of conflict, did not mention the issue of the canal being built on the Amu Darya in its statements on the summit; it only published a text expressing the importance of cooperation on "water and energy" issues.[7] This is significant in that it indicates that the parties will resolve this issue with an approach centered on regional cooperation with the awareness that every crisis also contains opportunities.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan is one of the states that stands out with its constructionist position on the solution of the Afghan Question. Therefore, Tashkent takes care to develop a healthy dialogue with the Taliban, continues its humanitarian aid ac-

tivities for the Afghan people, strives to build a consensus on Afghanistan at the regional and global level, and brings cooperation opportunities, not conflicts, to the agenda by involving the country in various projects. The most current example of this is Kamilov's visit to Kabul, which demonstrated the will to find a middle ground on the canal being built on the Amu Darya River. This makes Uzbekistan the most critical actor in the resolution of the Afghan conflict.

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[2] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "Uzbekistan's Impact on Regional and Global Peace: "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities" Conference", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/uzbekistans-impact-on-regional-and-global-peace-central-and-south-asia-regional-connectivity-challenges-and-opportunities-conference/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 25.03.2023).

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[4] Başaran, op.cit.

[5] "Узбекская делегация посетила с рабочим визитом столицу Афганистана", Central Asia News, <https://centralasia.news/20355-uzbekskaja-delegacija-posetila-s-rabochim-vizitom-stolicu-afganistana.html>, (Date of Accession: 25.03.2023).

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[7] Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Finland's NATO Partnership

Finland applied for membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 18 May 2022, together with Sweden, and the country officially joined NATO as the 31st member on 4 April 2023. Considering that the accession protocol was signed on July 5, 2022, it can be said that the membership process took place extremely quickly in less than a year. Although the Russian-Ukrainian War had a determining influence on the course of the process, the fact that Finland, which has been pursuing a policy of neutrality for a long time, has been a member of the Partnership for Peace since 1994, which is considered as a transitional step before full membership, and has provided support to NATO operations and operations has had a positive effect.[1]

As it will be remembered, Sweden and Finland's membership processes started together after the NATO Madrid Summit in June 2022; however, Swe-

den's membership was not welcomed yet, but Finland's membership was realized due to Finland's taking the necessary measures in the fight against terrorism.

In a statement on Finland's NATO membership, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Finland's membership is an event that does not contribute to strengthening stability, security and predictability on the European continent, poses an additional threat to Russia and obliges Russia to take the necessary measures to restabilize the entire security system.[2]

As one of the few countries in Europe with compulsory military service, Finland would provide NATO with considerable support in wartime with a force of 280,000 people.[3] The NATO accession, which is expected to change Europe's security environment in the coming years, will further complicate rela-



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tions with Russia, which opposes NATO's expansion in the east. In addition, the NATO Defense Planning Process [5] (NDPP) for the use of Finland's existing military capabilities by NATO will take time. The aim of the NDPP process is to harmonize national and alliance defense planning activities in order to ensure the most effective use of the necessary forces and capabilities by the allies. The NDPP process will mutually determine which and how much of Finland's military capabilities will be allocated to NATO to meet the needs identified in the current political directive.

Defense planning is a process carried out in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of the resources allocated to defense in order to ensure survival, to achieve the objectives set and to protect interests.[6] For NATO, defense planning, whose ultimate goal is to produce the desired level of security, is a "capabilities-based" process. In this process, allied countries submit their military capabilities that they intend to allocate to NATO each year, in accordance with the NDPP process, and the free will of the countries decides.[7] The deployment of NATO elements in the country, or the extent to which the country's own forces are allocated to NATO, will therefore depend on the decision of its politicians.

The first military advantage of Finland's NATO membership is that it opens a reinforcement route for NATO's Baltic states through the Baltic Sea, outside the Suwalki Corridor.[8] Finland would be able to provide reinforcements to the Baltic states by sea, in addition to the Suwalki Corridor, the narrow corridor separating Kaliningrad and Belarus, which Russia might try to close in a conflict. Although increased NATO flagged ship and aircraft activity in the Baltic Sea is expected to provide security relief to the Baltic states, it is also likely to increase tensions in the region.

