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C+C5 Summit: Xi's Messages and Goal

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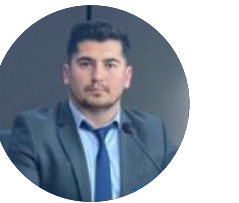


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Vucic's Test: Increasing Violence Incidents in Serbia

Globalization has increased the interaction among the international community. Particularly, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there was a general acceptance that wars would come to an end. During this process, Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis received significant attention, leading to the be-

lief that borders would lose their significance. This perception was further reinforced in parallel with the importance of international organizations. However, Samuel Huntington argued that wars would not cease, but rather that conflicts would arise between cultures, not states, through his thesis "The Clash of Civilizations."



Veli Can AKKAŞ

Nevertheless, events such as the Arab Spring, the Syrian Civil War, and the Russia-Ukraine War demonstrated that conflicts persisted and highlighted the importance of borders. Moreover, it has been observed that conventional wars have been replaced by hybrid warfare. Additionally, the new era has witnessed the rise of nationalism and radicalism. One of the regions where these trends are on the rise is the Balkans.

As it is known, states take steps to legitimize their policies, and this includes shaping the narrative of history. In other words, actors try to base their current strategies on historical references. In this context, it can be observed that nationalism is instrumentalized. In the Balkans, where nationalism is on the rise, there have been discussions in the Serbian public, especially after the Russia-Ukraine War. These discussions reflect the idea of a “Greater Serbia” and are propagated through media and education policies to permeate society.[1]

Actually, the Balkans have a heterogeneous demographic structure. In other words, different identity groups coexist in all the countries in the region. That is why limiting radical movements is among the priority topics in the regional policies of international organizations such as the European Union (EU). However, radicalization permeates all segments of society. In this regard, the politicization of the population plays a decisive role, especially in an environment where social decay has reached an extreme level.

Due to all these reasons, it can be observed that violence and radicalization are on the rise in Serbia. The proliferation of weapon usage here leads to serious problems. In fact, the incident on May 3, 2023, in Belgrade, where a 14-year-old child used a weapon in school, resulting in the death of nine people and numerous injuries, serves as a concrete example of this.[2] This incident has highlighted the extent of violence and weapon usage in Serbia, leading to the formation of public opinion against the government both nationally and internationally. In fact, Serbian President Alexander Vucic has announced that various measures will be taken in response.[3] Additionally, the Serbian Minister of Education, Branko Ružić, has resigned in order to mitigate the reactions.[4]

Although Ružić’s resignation has taken place, it is evident that the public’s interest in the issue will not cease. Therefore, Vucic has taken concrete steps to regain the government’s reputation and address security concerns. In this context, it has been decided that two police officers will patrol each school to enhance security.[5] The measures taken by the Belgrade administration are not limited to this. In order to develop alternatives to risky behaviors and manage difficult situations, the Council for Prevention of Peer Violence has also been established.[6]

However, it would be incomplete to say that the incident demonstrating the prevalence of violence in Serbia was limited to the attack in the school. Another incident occurred in the village of Dubona, under the administration of Mladenovac Municipality, where eight people lost their lives due to an attack.[7] These incidents, occurring in a Serbia where the culture of violence is widespread, have been met with significant public outrage. In fact, the public has organized protests demanding the resignation of government officials and the closure of media organizations that promote violence.[8] Moreover, it is not possible to say that these reactions are solely coming from the local population. For example, Members of the European Parliament have made statements indicating that there has been no progress in Serbia’s EU accession process.[9] However, these incidents alone have not been the only factors influencing this decision. In addition to principles such as democracy and the rule of law, the implementation of sanctions against Russia for the sake of the EU is also a significant criterion.

Nevertheless, it can be said that the Belgrade administration is making efforts to prevent violence. Especially in order to control the proliferation of weapons, numerous individuals have been detained. Additionally, measures are being taken to make it more difficult to obtain firearms licenses and to identify problematic students in schools.

In conclusion, there is an increasing tendency of violence in the Balkans, and Serbia stands out as one of the prominent countries in this regard. Undoubtedly, the demographic structure of the country and the news coverage in the media have an impact on this trend.

[1] “Cvejić: Sistem, porodica, mediji... uveli nasilje na velika vrata”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/3/cve-jic-sistem-porodica-mediji-uveli-nasilje-na-velika-vrata>, (Date of Accession: 03.05.2023).

[2] “Pucnjava u Beogradskoj školi: Učenik ubio devet i ranio više osoba”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/5/3/pucn-java-u-beogradskoj-skoli-ucenik-ubio-devet-i-ranio-vise-osoba>, (Date of Accession: 03.05.2023).

[3] “Vučić najavio oštre mjere koje će ‘suštinski promijeniti’ Srbiju”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/7/vucic-najavio-ostre-mjere-koje-ce-sustinski-promijeniti-srpsko-drustvo>, (Date of Accession: 07.05.2023).

[4] “Ružić podnio ostavku na mjesto ministra prosvjete Srbije”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/7/ruzic-pod-nio-ostavku-na-mjesto-ministra-prosvjete-srbije>, (Date of Accession: 07.05.2023).

[5] “Polijske patrole u školama Srbije”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/5/8/policijske-patrole-u-skolama-srbije>, (Date of Accession: 08.05.2023).

[6] “Vlada Srbije formirala Vijeće za sprečavanje vršnjačkog nasilja”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/11/vla-da-srbije-formirala-vijece-za-sprecavanje-vrsnjackog-nasilja-i-vise-radnih-grupa>, (Date of Accession: 11.05.2023).

[7] “Srbija u stanju šoka, najglasnija je tišina”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2023/5/5/srbija-u-stanju-soka-na-jglasnija-je-tisina>, (Date of Accession: 05.05.2023).

[8] “Serbia Shootings: Tens of Thousands Join Protests”, BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65529509>, (Date of Accession: 09.05.2023).

[9] “Europarlamentarci: Srbija ne napreduje prema EU”, Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/5/9/europarlament-arci-srbija-ne-napreduje-prema-eu>, (Date of Accession: 09.05.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Future of the British Royal Family

II. After the death of Elizabeth II, appointed King of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth of Nations. Charles' coronation was held on May 6, 2023. The continuation of the British monarchy, which has become one of the polemic subjects of recent times and whose future has been questioned, has been confirmed with this ceremony. However, this confirmation did not help to clear some doubts about the monarchy. On the contrary, the number of people who question the place, duty and functions of the monarchy in today's world has increased.

At the same time III. Charles' coronation was the first to take place in the UK in 70 years. Finally, in 1953, II. The coronation ceremony of Elizabeth and the current ceremony took place under very different conditions. In those years, the United Kingdom, having emerged victorious from the Second World War, was driven to rebuild its economy as an overseas colonial empire and regain its leading position in the world. The ceremony was therefore accompanied by an air of widespread optimism. Today, the United Kingdom is faced with a completely different conjuncture.



YİĞİT KIRDÜK

The UK is currently in a deep political and economic crisis. While the post-Brexit economic crisis deepens in the country, the UK is losing its political influence in the national arena along with the economic crisis. Therefore, in such an environment, III. Expenditures for Charles' coronation were met with surprise by some British sections.

In the midst of the economic crisis, inflation rates in the UK reached around 10%; The government's lavish funding of an anachronistic ceremony has drawn criticism. These criticisms drew attention to the fact that the British monarchy is the only monarchy in the world that still crowns its kings. However, during the coronation ceremony in line with British traditions, III. Charles swore to uphold the Protestant law and faith. But while this oath was fulfilled; Rishi Sunak, the only non-Christian Prime Minister in the history of the United Kingdom, also attended the ceremony. Therefore, the ceremony took place in contradictions.

Aware of all these contradictions and criticisms, King Charles has made some efforts to adapt the coronation ceremony to the 21st century. In this context, for the first time, representatives of other non-Protestant Christian denominations settled in England were also included in the ceremony. But III. This time, Charles has become the target of conservative groups.

Also, III. He also staged some protests during Charles' coronation. These groups were led by young individuals such as the UK Anti-Monarchy Movement. Therefore, while the opposition of the young generation to the monarchy rises in the United Kingdom; The protests also led to the detention of some people.[1]

On the other hand, the King of the United Kingdom is also the King of the Commonwealth of Nations. This community includes developed countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The United Kingdom uses this position to consolidate its influence and soft power in its foreign policy.

Similarly, the Royal Family is a family closely followed by the international media and the public. As can be expected, even scandals and crises in the family are quickly on the agenda of the international media. Therefore, thanks to these qualities, the Royal Family; is a global brand that can make major contributions to the UK economy through media revenues, tourism and merchandise.

In addition, the monarchy offers a strong identity to the United Kingdom, which has been dragged from crisis to crisis, brings together different elements within the Kingdom on a common ground and provides relative stability in the country.

Finally, perhaps the real question to ask is not whether the Royal family has a place in the 21st century; It is the future of the royal family. So that; After Brexit, England, the center of the Royal family, continues to have problems with Scotland and Northern Ireland. While these problems continue, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as a requirement of his duty, the new king III. He doubts that Charles will be able to act impartially towards them.

On the other hand, powerful members of the Commonwealth of Nations are Canada, Australia and New Zealand; II. Throughout Elizabeth's reign, she remained loyal to the English throne and did not change her forms of government. However, III. It is unclear whether these countries will retain their forms of government after Charles' accession to the throne. Because in the recent past, some local leaders from Australia, the Caribbean, Canada, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea signed and III. In a letter to Charles, a formal apology was requested from the Royal family. The racism, oppression, colonialism that has been applied to them for centuries and the slavery that they were subjected to in the past were put forward as the justification for the apology. In addition to the apology, financial compensation was requested from the United Kingdom and the return of cultural treasures stolen in the historical process was requested.[2] Therefore, III. As Charles was crowned, new problems awaiting the United Kingdom began to come to light.

[1] "A Human-Rights Nightmare. Anti-Monarchy Protesters Have Already Been Arrested at King Charles III's Coronation", Time, <https://time.com/6277591/anti-monarchy-protesters-arrested-king-charles-coronation/>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

[2] "Commonwealth Indigenous Leaders Demand Apology from the King for Effects of Colonisation", The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/04/commonwealth-indigenous-leaders-demand-apology-from-the-king-for-effects-of-colonisation>, (Date of Accession: 04.05.2023).



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Result of the C+C5 Summit: Xian Declaration

Relations between China and Central Asian countries have recently reached strategic dimensions. Within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, its effects in the Middle Corridor increase the value of the countries in the region. At the same time, the global effects of the Russia-Ukraine War increased the interest in the Central Asian states and shaped Beijing's policies.

It can be said that China, which wants to strengthen and deepen its ties with the countries of the region in a holistic way, has increased its influence in Central Asia with the mechanism in the C+C5 format.

In addition, the basis for mutual cooperation and new projects for the future is formed. In this context,



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the C+C5 Summit held in Xian, China on 18-19 May 2023 is also important in many respects. The summit, which was held with the participation of the leaders of the Central Asian countries, created an effect that strengthens their cooperation and partnerships; it is also an indication that Beijing has deepened its presence in the region.

While Chinese President Xi Jinping revised their bilateral cooperation with the leaders of each regional country; has also taken steps to emphasize the sustainability of win-win relations within the framework of common policies. In this context, within the framework of the summit, an agreement was reached on issues such as the development of common commercial-economic, energy, transportation and security ties, and the institutional structuring of relations.

The Xian Declaration signed after the summit is crucial because of the current structure of the relations between the parties and the signs for the future. The following items are included in the 15-item declaration:[1]

- The parties agree on the development of fruitful cooperation between Central Asian countries and China. At the same time, the desire to create a closer community with a common destiny is affirmed.
- Within the framework of the summit, it was declared that a mechanism for the meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia and China was officially established. The summit will be held alternately, once in China and once in one of the Central Asian states, in alphabetical order, two years apart. It is also envisaged to establish a mechanism for ministerial meetings in order to accelerate the formation of the said format.
- Central Asian states have confirmed their commitment to the "One China Principle"; China, on the other hand, stated that it supports the development path of Central Asian states, their efforts to protect their national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and their independent foreign and domestic policies.
- Sides; stated that they agreed that ensuring state security, political stability and constitutional order is of key importance. However, they have resolutely opposed any attempt to discredit legitimate state power and incite "color revolutions", as well as any form of interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- The issue of ensuring and maintaining harmony between the Belt and Road Initiative and the national development projects of Central Asian countries was emphasized. In this context, the National Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026, the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2030, the "Revival of the Great Silk Road" of Turkmenistan and the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026, to strengthen practical cooperation in various fields in order to form a new architectonics of cooperation, characterized by a high level of complementarity and mutual benefit.
- It was also stated that importance would be attached to the strengthening of commercial-economic ties. Emphasis was placed on developing a strategy for the New Economic Dialogue. At the same time, an agreement was reached on issues such as developing green investment projects, organizing the Central Asia-China Industry and Cooperation Forum, and creating common value chains.
- Within the scope of increasing mutual interaction and facilitating transportation, the need to improve the status of Central Asia as one of the most important trans-Eurasian transportation hubs, to develop multimodal transit and transportation in China-Central Asia directions was expressed. In this context, it was declared that the parties would jointly develop the transportation infrastructure, including the modernization of new railways and existing railways and roads from China to Central Asia. Therefore, the operation of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Project, the China-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan Highway and the West-China-Western Europe Highway has become more valuable.
- Among the cooperation sectors, the importance of issues such as agriculture, irrigation, food safety and animal husbandry was emphasized.

- Within the scope of cooperation in the field of energy, the creation of “Central Asia-China” partnerships in energy development, establishing cooperation along the entire production chain, and further expanding cooperation in the field of traditional energy resources, including oil, natural gas and coal, was supported. In this context, satisfaction with the acceleration of the construction of the fourth line of the Turkmenistan-China Natural Gas Pipeline was also expressed. It is seen that the changing energy supply-demand balance as one of the effects of the Russia-Ukraine War stands out as one of the main components in Central Asia-China cooperation. It should be noted that it is highly probable that new mechanisms will be created in the future within the scope of energy-based cooperation projects. Indeed, the development of an international roadmap for the development of hydrogen has been noted as one of the priority areas.
- A common will has been put forward to strengthen cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Central Asian countries and China in fields such as education, science, culture, tourism, archeology, archives, physical culture and sports, media and think tanks. In this context, Beijing has proposed the implementation of the Cultural Silk Road Project.
- The issue of climate change has also been one of the topics in the declaration. The parties called for closer cooperation in the field of climate resilience and adaptation, emphasizing that the joint use of “green” solutions and that they are designed to serve as effective measures to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.
- In the meeting declaration, where developments in Afghanistan were also discussed, the initiative to establish the United Nations (UN) Regional Sustainable Development Goals Center for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty was also included. At the same time, the parties strongly condemning terrorism, separatism and extremism in all its forms and manifestations, committed to joint action to combat drug trafficking, international organized crime and cybercrime, and to act together to ensure the security of key projects and mass events. The Samarkand Solidarity Initiative for Common Security and Prosperity is also important in this respect.
- Central Asian states have declared their readiness to cooperate actively within the framework of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative put forward by China. It has been declared that the “Central Asia-China Digital Data Security Cooperation Initiative” is jointly promoted.
- Finally, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen the central role of the UN in achieving international peace, security and sustainable development.

The Xian Declaration not only sets out the multiple cooperation options and future projects between the parties, but also shows that the intention to create a global impact is being followed. The frequent emphasis on the UN aims to ensure that partnerships and desired initiatives between the parties receive international support. It is also aimed to increase and strengthened the dialogue through multilateral organizations such as SCO and CICA in addition to UN.

Another point emphasized by the declaration is that the relations between the Central Asian states and China should be intensified in new sectors in addition to the existing cooperation areas.

On the other hand, it is seen that there is an institutionalization aim in the development of mutual relations. The establishment of cooperation mechanisms, ministries and various initiatives indicate that the parties want to strengthen partnerships on an institutional basis.

As a result, it is seen that the Central Asia-China Summit has brought a new vitality and dimension to the relations between the parties. It can be predicted that the second summit to be held in Kazakhstan in 2025 will be held with this enthusiasm. It can be said that the C+C5 format will develop in a way that will create strategic effects, with new arrangements and institutionalization activities to be made in partnerships until this date.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Obstacle to the EU

It is known that the Western Balkans have come to the fore in the enlargement policies of the European Union (EU) in the recent period. In this context, the Union is in various contacts with the states of the region. One of these states is Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a matter of fact, the EU integration process of the Sarajevo administration continues. However, it is not possible to say that this process proceeded smoothly.

Especially after the Russian-Ukrainian War, the security concerns of the states of the region

have increased. In this context, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also in contact with both the EU and the United States of America (USA) to improve its cooperation. In particular, the negotiations with the EU are considered to have contributed to the political situation of the country. At this point, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is also on the agenda as a critical actor that comes to the forefront.

It can be stated that concerns about Russia's influence were decisive in the EU's focus on the



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region in question. It is believed that the Moscow administration seeks to increase its influence over the Serbian population by utilizing pan-Slavism. In contrast, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is focused on integration with the EU, is also increasing its contacts with the OSCE. In fact, Bosnian officials emphasize the importance of the OSCE in their statements regarding the war in Ukraine.[1]

Furthermore, due to the aforementioned security concerns, Bosnia and Herzegovina has also participated in the EU Military Committee Meeting. During this summit, the importance of global security was emphasized, and the significance of actors enhancing their defense capabilities was highlighted. However, Bosnia and Herzegovina's steps in the security context are not limited to this. Sarajevo, in fact, has intensified its contacts with the Washington administration. In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina is preparing to procure helicopters from the United States.[2] This also indicates an increase in military cooperation between the parties. However, it should be noted that this policy has drawn the reaction of Milorad Dodik, the leader of the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dodik is already known as a figure close to Russia.