Another advantage would be that Finland's membership would strengthen NATO's hand in the Arctic. Even though military matters are excluded from the Arctic Council's mandate, six of the eight Council member states (USA, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Iceland, Norway, Russia) have already become NATO allies. Finland's membership would be a positive contribution to NATO in terms of monitoring Russia's military activities towards the Murmansk Base on the Kola Peninsula[9] in the Western Arctic, an important base for naval, air and global power projection capabilities.

The Russian Northern Fleet is home to advanced land, air and sea elements, as well as medium-range ballistic missiles, strategic bombers, nuclear ballistic missile submarines and submarine support bases. The base also has the capability to monitor the Northern Sea Route and to electronically blind hostile elements with its existing capabilities, and military surveillance activities to

determine the mobility of the base would increase the risk of mutual hot conflict.

The final advantage is the accession to NATO of another country with experience in operations in the Arctic. In order to increase its combat capability in the Arctic, NATO conducts the "Cold Response" exercises hosted by Norway every two years. In 2022, approximately 30,000 troops, 220 aircraft and more than 50 ships from 27 countries participated in the exercise.

It is also clear that Finland's NATO membership will have negative as well as positive consequences. Russian President Vladimir Putin[10], who stated before NATO membership that it would have political and military consequences, mentioned the development of Belarusian fighter jets to be capable of carrying Russian nuclear warheads and the delivery of the Iskander-M operational-tactical missile system to the Belarusian Armed Forces.[11]

With membership, The Helsinki administration, which in the past played the role of mediator and balancer between NATO and Russia and in the Arctic Council, has lost this position. Moreover, Finland has come within the primary scope of the "Block Area Access and Restrict Operational Capability" capabilities in Belarus and the Kaliningrad Oblast. Therefore, the country will be one of Moscow's near-targets in the event of a possible escalation.

In conclusion, Finland's NATO membership, which was finalized in less than a year after it decided to become a member of NATO in response to the increased need for security following the Russia-Ukraine War, will show whether Finland's NATO membership will be an event to thank Putin for, as US Foreign Minister Antony Blinken said, or whether it will be a development that will have different results.

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[2] Dmitri Chirciu, "Russia: We Will Ensure Our Security Against Finland's NATO Membership", Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/rusya-finlandiyanin-natoya-uyeligine-karsi-guvenligimizi-saglayacagiz/2864254>, (Date of Accession: 05.04.2023).

[3] "Finland Becomes 31st Member of Nato in Brussels Ceremony", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/04/finland-nato-member-brussels-ceremony>, (Date of Accession: 05.04.2023).

[4] "How Finland Joining Boosts NATO Defenses Against Russia", The Defence Post, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2023/04/03/finland-nato-membership-russia/>, (Date of Accession: 05.04.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Macron and Leyen's Visit to Beijing: Europe's Search for Strategic Autonomy and the Russia-Ukraine War

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying announced that French President Emmanuel Macron and European Union Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will visit Beijing on 5-7 April 2023. It is known that one week before this visit, on March 31, 2023, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez went to Beijing and met with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Considering that the European Union (EU)-China relations and the war in Ukraine were dis-

cussed during Sanchez's visit,[1] it can be said that Macron and Leyen focused on similar issues in their meetings with Xi.

The main factor affecting the intention of European actors to visit Beijing is the peace plan published by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the first anniversary of the Russia-Ukraine War. Because in the first article of the said plan, China openly expressed its sup-



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port for the sovereignties and territorial integrities of the states.[2] Of course, this article emphasizes the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Moreover, despite this article, which caused discomfort in Moscow, Xi visited Moscow on March 20-22, 2023, revealing that China-Russia relations will continue to develop and deepen.

The situation in question has led to the strengthening of the idea that Beijing can act as a mediator in the Russia-Ukraine War among the European actors. In fact, it is possible to accept the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Beijing on 4 November 2022 as the beginning of the idea that China can mediate. Because during the said visit, Scholz asked Xi to use his influence over Russian President Vladimir Putin.[3] In this sense, after China's peace plan, which is a development in line with the point Scholz pointed out, first Sanchez and then Macron and Leyen made these visits, which showed that they care about Beijing's mediation.

On the other hand, after the allegation that China could play a mediator role came to the fore, it was suggested by the United States of America (USA) that the Beijing administration might send weapons to Russia.[4] In fact, the USA is one of the leading actors who want the prolongation of the Russia-Ukraine War. Turning the war into a war of attrition is very useful for the Washington administration. Because, in this way, the USA had the opportunity to both repair the damage in trans-Atlantic relations and consolidate its hegemony in Continental Europe, as well as weaken its rival Russia, which stands out in the context of its pursuit of multipolarity.