Another indication of the West's growing interest in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the announcement of the visit of European Commissioner for Enlargement, Oliver Varhlyi, to Sarajevo. It is believed that during this visit, the issue of limiting Russia's influence and addressing the growing radicalization will be discussed. Bosnian High Representative, Christian Schmidt, has already made statements in this regard.[3]

Although there have been positive developments in the integration process between the parties, there are also serious difficulties. For example, Dodik's attitude is obvious. Indeed, Schmidt states that Dodik's separatist tendencies have harmed the healthy implementation of the Dayton Agreement.[4] It can be said that this has also made Sarajevo's journey to the EU more difficult. On the other hand, it can be stated that despite all the difficulties, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken important steps towards EU membership and is willing to do so.

In conclusion, the Russia-Ukraine War has directed Balkan countries towards the West in the context of Russian expansionism, thereby increasing the interest of the West, particularly the EU, in the region. In this regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina also values the EU integration process. However, the attitudes and separatist tendencies of Bosnian Serbs, particularly Dodik, make Sarajevo's journey to Brussels more challenging.

[1] "BiH Foreign Minister met with the OSCE Chairman", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/bih-foreign-minister-met-with-the-osce-chairman/>, (Date of Accession: 12.05.2023).

[2] "The Armed Forces of BiH are getting new American Helicopters", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/the-armed-forces-of-bih-are-getting-new-american-helicopters/>, (Date of Accession: 12.05.2023).

[3] "HR Christian Schmidt and the "Radicalization of Bosniaks"", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/hr-christian-schmidt-and-the-radicalization-of-bosniaks/>, (Date of Accession: 12.05.2023).

[4] "Remarks by High Representative Christian Schmidt to the United Nations Security Council", Sarajevo Times, <https://sarajevotimes.com/remarks-by-high-representative-christian-schmidt-to-the-united-nations-security-council/>, (Date of Accession: 10.05.2023).





ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Changing Equations in the Japan-Russia-China Triangle

The Asia-Pacific Region has become one of the main playing fields of global competition. As a matter of fact, it is seen that Japan, an important ally of the West, has increased its influence and power in the region. With its new proactive foreign policy, the Tokyo administration has made its position in the region more critical in the geopolitical power struggle. Considering that the country at issue has increased its defense expenditures,[1] toughened its attitude towards Russia and China,[2] and the defense-based agreements it has signed with Western states, it can be said that Tokyo is getting closer with the United States (US) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) day by day.

At this point, the defense agreement signed in London in January 2023 between British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is important.[3] In addition, it is important that Japan is accepted as a temporary member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).[4] It is also critical that the G7 Summit in 2023 will be held in Hiroshima, Japan, and Tokyo will take on the G7 Presidency.[5] As a matter of fact, this indicates that Japan will improve its relations with the G7 countries. Within the framework of all these developments, it can be argued that Japan will accelerate its Western-centered proactive foreign policy.



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In addition, as mentioned above, it is clear that Japan has strengthened its anti-Russia and anti-Chinese rhetoric. In this context, at the cabinet meeting held on January 27, 2023, the Tokyo administration's decision to impose additional sanctions on Russia as a response to the Russia-Ukraine War is an indicator of Tokyo's hardened attitude towards Moscow.[6] Therefore, it can be predicted that the G7 countries, especially Japan, will take a tougher stance against Moscow.

On the other hand, in various statements made by the leaders of the G7 countries, it is emphasized that they will increase the pressure on Russia. In particular, it can be deduced that G7 countries were influenced by Tokyo, not Japan by G7. Because Kishida visited many of the G7 countries before these discourses were used.[7] It is known that Japan's strong US and NATO perspective pushes it to make harsher rhetoric against the "other" states of the West, such as China and Russia. As a result, it can be said that Japan's harsh rhetoric has affected the attitudes of the G7 countries in terms of anti-Russian rhetoric. Because it is seen that the anti-Russian discourse developed by Japan with its foreign policy breakthrough through both the UNSC and the G7 is also supported by the West.

In the context of China, it is remarkable that Kishida defines the military agreements between the USA and Japan as a "turning point". [8] Cooperation on the Tokyo-Washington line is basically shaped by anti-China. Within this scope, it is worth mentioning the meeting between Kishida and US President Joe Biden in January 2023. As a matter of fact, during the meeting in question, ideas were exchanged about naval bases.[9]

As it is known, the USA and Japan are establishing alliances over the seas due to China's claims about Taiwan. At this point, especially naval bases are being revised and the number of bases is increased. In addition, the allegations that the USA wants to be active again at the Manila Base are also on the agenda.[10] It can be stated that the reason why Japan both strengthens its anti-Beijing stance and supports the US presence in the region is the possibility of a possible hot war to affect the Japanese Islands as well. Because the West thinks that these islands have strategic importance in a possible war over Taiwan. For this reason, it can be argued that there is a relationship shaped by the logic of win-win between countries.

For Tokyo, it is an advantage that the USA provides protection on the Japanese Islands. However, at the same time, this situation also contributes to the geopolitical superiority of the USA against China through the Taiwan Crisis, as it means that Washington has influence on islands in the question.

As a result, it is possible to argue that Tokyo's opposition to Beijing and Moscow will continue. Therefore, unless issues such as the Russia-Ukraine War and the Taiwan Crisis are resolved, the tension between the West and these actors is likely to continue. Of course, in this case, it is inevitable for Japan to harden its rhetoric and actions.

[1] "Japan Unveils REcord Defence Budget Amid Regional Security Fears", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/23/japan-unveils-record-defence-budget-amid-regional-security-fears#:~:text=Japan%20will%20boost%20its%20defence,by%20China%20and%20North%20Korea,> (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023).

[2] "Tokyo Urged to Heed Rational Voices on China After it Hypes Regular China-Russia Air Patrols", Al Jazeera, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202212/1280953.shtml>, (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023).

[3] "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>, (Erişim Tarihi: 15.04.2023).

[4] "Japan Joins U.N. Security Council as New Nonpermanent Member", Kyodo News, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2023/01/6c679e2ec5bf-japan-joins-un-security-council-as-new-nonpermanent-member.html>, (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023).

[5] "Japan to Host G7 Summit in Hiroshima Next May", Japan Times, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/06/28/national/g7-hiroshima-summit/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 15.04.2023).

[6] "Japan Cabinet Approves Additional Sanctions on Russia", NHK World Japan, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230127_21/, (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Reflection of Romania's Contribution to European Security on the Schengen Process

Due to its geopolitical location, Romania is an important country for both the European Union (EU) and the United States (USA). In particular, it is perceived as a buffer zone against Russian expansionism, which has been discussed recently. Therefore, both the EU and the USA tend to expand and deepen their relations with Romania. The Bucharest administration, on the other hand, perceives the "Russian threat" as a matter of national security.

As it can be understood, the common threat perception plays a decisive role in the policies of these actors. Accordingly, it is still discussed that Romania is not a Schengen member. As a matter of fact, in its report on the Schengen Area, the European Commission called for the approval of Romania's accession from the EU countries.[1]



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As it is known, the Russia-Ukraine War was perceived by the regional states as a violation of their sovereignty and European states-imposed sanctions on Russia. It is seen that Bucharest has pioneered the said sanctions. In addition to these sanctions, Romania makes statements that will open the legitimacy of Russia to discussion before the international community. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Romanian President Klaus Iohannis declared that Russia violated international law by attacking Ukraine.[2]

On the other hand, the Russia-Ukraine War caused the actors in the region to feel various security concerns; has also accelerated the cooperation between these actors. Moreover, Iohannis stated that the protection of Romania and Moldova would ensure the security of Europe. [3]

While Romania's anti-Russian policies continue, it is seen that its strategic importance in the region has increased. In this framework, the Bucharest administration has not only strengthened relations with the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); At the same time, it has strengthened its bilateral relations with the states of the region. In particular, there is a significant progress in Romania's relations with Hungary. The good relations between the two countries were clearly demonstrated by the support of the Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto to Romania on the Schengen issue. Szijjarto stated that Romania should be a part of the Schengen Area and that the relations between the parties will improve.[4]

It should be noted that; With the steps it took against Russia, Romania gained the support of both Europe and the states of the region and gained significant support for Schengen membership. Although the desired result has not been reached yet, Romanian Minister of Interior Lucian Bode stated that his country has been ready to join the Schengen Area since 2011.[5]

The political importance of Romania in the region is increasing and the parties are producing various policies with this awareness. It would be appropriate to say that Romania is becoming more important day by day, especially in terms of integration processes in Europe. Thierry Breton, Member of the European Commission for Internal Market, stated that Romania can play an important role in the defense industry.[6]

Although it is true that Romania contributed to European integration, there are many developments that feed this process. Especially the steps of Russia are very important for the parties. For example, a Polish aircraft patrolling for the Agency for Operational Cooperation for the Management of External Borders of EU Member States (FRONTEX) in cooperation with the Romanian Border Police was harassed by a Russian warplane.[7] It is obvious that such events lead the parties to common security policies and integration.

In addition to all these developments, the fact that Europe took a position against Russia and turned to various initiatives to ensure the security of the region increased the importance of Romania. In this context, various exercises were held in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Black Sea. In particular, "Junction Strike 23", which is described as the Biggest Exercise of Special Operations Forces, started in Romania.[8]

It would be correct to say that the exercise in question took place as an intimidation against Russia. It is also clear that the rapprochement between Bucharest and Bar will contribute to the reduction of security concerns of the actors in the region. One of the most striking of these efforts belongs to Romania. Because in the Russo-Ukrainian War, the Bucharest administration consistently supported Ukraine and continued to strengthen its own defense and army. In this context, Romania has made various initiatives, especially regarding the modernization of the army. For example, Romania will buy submarines from France, minelayers from the UK and tanks from the USA.[9]

As a result, it can be stated that security concerns, which can be considered as the reflection of the Russia-Ukraine War in Europe, bring the actors in the region closer to each other. At this point, Romania comes to the fore as an important buffer zone and strengthens its army day by day, reducing the security concerns of European states.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

SCO Under the Chairmanship of India

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an Asia-based organization established to deepen political, economic, and defense cooperation and relations among member states. In addition to Central Asian countries and members such as Russia, the SCO is a very important organization as it brings together actors such as China, India, and Pakistan, which are engaged in regional competition. With the theme of the SCO Chairmanship-in-Office being "Security", India pays special attention to the SCO in promoting partnerships in various fields in the region.

The attitude of the New Delhi administration in the SCO meetings hosted by the SCO also demonstrates this interest. As a matter of fact, the SCO Defense Ministers' Meeting was held in New Delhi on 28 April 2023. The meeting was attended by Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu and his Rus-

sian counterpart Sergey Shoigu, Colonel General Sherali Mirzo from Tajikistan, Colonel General Ruslan Zhaksylykov from Kazakhstan, Bahadir Kurbanov from Uzbekistan and Major General Taalaibek Omuraliev from Kyrgyzstan.[1] Representatives of Belarus and Iran also took part in the meeting as observers.

It is known that Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif attended the meeting online. This attitude of Asif is a reflection of the India-Pakistan tension. The rivalry and regional struggle between the two countries continue within the SCO. However, both countries attach importance to the SCO partnership in the fight against regional threats, terrorism, and extremism. This is an essential factor that brings the parties together. At the same time, the SCO brings the parties together on common ground in terms of combating regional threats



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and cooperation against terrorism. In this context, it can be said that the SCO started to pay more attention to defense partnerships after 2021. Since that period, the new regional realities that emerged with the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian War and the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan have significantly affected security and defense policies. Therefore, it is possible to say that new initiatives at the institutional level have also gained importance. As a matter of fact, it is known that the main focus of the aforementioned meeting was regional security, along with the developments in Afghanistan.

Increasing the coordination among the SCO member states in effectively combating terrorism and extremism is one of the priority issues. This issue has already been emphasized at the meeting. Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh underlined the regional security threats and emphasised the importance of acting collectively. He also emphasised India's international role and made the following statements:[2]

"If we want to make the SCO a stronger and more credible international grouping, our top priority must be to effectively combat terrorism... India is working to strengthen trust and cooperation among the SCO members."

On the one hand, India emphasises cooperation and partnerships, and on the other hand, it endeavours to use the SCO leadership process as effectively as possible and to seize opportunities. New Delhi has a number of advantages in terms of setting the agenda, guiding member states, reinforcing its international image, deepening bilateral relations within the scope of the fight against terrorism and deepening its relations with Central Asian countries. Afghanistan-centered developments constitute the basis of these advantages. The activities of local radical groups and the activities of terrorist groups, especially the terrorist organization State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), lead the countries to act together.

On the other hand, the Defense Ministers' Meeting is also crucial as it provides space for bilateral talks on military cooperation and defense. The Defense Ministers' Meeting was preceded by a meeting between the Defense Ministers of China and India, which act together within the SCO framework but are in regional competition. As it is known, there are border problems between Beijing and New Delhi. There is also regional rivalry between the parties. In this sense, the meeting between the Defense Ministers and the establishment of a moderate dialogue may have a positive impact on border tensions. During the bilateral meeting, Shangfu and Singh exchanged views on India-China relations. Singh also stated that the development of relations between New Delhi and

Beijing depends on peace and tranquility at the borders. [3]

However, the visit of the Chinese Defense Minister to India is also important as it is the first visit after the confrontations between the two countries in 2020. Therefore, it is likely that steps will be taken to improve military and diplomatic channels within the framework of bilateral talks and the SCO meeting. Indeed, it was stated that the parties had a friendly and sincere exchange of views and agreed to maintain close contact and dialogue. In a press release issued by the Chinese Ministry of Defense, it was stated that the bilateral meeting will accelerate the resolution of related issues in the western part of the China-India border and continue to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas. [4]

Singh also held bilateral meetings with the ministers of other member states. The strategic nature of these meetings gives them the potential to open the door to processes aimed at strengthening defense ties between India and each member state.

It is likely that there will be other developments that will add value to India's position in the SCO in the upcoming processes. At the same time, it is possible that various cooperation processes may also come to the agenda. India will host the Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 4-5 May 2023 and the SCO Summit on 3-4 July 2023. It is not yet clear which leaders will attend the meetings and how. However, it can be said that the course of relations with India and international developments will have an impact on the attitude of the leaders.

Following the Defence Ministers' meeting, where military cooperation and counter-terrorism issues were discussed, both meetings are expected to focus on India's extensive foreign trade as well as inclusive connectivity initiatives, including the North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).[5] At the same time, active initiatives on the Afghan conflict and regional stabilization issues are likely to continue. India's role in such initiatives is undoubtedly increasing. In this sense, it is possible to talk about a New Delhi administration that aims to stand out at the regional and global levels.

As can be seen, the SCO Chairmanship gives India an advantage in developing bilateral relations and increasing its influence in international affairs. At the same time, there are also some opportunities to reduce the regional tensions. The fact that the talks with the Chinese Defence Minister, who visited India for the first time after the border problems, took place in a positive atmosphere is an example of this.



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C+C5 Summit: Xi's Messages and Goal

On May 17, 2023, President Xi Jinping of China invited the leaders of Central Asia for the C+C5 (China+Central Asia) Summit. In response to this invitation, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, President Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyzstan, and President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, along with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan and President Serdar Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, visited the city of Xi'an, which holds historical and strategic significance for the Belt and Road Initiative, on May 18.[1] During the visit, various meetings were held with the aim of developing bilateral and regional relations. On May 18, 2023, President Xi had individual meetings with the Central Asian leaders to prepare for the summit scheduled

for May 19, 2023.[2] The first Central Asian leader that Xi met with was President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan. President Tokayev stated in his remarks that they shared the common goal of intensifying bilateral relations, emphasizing that they achieved this based on security and cooperation. The construction of lasting friendship between the two states was highlighted, with the announcement of sharing "happiness and sorrow" and the intention to advance the "enduring multilateral strategic partnership." [3]

When we look at the relations within the framework of the relations, the trade volume between the two states according to the data of



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2022 has reached approximately 31 billion dollars. In addition, the leaders signed 47 agreements worth 22 billion dollars. During the leaders’ meeting, the oil and gas industry, the activities of technology companies, the establishment of a gas processing plant in the Kashagan oil field, the expansion of the Kazakhstan–China oil pipeline, renewable energy, mining, e-commerce, customs, agriculture, logistics and the Trans–Caspian International Transport Corridor were discussed.[4]

One of the leaders Xi met with was Mr. Japarov. During the meeting, issues such as mutual trade, implementation of trade and economic cooperation programs, security, friendship and cooperation, development of bilateral relations, hydropower projects and China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan Railway were discussed. Noting that Kyrgyzstan–China relations are at the highest level, Mr. Japarov noted that political mutual trust serves to expand and develop trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the countries. During the meeting, in addition to the joint declaration on the establishment of a strategic partnership between the countries, 25 other documents were signed.[5]

During the meeting between Xi Jinping and President Mirziyoyev, a wide range of topics were addressed, including investment, economy, trade, commercial relations, energy, health, regional security and stability, poverty eradication, and the deepening of bilateral relations in multiple dimensions. The discussions also focused on intensifying connectivity and establishing a China–Uzbekistan community, as well as a China–Central Asia community, to foster a shared future. As a testament to their commitment, the leaders signed 41 documents, encompassing areas such as investment, poverty reduction, agricultural product trade, quarantine measures, and local cooperation.[6] Subsequently, following the business forum, significant agreements worth a staggering 25 billion dollars were successfully concluded.[7]