In such an environment, Washington, which wanted the war to prolong after China's mediation came to the fore, tried to undermine mediation efforts by accusing Beijing of preparing to send weapons to Russia.

Despite the aforementioned strategy of the USA, it is obvious that the Beijing administration favors the end of the war. As a matter of fact, Xi conveyed his opinion on this issue to his Russian counterpart at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Leaders' Summit held in Samarkand, the ancient city of Uzbekistan on September 15-16, 2022, and clearly expressed that China is uncomfortable with the prolongation of the war in Ukraine.[5] Therefore, Beijing has been using a consistent rhetoric about the end of the war for a long time. This is probably why, after China's publication of its peace plan proposal, European actors' visits to Beijing were planned, and after Xi's visit to Moscow, first Sanchez's and then Macron and Leyen's visit took place.

Undoubtedly, these visits are very important in that they indicate that although Continental Europe acts in solidarity from a collective Western perspective due to threat perceptions regarding Russia, it may adopt a roadmap different from the expectations of the USA in the medium and long term.

As it can be understood, the interest shown by various actors from Continental Europe to China does not coincide with the global imaginations of the USA. This can be interpreted as the Western solidarity created by the war in Ukraine may crack once again after the war. As a matter of fact, the fact that the future of China-EU relations was also discussed during the aforementioned visits confirms this situation.

As can be expected, the effective position of the said country in the global economy is decisive in the EU's determination to maintain relations with China. In other words, there is an interdependence relationship between China and Europe that is not easy to give up. This means that the effort of the USA to get the support of Europe against China in the Asia-Pacific after Russia may be fruitless. The EU has already revealed that it wants to be positioned as a power center/pole in the multipolar world, especially during the previous US President Donald Trump era. Therefore, relations between China and the EU can develop in line with the expectations of both parties within the framework of the searches for multipolarity. Because the EU has not ended its searches for strategic autonomy.

As a result, China is uncomfortable with the prolongation of the Russia-Ukraine War. That's why Xi wants to mediate. The European states, which were most affected by the negative consequences of the war, especially the energy crisis, are also in anticipation of the end of the war as soon as possible. For this reason, diplomatic visits from Europe to Beijing intensified after the peace plan published by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is very important in terms of showing that the EU cares about China despite the USA.

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[2] "China's Position on the Political Settlement of the Ukraine Crisis", FMPRC, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202302/t20230224_11030713.html, (Date of Accession: 05.04.2023).

[3] Cenk Tamer, "Batı'nın Çin'le Mücadelesi ve Almanya'nın Farklılaşan Tutumu", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/batinin-cinle-mucadelesi-ve-almanyenin-farklilasan-tutumu/>, (Date of Accession: 05.04.2023).

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China's Strong Role in Central Asia

In the conjuncture brought about by the Russia-Ukraine War, the importance of the Central Asian geography in global politics has increased. As a result of the increasing interest in the region, the cooperation and partnership agreements signed recently have increased. In addition to the European actors that provide diversity of cooperation with the effect of the energy crisis, there are also Asian powers that carry out a strategy of being effective in the region.

At this point, it is seen that countries such as India, China and Japan come to the fore. Especially with the effect of China's Belt and Road Initiative, there are important developments in its relations with the countries of the region. The increasing value and strategic importance of the Middle Corridor also strengthens China-Central Asia ties.

At this point, the last example of increased cooperation was the cooperation package signed



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between Uzbekistan and China. On March 29, 2023, a series of agreements on cooperation in the fields of trade, economy and energy were signed between Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China. In addition to the cooperation between the parties in the field of renewable energy resources and trade, agreements on establishing a partnership between the local government in Tashkent and China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region were also signed. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the construction of solar power plants in Navoi and Fergana regions.[1]

Uzbekistan and China, which diversified their fields of cooperation, signed agreements worth 15 billion dollars in the fields of trade, investment, financial and technical cooperation in September 2022.[2] It is seen that the partnerships between the two are progressing step by step.

It can be stated that developments based in Afghanistan and Ukraine have brought Central Asia to a strategic and critical point in terms of energy and transportation. Accordingly, many actors have taken action to strengthen ties with the countries of the region. It is possible to say that China is one step ahead in this regard. It can be said that Beijing, which has been interested in the region for a long time, is reaping the fruits of its past investments today. Beijing strengthens its relations with regional capitals through various partnerships. It is known that the relations between the parties are mostly based on energy and security.