Another meeting took place between Xi Jinping and President Rahman, delving into various crucial subjects. The discussions encompassed green economy, digital technologies, security and counterterrorism measures, infrastructure development, energy initiatives, mining activities, and an assessment of the Tajik aluminum company “Talco.” Moreover, the leaders explored matters concerning energy plants and transmission lines within Tajikistan, the local production of electric vehicles, advancements in the agricultural sector, the proposal to establish an economic corridor named the “China–Tajikistan–Northern Afghanistan” corridor, the construction of a specific section of the Varshez road in the Shughnon district of the Gorno–Badakhshan Autonomous Region, leading to the Kulma–Karasu junction, and the collaborative development of a project for the reconstruction of the Kulma–Kara-

su border crossing between Tajikistan and China. These comprehensive discussions culminated in the signing of 25 cooperation documents, solidifying the commitment to joint endeavors.[8]

Xi Jinping, finally, had a meeting with President Berdimuhamedov. The leaders discussed investment, economy, trade, natural gas, communication, aviation, culture, regional peace, stability, long-term stability preservation, the Belt and Road Initiative, and strengthening cooperation. Following the meeting, the leaders signed five new agreements.[9]

Subsequently, the C+C5 Summit was held after the bilateral meetings. In his speech at the summit, Xi emphasized the need for a “stable,” “prosperous,” “harmonious,” and “interconnected” Central Asia. In this context, he outlined a vision for a China–Central Asia community, emphasizing the principles of “mutual assistance,” “common development,” “universal security,” and “enduring friendship.” He proposed the following eight-point roadmap within this framework:[10]

- Strengthening institutional structure,
- Expanding economic and trade ties,
- Deepening Transportation connectivity,
- Broadening energy cooperation,
- Promoting green innovation,
- Developing capabilities for development,
- Enhancing intercultural dialogue,
- Preserving regional peace.

After the summit, the leaders held a press statement. In the statement, they mentioned that they signed the Xian Declaration of the China–Central Asia Summit, acknowledged the summit outcomes, and outlined a plan for the future development of China–Central Asia relations. They also expressed their commitment to working closer together for a shared future, supporting each other firmly on issues such as sovereignty, independence, security, and territorial integrity, rejecting any interference in their internal affairs by any external forces, maintaining their adherence to the One China Principle, considering the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative as a new starting point, promoting trade liberalization, expanding industrial and investment cooperation, developing corridors between China and Central Asia, implementing the “Cultural Silk Road” program, providing scholarships to Central Asian students, resolutely combating various threats including terrorism, separatism, and extremism, jointly building a stable Central Asia, adhering to the United Nations Charter, strongly supporting multilateralism and international law, and making the international order and global governance more just. [11]

In addition to the bilateral agreements, the leaders have also accepted nine multilateral documents. This demonstrates China’s intention to enhance its relations with Central Asia on both bilateral and regional levels. Alongside the China–Central Asia Summit Xian Declaration, documents pertaining to industrial and investment cooperation, economic and trade cooperation, digital trade, infrastructure and engineering, as well as quarantine of imported and exported animals and plants have been endorsed, highlighting collaboration in these areas. Furthermore, agreements regarding the establishment of meeting mechanisms for agriculture ministers and customs service heads have been approved. Lastly, the leaders announced the acceptance of the memorandum of understanding on the establishment of the China–Central Asia Business Council.[12]

The Xian Declaration, consisting of 15 points, contains significant details. The declaration emphasizes the importance of leader diplomacy for the advancement of relations, the establishment of ministerial-level mechanisms for identified areas of cooperation, and the possibility of establishing an Asia–Central Asia Secretariat to facilitate the functioning of mechanisms within foreign affairs institutions. Decisions and discussions were made regarding these relationship aspects. Additionally, emphasis is placed on cooperation in alignment with the development strategies of Central Asian countries, China’s access to various regions through corridors in Central Asia, and the continuation and enhancement of projects involving China in the region. Furthermore, the declaration opposes instigation attempts such as “color revolutions,” highlights democracy as a shared aspiration and value of humanity, and identifies strategies for increasing dialogue and cooperation through international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Conference on Interaction and Confidence–Building Measures in Asia (CICA), and others. Efforts in the international arena for digital data security are also highlighted. Lastly, views are expressed on the development of agricultural trade and smart farming, ensuring food security, energy cooperation, joint efforts against climate change, and the establishment of inclusive governance in Afghanistan.[13]

The main conclusions reached at the summit and the talks are “to create a closer China–Central Asian community sharing a common future”, “to establish closer cooperation” and “a more stable, developing and prosperous Central Asia”. In this context, an important step was taken by officially establishing the meeting mechanism to be held every two years.[14]

Indeed, this not only signifies the stable development of Central Asia but also entails increasing gains for China within a win-win framework. The strengthening and stabilization of Central Asian states would mean a stable route for China’s Belt and Road Initiative, security of its western borders, and new markets. China is striving to institutionalize its relations with Central Asia at the highest level from a broad perspective. At a time when Russia has experienced a loss of power due to the Ukraine conflict and Western sanctions, the development and deepening of relations become of critical importance. Additionally, Central Asia is the most stable geography between Europe and China. As European interest in Central Asia grows, China is deepening its relations with the region to develop significant strategies. This approach would strengthen China geopolitically against Europe and contribute to the stability of the shortest route of the Belt and Road Initiative. The inaugural summit and the decisions made hold critical importance in this regard. The messages conveyed by Xi Jinping are evidence that this will rapidly materialize.

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[4] Dana Omirgazy, “Kazakhstan and China Sign 47 Agreements Worth \$ 22 Billion, as Tokayev Outlines Key Areas for Partnership”, The Astana Times, <https://astanatimes.com/2023/05/kazakhstan-and-china-sign-47-agreements-worth-22-billion-as-tokayev-outlines-key-areas-for-partnership/>, (Date of Accession: 20.05.2023).

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SCO Influence on India-Pakistan Relations

The fact that India holds the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has the potential to make the year 2023 very productive for New Delhi. In many ways, India's relations with Pakistan are also affected by this atmosphere. As a matter of fact, the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting^[1] held in Goa on 4-5 May 2023 sets an example in this regard.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also traveled to Goa to attend the SCO Foreign Ministers meeting. In addition to its regional and global effects, the SCO meeting is also remarkable in terms of Zardari's visit to Goa. With this visit, Zardari became the first senior Pakistani official to visit India after nearly a decade. Before Zardari, the last Pakistani official to visit India was Deputy

Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar in 2011. ^[2]

Zardari's personal participation in the meeting also brought the relations between the two countries and the New Delhi-Islamabad rivalry in the SCO equation back to the agenda. In addition to being a platform where the rivalry between New Delhi and Islamabad continues, the SCO also provides opportunities for the development of relations between the two countries from time to time. Zardari's visit is also important in this respect.

In this context, it can be said that the meeting is a positive development for the start of a process in which the parties approach each other moderately. In 2019, it may be possible to restart the broken commercial relations and perhaps take steps



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to improve bilateral relations. In this regard, the expectations of the parties from each other come to the fore. Because Zardari stated that India should take the necessary steps to create a favourable environment for negotiations between the parties. ^[3]

In 2019, New Delhi canceled the special status granted to Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. This move by New Delhi destroyed the positive ties with Islamabad and drew Islamabad's reaction. Today, it is seen that this is the biggest obstacle to the softening of relations between the two countries. As a matter of fact, Zardari confirmed this with his statement, "Until India revises its 2019 steps, meaningful bilateral interaction will be difficult." ^[4]

On the other hand, mutual criticisms were also on the agenda. At the meeting, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar emphasized the fight against terrorism, while Zardari stated that unilateral and illegal measures of states that violate international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions are contrary to SCO objectives. ^[5] With these statements, he once again expressed his reaction to New Delhi's move to abolish the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, the parties gave messages through their mutual dissatisfaction.

The peaceful resolution of tensions between the parties and the emergence of a moderate relationship dynamic will contribute to the increase of harmony and common policies within the SCO. Both sides attach great importance to the organization. However, the fact that the elements of bilateral rivalry are seen at a level that cannot be compromised in terms of stepping back shows that it is not possible to take concrete steps in this regard. However, it can be said that the SCO partnership keeps the parties diplomatically within a certain framework and bilateral relations are progressing in this context.

Another message of Zardari's visit to Goa is about the Pakistan-SCO ties. Zardari's personal participation in the meeting is of great importance in terms of showing how much importance Pakistan attaches to the SCO. Zardari also expressed this. Pakistan Foreign Ministry also drew attention to this issue with its statement: ^[6]

"Our participation in the meeting reflects Pakistan's commitment to the SCO Charter and processes and the importance Pakistan attaches to the region in its foreign policy priorities."

Since this situation is related to the issue of transferring ties or disputes with India to the SCO, it is a message to both India and

other member states. Considering that Zardari, who personally attended the summit, demonstrated Pakistan's commitment to the SCO, there is a possibility that Pakistan will take important steps in terms of participation in the leaders' summit.

In addition, Zardari's participation may also be intended to show that Pakistan will not completely cede the SCO space to India. In this respect, it can be argued that Islamabad is acting within the scope of its goal of improving its relations with Central Asian countries.

Finally, it is seen that Pakistan needs stability in its foreign policy due to domestic problems. As it is known, Pakistan is going through a difficult period due to economic, political, and security-based issues. Therefore, the SCO meeting creates a favorable ground for a moderate atmosphere in terms of ties with India. Therefore, the issue of participation in the meeting is related to Pakistan's efforts to achieve a more stable atmosphere in the international arena rather than its efforts to establish a full reconciliation or dialogue with India. From this point of view, it is also seen that Zardari's visit is a regional necessity. ^[7]

In conclusion, Pakistan Foreign Minister Zardari's visit to India within the framework of the SCO contains different messages in many respects. The visit itself is an important event in itself. In addition, it can be said that the Islamabad administration has adopted an attitude in favour of Zardari's participation in the meeting due to different objectives and requirements. From this point of view, it is also possible to make similar predictions for the SCO Summit to be held in July 2023.

^[1] "Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Meet in Goa: As Russia, China Vie for Upper hand, What SCO Means for India", The Indian Express, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/as-russia-china-vie-for-upper-hand-what-sco-means-for-india-8592291/>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

^[2] "Will Pakistan Foreign Minister's Rare India Visit Ease Tensions?", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/4/will-pakistan-foreign-ministers-rare-india-visit-ease-tensions>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

^[3] "Onus on India to Create Environment for Bilateral Talks: Bilawal", The News, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1067394-onus-on-india-to-create-environment-for-bilateral-talks-bilawal>, (Date of Accession: 06.05.2023).

^[4] Ibid.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Target of ISKP Terrorism in Afghanistan

The most important concern during the withdrawal of the United States of America (USA) from Afghanistan was the possibility of the region turning into a terrorist center. For this reason, the Taliban has made a commitment that Afghanistan will not turn into a terrorist base and will continue the fight against terrorism, both during the Doha Agreement dated February 29, 2020 and during the contacts with various countries, especially China.

While a significant part of the terrorist organizations that have been in existence in Afghanistan for a long time became passive with the withdrawal of the USA; the so-called Emirate of Khorasan (ISKP) continues the attacks of the terrorist organization Devlet al-Iraq and al-Sham (DAESH). As a matter of fact, there are various allegations that DAESH militants, who received heavy blows in Iraq and Syria, are heading to



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Afghanistan. Therefore, the terrorist organization stuck in the Middle East is trying to make Afghanistan its new safe zone.

However, the Taliban, which is fighting against ISKP in the region, is trying to be recognized by the world, to overcome the isolation policy of the USA and to solve the problems within the country. However, political, economic and military problems and inadequacies stand out as the most important obstacles in front of the Taliban. On the other hand, various attacks of terrorist organizations such as ISKP deepen the problems in Afghanistan. In this context, the organization in question aims to turn the country into a center of chaos and to destroy the authority that the Taliban is trying to build.

As it is known, DAESH tried to establish a state in the Middle East, where it emerged. It is known that in Iraq and Syria, it has made various progress and gained important experience at this point. However, as a result of the struggle of regional and global actors against DAESH, heavy blows were dealt to the terrorist organization. In this process, the militants of the organization fleeing from Iraq and Syria turned to South Asia.

Terrorists who come to the region in question primarily carry out attacks that will weaken the authority in Afghanistan. Because ISKP is trying to increase its influence by taking advantage of the power and authority vacuum that will occur in the region. It should also be emphasized that the potential for deepening economic problems as a result of ISKP's terrorist acts is high. Moreover, in parallel with the deepening of economic problems, the possibility of people to turn to terrorist organizations that use religious arguments as a tool will increase. The terrorist organization ISKP will also benefit from this situation.

One of the reasons for ISKP's attacks is the continuity, deepening and expansion of the isolation policies applied to Afghanistan. Because the activities of terrorist organizations will increase in Afghanistan, which cannot receive foreign aid. On the other hand, foreign states will approach the country in question with more concern.

At this point, the purpose of ISKP's attacks on foreign representations is better understood. As it is known, the terrorist organization ISKP has previously attacked the embassies of Russia[1] and Pakistan[2]. Later, during the visit of a Chinese delegation to Kabul, it organized an attack on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[3] According to a report prepared by the United Nations, the terrorist organization threatened to attack the embassies of India, China and Iran in Afghanistan.[4] ISKP's terrorist attacks on the representatives of foreign states and visiting delegations cause the thought that the Taliban did not fulfill the Doha Agreement and the promises made to various states. This leads to increased international pressure on the Taliban.

As a result, ISKP wants to destroy the authority that is being tried to be established in Afghanistan with various attacks. Therefore, the organization aims to deepen the problems in the country. Because the ISKP, which increased its attack capacity with the decreasing authority, is likely to enter the process of statehood thanks to its experience in Iraq and Syria. Undoubtedly, this situation does not only affect Afghanistan; concerns the whole world. In this scenario, Afghanistan may even be subject to a new foreign intervention. The actors that are likely to intervene may be the International Coalition, which targets DAESH in Iraq and Syria under the leadership of the USA, or the Asian states if Russia, China and India meet on a common ground. However, it is not possible to say that the Taliban will approach this situation warmly. Because the Taliban think that states that use terrorist organizations as proxy actors and follow a policy of isolation are responsible for the deepening crisis in Afghanistan.

[1] Mohammad Yunus Yawar, "Two Russian Embassy Staff Dead, Four Others Killed in Suicide Bomb Blast in Kabul", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghan-police-report-suicide-bomb-blast-near-russian-embassy-kabul-2022-09-05/>, (Date of Accession: 09.02.2023).

[2] "Islamic State Claims Responsibility for Attack on Pakistani Embassy in Kabul", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/islamic-state-claims-responsibility-attack-pakistani-embassy-kabul-2022-12-04/>, (Date of Accession: 09.02.2023).

[3] "Deadly 'Suicide' Blast Outside Afghan Foreign Ministry in Kabul", Aljazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/11/explosion-outside-afghan-foreign-ministry-in-kabul>, (Date of Accession: 09.02.2023).

[4] "ISIL-K Threatened to Launch Terrorist Attacks Against Embassies of India, China, and Iran in Afghanistan: UN Report", The Economic Times, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/isil-k-threatened-to-launch-terrorist-attacks-against-embassies-of-india-china-and-iran-in-afghanistan-un-report/articleshow/97756237.cms>, (Date of Accession: 09.02.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Serbia's EU–Russia Dilemma

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, bloody conflicts took place in the Balkans. Although a relative peace and stability has been established in the region after the interventions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against Bosnia and Kosovo, the influence of ethnic nationalism and the participation of global actors in the power struggle in the region cause the security environment in the Bal-

kans to become fragile. Of course, this brings the sustainability of peace into discussion.

In the context of ethnic nationalism, it can be said that Serbian nationalism has come to the fore in the region. Because the Belgrade administration's ideal of "Greater Serbia" and the attitude of Serbian nationalists in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina show that the region is



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pregnant with various crises. In such an environment, Serbia also supports the separatist tendencies of the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina and tries to take on the protection of the Serbs in the north of Kosovo, especially by not recognizing the independence of Kosovo. As a matter of fact, the events that led to the escalation of tension in the Kosovo-Serbia line in the recent past also maintain their place in the memories.

The tension in question arising from demographic heterogeneity is also affected by the power struggle between global actors. Because the NATO Kosovo Task Force (KFOR) being active in Kosovo and the Pristina administration's declaration of independence with the support of the United States (USA) pushed Belgrade to get closer to Moscow. Similarly, it is known that Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the countries where the influence of the USA and the European Union (EU) is felt intensely. Undoubtedly, it can be claimed that this played a decisive role in Serbia's rapprochement with Russia.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Moscow administration closely follows the developments in the Balkans. Russia attaches importance to increasing its influence in the region. The reason for this is that the geography in question is also Southeastern Europe. Therefore, the Kremlin administration interprets the increase in its influence in the region as an increase in the influence of Europe in its immediate surroundings. At the same time, the situation in question was that the Moscow administration told the West, "I can destabilize your immediate environment, and therefore you, if necessary," means to deliver the message.

In this context, it is seen that Russia uses pan-Slavism effectively. In other words, the Slavic origin of the Balkan peoples is considered by Moscow as an instrument that will strengthen its presence in the region.

As a reflection of the situation in question, Serbia has close relations with Russia, even though it is a country with an EU target. This issue came to the fore, especially after the Russia-Ukraine War, and started to be discussed intensively. Because Belgrade sees its relations with Moscow as an important balancing factor both in terms of energy dependency and in the context of its multidimensional and multidimensional foreign policy understanding. Of course, it is also very important that the actors with whom Serbia have conflicts in the region are supported by the USA and the EU.

On the other hand, it is known that far-right views have a certain social basis in Serbia. For example, in a survey conducted by the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) in March 2023, one-third of the respondents stated that they had a negative view of the EU.[1] As can be expected, this tendency of the Serbian people also has reflections on politics.

However, it should be emphasized that Belgrade considers the Russian factor as a part of its balance policy and does not seek to break away from the West completely. On the contrary, Belgrade wants to maintain relations with the West; but while doing this, it has the desire to act autonomously in line with its own national interests in foreign policy.