The Central Asia-China mechanism is also an important factor that strengthens the ties between the parties. Such regional and global structures allow for increased mutual interaction. Launched in 2020, C5+1 meetings have become an important tool in strengthening mutual partnerships.

However, China has a significant share in the export revenues of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. In terms of security, China is an important partner for Central Asian countries in terms of providing military technology and equipment. Tajikistan-China joint border patrols and counter-terrorism exercises set an important example within the scope of military cooperation.

It can be said that another important component in relations is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO makes a strategic contribution to Beijing's enhanced role in Central Asia. Through the SCO, commercial, economic, military and political interactions are deepened.

The decrease in Russia's military and political influence also paved the way for China to increase its influence in the region. For example, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was ineffective in the Tajik-Kyrgyz border issues. Accordingly, it is seen that the perspective of the countries of the region towards the CSTO has been negatively affected. Because Bishkek canceled the joint CSTO exercise called "Sarsilmaz Brotherhood-2022" to be held in Kyrgyzstan.[3]

On the other hand, it is known that the effects of the Russia-Ukraine War reduced Moscow's influence in the region. In order to fill the gap, China is taking steps to move from the position of "commercial partner" to "strategic partner" status. In this direction, it is seen that economic and infrastructure-based relations have been developed within the scope of the energy and security sectors. Following a pro-active policy, the Beijing administration strengthened its ties by signing economic agreements with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 2022.

The acceleration in relations with Uzbekistan and the developments in the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway project please Beijing in terms of China's regional targets. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who also improved relations with Turkmenistan, hosted the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, on January 6, 2023.[4] As it is known, Beijing attaches great importance to relations with Turkmenistan at the point of meeting its energy needs. It is clear that Ashgabat is also pleased with the development of commercial relations with Beijing. As a matter of fact, on the occasion of the said visit, the relations between the two countries rose to the level of "comprehensive strategic partnership". Undoubtedly, energy is the cornerstone of cooperation. It can be argued that attempts will continue to be made to strengthen the China-Turkmenistan relations, which have deepened with natural gas cooperation.

While China is making such moves; Some steps are being taken by the West as well. As a matter of fact, on March 17, 2023, senior officials from the governments of the United States (USA), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan confirmed their common goals and commitments to enhance cooperation and develop trade and investment opportunities as part of the US council meeting. signed the Central Asian Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).[5]

The USA, which follows the domestic political steps of the countries in the region and aims to provide efficiency through democratization processes by supporting reform activities, also engages in commercial initiatives. Therefore, Central Asia becomes one of the important areas of US-China competition. Against Beijing, which is one step ahead of European countries and increased its partnership with Central Asia, Washington does not act solely on trade; it also strives to develop a communication within the framework of values.

In addition to the US influence, another compelling factor for China is Russia. Although its influence has decreased due to recent developments, Russia has a strong cultural influence in the region. It is also an important actor in the fields of economy and security. Moreover, Moscow does not want to share its influence in the post-Soviet field because of the "Near Environment Doctrine".

In summary, the geographical centrality of Central Asia and the decreasing influence of Russia allow China to have a more comfortable presence in the region than ever before. Beijing is also trying to seize this opportunity and is making moves to deepen its ties with the countries of the region. It does this in the infrastructure, energy and transportation center. Therefore, international developments, geostrategic location and the advantage of the Middle Corridor play an encouraging role in China's moves to further its relations with Central Asia.

On the other hand, there are compelling factors against Beijing's influence in the region. At this point, it can be stated that Russia is an important factor. Because Russia still has influence in the said geography. However, depending on the new conjuncture, new actors began to appear. It can be said that China is faced with compelling factors in Central Asia, which is a region where European countries are more interested in, along with the USA.

After all, Beijing is aware of the opportunities and challenges and is taking various steps to strengthen its partnerships in the region in line with this awareness. It can be predicted that Beijing will continue its moves to diversify and deepen its cooperation in the future.

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17 April 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's article titled "The New Constitution Referendum in the Construction Process of New Uzbekistan" was published in Milliyet Newspaper.

18 April 2023

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, made evaluations about terrorism and the west on TVNET.

19 April 2023

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



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