The EU, on the other hand, is trying to push Serbia away from Moscow by both forcing it to normalize with Kosovo and putting pressure on Russia to impose sanctions on Russia due to the war in Ukraine. The last example of the aforementioned policy is the statements made by the EU High Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy Joseph Borrell on 22 May 2023. In this statement, Borrell requested that Serbia, as a state advancing towards EU membership, should not align its policies with the foreign and security policy of the EU, especially the sanctions. In this context, Borrell stated that Belgrade's stance is incompatible with the EU membership process.[2] Therefore, it can be argued that the union forced Serbia to make a choice.

As a result, Serbia takes care to maintain its relations with Russia, which wants to gain influence in the Balkans through pan-Slavism, due to the problems it has with Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In fact, Belgrade's effort in this regard stems from its effort to act autonomously in its foreign policy. However, due to the acceleration of policies to isolate the Moscow administration from the world after the war in Ukraine, the EU also wants Serbia to impose sanctions on Russia. And this opens the future of the balance policy, which Belgrade is trying to carry out sensitively, for discussion. At this point, it can be said that Serbia is faced with a serious dilemma.

[1] Veli Can Akkaş, "Serbia-Kosovo Normalization in the Shadow of Global Competition and the Role of the EU", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/serbia-kosovo-normalization-in-the-shadow-of-global-competition-and-the-role-of-the-eu/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 24.05.2023).

[2] "Borrell: Tijesne veze sa Rusijom nespojive sa putem Srbije ka EU", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/2023/5/22/borrell-nacionalnim-interesima-srbije-steti-nepridruzivanje-sankcijama-rusiji>, (Date of Accession: 24.05.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

China's Decision to Participate in MNEK Exercises

It can be argued that a significant part of the rivalry between the United States (US) and China is composed of regional issues in the Asia-Pacific. The first of these is the Taiwan Question. China sees Taiwan as a separatist region. Therefore, Beijing has a goal of unification. For this reason, Washington is trying to pressure Beijing through Taiwan by making various agreements with Taipei. The visit of the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan on August 2,

2022,[1] and then the meeting of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Kevin McCarthy with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen on April 5, 2023[2] proves this situation.

On the other hand, one of the most important problems related to China in the region is the South China Sea issue. As a matter of fact, the sea in question has a critical importance for the containment policy that the USA is trying to implement against China. In addition to all



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these, Beijing claims rights over the so-called "Nine-Dash Line" in the South China Sea.[3] This particularly disturbs the riparian countries Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines and Vietnam. Therefore, it can be said that China's relations with these countries are tense due to these allegations. On the other hand, it can be argued that the USA also played an important role in the aforementioned tension and affected countries. In this context, the relations between China and the aforementioned states are important both within the scope of Washington's containment policy and in terms of Beijing's political influence in the region. In this process, China's maritime relations with Indonesia, which has a coast on the South China Sea, are important. Because Beijing will participate in multilateral naval exercises to be organized by Jakarta, to which states such as North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the USA are also invited.[4]

In the statement made by the Ministry of Defense of China, it was stated that the ships of the Chinese Navy named Zhanjiang and Xuchang with guided missiles will participate in the exercises called 2023 Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK).[5] The exercise in question will be the fourth exercise since 2014. The previous exercise was held in 2018; but later the exercises were suspended due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The exercise in question will be held in Makassar between 4-8 June 2023 with the participation of the navies of 47 countries, including China.[6]

In this context, Beijing's refusal to reject Jakarta's offer adds special importance to the exercises in question. Because maritime security and the influence that can be obtained on the seas are very important in the Asia-Pacific Region. As a matter of fact, the region is located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. In addition to all these, there are many islands in the region. At the same time, collaborations such as the AUKUS Pact, ANZUS and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) are alliances that are shaped over the seas and aim to surround Beijing through the seas.

On the other hand, the fact that Indonesia has a coast to the South China Sea and is in competition with China at this point also increases the importance of the exercises. As a matter of fact, Beijing's participation in these exercises may reduce regional tensions. On the other hand, this may also allow China to analyze the naval forces of its rivals. Likewise, its rivals may find the opportunity to observe China's naval power. These possibilities may cause the parties not to show their real potential in the exercises. In addition to all these, it is quite remarkable that the navies of North Korea, Russia, USA and China were invited to these exercises at the same time. Because the general structure of the

international system can be read through these four states. At the same time, there is a serious geopolitical, geoeconomic and geostrategic rivalry between Washington and Pyongyang, Moscow and Beijing. In the shadow of this competition, it is very important for the parties to practice jointly.

On the other hand, South Korea was also invited to these exercises. It is very interesting that South Korea is one of the states that most closely feel the threat of North Korea and that these two countries take part in the exercises together. This situation may lead to a softening, albeit conjunctural, in the strategy of the USA, together with South Korea, against both North Korea and China.

As a result, China's participation in the exercises in question may reduce regional tensions in the short term; however, it can be said that this development will not solve the main problems between the parties and especially the conflicts in the South China Sea in the long run.

[1] "How Pelosi's Taiwan Visit Has Set a New Status Quo for U. S.-China Tensions", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/08/17/how-pelosi-s-taiwan-visit-has-set-new-status-quo-for-u-s-china-tensions-pub-87696>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[2] "U. S. Tensions With China on Display as McCarthy Hosts Taiwan's Leader", The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/us/politics/mccarthy-tsai-taiwan-china.h>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[3] "What is Nine-Dash Line? The Basis of China's Claim to Sovereignty over South China Sea", The Print, <https://theprint.in/the-print-essential/what-is-nine-dash-line-the-basis-of-chinas-claim-to-sovereignty-over-south-china-sea/469403/>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[4] "China to Join Indonesia's Multilateral Naval Drills Despite Rising Tensions", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-join-indonesias-multilateral-naval-drills-despite-rising-tension-2023-05-31/>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).

[5] "China to join Indonesia's Multilateral Naval Drills Despite Rising Tensions", Channel News Asia, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/china-sends-warships-multilateral-naval-exercise-komodo-indonesia-zhanjiang-xuchang-3527921>, (Date of Accession: 31.05.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Russia's Energy Initiative to Central Asia

On December 29, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed the creation of a "tri-partite gas union" to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to export natural gas to countries including China. The aim of Moscow was to establish a coordination center between gas exporting countries like itself[1]. At a time when the energy crisis in the world deepened, Russia aimed to develop cooperation with various countries in order to use its energy trump card more effectively with the said proposal. It can be said that the Kremlin aims to take precautions against the policies that the West will follow and the alternatives it will create. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan reacted differently to Moscow's "triple gas union" proposal. Astana stated that the issue

should be discussed and discussed. Tashkent, on the other hand, stated that cooperation was made with various countries, including Russia, through mutual agreements; however, they stated that they would not sign an agreement that would harm their sovereignty. Uzbekistan Energy Minister Jurabek Mirzamahmudov used the following statements in his evaluation on the subject[2]

"Even if a gas agreement is signed with Russia, this does not mean unity. Therefore, negotiations are being held for the delivery of gas via neighboring Kazakhstan. This will be a technical contract; not a union."



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With the statement made, Uzbekistan has a will to develop cooperation with states; however, it has revealed that they are sensitive about making independent decisions, pursuing a multi-faceted foreign policy and not limiting the commercial relations they have established with various states to certain mechanisms. In addition, Mirzamahmudov made statements that Russia can send liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Afghanistan and Pakistan via Central Asia. These statements made it necessary for Russia to develop a more comprehensive policy and make a new opening.

For this purpose, the Moscow administration established direct contact with Astana and Tashkent. According to the Kremlin's statement, Russian President Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation with his Kazakh counterpart, Mr. Kasım-Cömert Tokayev, on January 3, 2023. During the meeting, energy-centered bilateral relations were discussed. While detailed information about the meeting was not shared; It was announced that the leaders agreed to maintain coordination between governments and specialized agencies[3].

On January 4, 2023, Putin had a telephone conversation this time with his Uzbek counterpart, Mr. Shevket Mirziyoyev. Strengthening bilateral relations was discussed at the meeting, and the parties expressed their commitments to deepen cooperation in various fields, including energy[4]. The increase in Russia's dependence on customers in terms of energy and Uzbekistan's cold approach to a gas union were influential in the discussion of the energy issue at the meeting.

In addition, Russia is trying to develop its energy relations with other Central Asian states. For example, Kyrgyzstan is dependent on foreign oil and natural gas. For this reason, Bishkek management needs foreign investors in energy and energy infrastructure. One of the prominent companies at this point is Gazprom Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyzstan extension of Gazprom. The company in question has invested \$400 million in the country's gas industry since 2016 and has built more than 1000 kilometers of distribution networks. In this way, approximately 40% of the country has become able to access natural gas. This rate is planned to be 60% in 2030[5].

One of the topics that has been talked about recently in Kyrgyzstan is the establishment of a nuclear reactor in the country. Because in 2022, the Ministry of Energy of Kyrgyzstan agreed with the Russian-based company Rosatom to conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of a nuclear power plant[6]. This situation reveals that Russia has a multidimensional presence in the energy field in Central Asia. There are various reasons for Russia's

energy expansion towards Central Asia. First of all, the Moscow administration, whose economy is dependent on energy exports, had to turn south in order to reach new markets. Therefore, the geopolitical importance of Central Asia has increased. In addition, the security and stability of the lines that will provide energy transfer are of critical importance. The fact that Central Asia is relatively more stable compared to other geographies has accelerated this process.

On the other hand, Russia is heading south with the effect of its broken relations with the West. At this point, Central Asia comes to the fore as an area where Russia feels safe because it is a post-Soviet geography. In addition, Russia is trying to intensify its relations with energy-rich countries in a process where the energy crisis is deepening and is being talked about more and more every day. In this way, he thinks that the West can balance its energy policies and continue to use energy as a trump card. In particular, the increasing interest of the West in Central Asia forced Russia to be more interested in this region. Because the increasing presence of countries such as China, India and Japan in the region has had a significant impact. In addition to all these, Russia wants to re-establish its influence on price determination in the world energy market. For this, it believes that relations with energy exporting countries should be strengthened.

As a result, the Kremlin suffered a significant economic loss with the war in Ukraine and left a large market. In this context, the energy trump card used against the West has weakened considerably. The situation in question pushed the Moscow administration to produce new policies and to strengthen its relations with Central Asian countries. However, Russia's proposal to establish a gas union was negatively received. For this reason, Moscow is trying to develop new strategies. For this reason, it is seen that Russia focuses on making an energy initiative.

[1] "Putin Proposes Creation of 'Natural Gas Union' with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan", RFE/RL, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-kazakhstan-uzbekistan-gas-union-putin/32153946.html>, (Date of Accession: 07.01.2023).

[2] Navbahor Imamova, "Russian Gas Swap Scheme Gets Cold Shoulder in Central Asia", VoA, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russian-gas-swap-scheme-gets-cold-shoulder-in-central-asia/6867304.html>, (Date of Accession: 07.01.2023).

[3] "Putin, Tokayev Discuss High Level of Russia-Kazakhstan Relations-Kremlin", TASS, <https://tass.com/russia/1558721>, (Date of Accession: 07.01.2023).

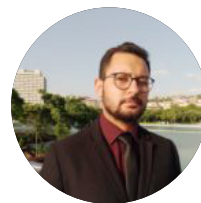


ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Deepening Relations in the North Pacific: Seoul-Washington-Tokyo Alliance

After the March 16, 2023 meeting between Yoon Suk-yeol and Fumio Kishida, relations between Seoul and Tokyo have been more positive than ever. Both the steps taken to resolve long-standing problems between the two states and the impact of North Korea on the security perceptions of regional states have played a decisive role in South Korea and Japan's efforts to bring a new dimension to bilateral relations. Undoubtedly, the deepening relations between the two states, which are allies of the United States of America (USA), coincide with the interests and expectations of the USA.

Trade rapprochement, especially after steps were taken to resolve the issue of forced labor compensation, has been reinforced by Tokyo's lifting of additional inspections on some export products used in the production of smart-phone chips and screens since 2019. With bilateral trade volume exceeding \$80 billion, the two economies are expected to further increase this figure in 2023. Moreover, if South Korea-Japan trade relations return to the structure of 2017-2018, South Korea's exports to Japan are expected to hover around \$2.69 billion.[1]



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As the commercial rapprochement continued, a meeting between South Korean Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Park Bo-gyoon and his Japanese counterpart Saito Tetsuo took place on April 13, 2023 to discuss the necessary steps for tourism development.[2] As a result of the meeting, Park stated that they agreed on cooperation in the field of tourism. In addition, Park stated that the number of Japanese tourists visiting South Korea has increased recently, but it is still very small compared to the number of South Korean tourists visiting Japan.

In addition to economic relations, there is also a growing positive trend in military and political relations. Due to the deepening Sino-US rivalry in many areas, including the digital world, Japan directly, and South Korea indirectly, has become significantly concerned about China.

It is known that South Korea's security perception is shaped around North Korea and the nuclear threat. In particular, China's close relations with North Korea increases South Korea's concerns. Moreover, this closeness indicates that Beijing is the only actor that can have an influence on North Korea's decisions. At this point, China has both a negative and positive outlook for South Korea. Japan, on the other hand, sees China's growing economic and military influence, which extends to many parts of the world, as a threat.

Since these three states, including the US, have a common security perception, it can be predicted that they will engage in joint military and political activities and improve their existing relations. As a matter of fact, on April 15, 2023, the South Korean Ministry of Defense announced that as a result of the "13th Trilateral Defense Talks" held on April 14, 2023, it was decided to regularly repeat anti-missile and submarine drills between Japan, South Korea and the United States.[3]

In addition to these developments, media reports suggest that US-South Korean intelligence cooperation may be expanded to include Japan. On March 15, 2023, returning from a visit to Washington, Kim Tae-hyo, South Korea's Deputy Chief National Security Advisor, said at the airport that Japan was on the agenda to join the existing South Korea-US intelligence alliance. [4] The fact that this development comes at a time when efforts are underway to normalize the existing Japan-South Korea General Security and Military Intelligence Agreement (GSOMIA) could be interpreted as a sign that the US is also interested in better relations between Japan and South Korea.

While these developments were taking place on the Washington-Seoul-Tokyo line, it was claimed that a new agreement was signed between Russia and North Korea.[5] According to a report by ORF, the Russian mercenary company Wagner will supply North Korea with weapons in exchange for food supplies. This raises concerns about regional security as well as the war in Ukraine. In the face of such a move, which could result in North Korea having greater mobility, it can be argued that the relations between the Seoul-Tokyo-Washington trio will deepen.

To summarize briefly, the US-China rivalry and North Korea's activities have led to a significant increase in security concerns in the Asia-Pacific region. These concerns, in turn, have opened the door for like-minded states to develop closer relations. The most obvious example of this situation is the search for cooperation between South Korea and Japan, which have long had many problems. It is obvious that the two US-allied states are getting closer to each other as a result of North Korea's military activities. Not only military and the deepening of relations, not only in the political sphere but also economically after Japan lifted the additional inspections that had been in effect since 2019, is important for the future of relations between the parties. Therefore, it can be predicted that the US-South Korea-Japan alliance will deepen in the coming periods.

[1] "S. Korean Exports to Japan to Rise If Ties Normalize: Report All News 15:29 March 19, 2023", Yonhap News Agency, [en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230319002600320#:::text=Japan%20accounted%20for%204.5%20percent,Commerce%20and%20Industry%20\(KOR-CHAM\)](https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230319002600320#:::text=Japan%20accounted%20for%204.5%20percent,Commerce%20and%20Industry%20(KOR-CHAM),), (Date of Accession: 19.03.2023).

[2] "S. Korea, Japan Agree to Boost Tourism", Yonhap News Agency, en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230415002100320, (Date of Accession :15.04.2023).

[3] "S. Korea, U.S., Japan agree to Hold Missile Defense, Anti-Sub Drills Regularly to Counter N. K. Threats", Yonhap News Agency, en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230415000600325, (Date of Accession: 15.04.2023)

[4] "Korea, U.S. Could Expand Intelligence Partnership to Include Japan", Korea JoongAng Daily, koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2023/04/16/national/diplomacy/Korea-United-States-intelligence-alliance/20230416162151247.html, (Date of Accession: 16.04.2023):



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Taliban's Qush Tepa Canal Step

Although the Taliban have been ruling Afghanistan since August 2021, it has not been recognized by any country in the international arena. It also faces the problem of legitimacy within the country. In order to overcome these, it tries to increase its dialogue with various countries and to ensure effectiveness through diplomatic missions. In addition, it aims to strengthen its presence in the administration by taking some steps in domestic politics. At this point, the Qush Tepa Canal Project stands out as a step of great importance for the Taliban.

The Taliban announced on March 31, 2022 that a canal project was launched to use the water of the Amudarya River. The project starts from

Kaldar district of Balkh province and ends in Andhoy district of Faryab province.[1] It is known to be 280 km long, 100 meters wide and 8.5 meters deep. Its total cost is estimated to be around 680 million dollars (60 billion Afs).[2]

When the canal is completed, it will have the opportunity to irrigate 500 thousand hectares of land in the provinces of Balkh, Jawzjan and Faryab. The canal, which is planned to have a water carrying capacity of 650 cubic meters per second, is planned to be completed in 2028 and to solve the water problem in the mentioned regions.[3]



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However, it is expected to make a significant contribution to the diversity and production amount of agricultural products in the country. This situation will enable the country to become self-sufficient in agricultural products, as well as to export grain.[4] Therefore, it is seen that the project is of great importance in terms of internal development and external expansion.

The first stage of the three-phase project, 108 km long, starts from the Amudarya River and reaches Dawlatabad district of Balkh province. The second stage, starting from Dawlatabad in Balkh, passing through Aqchi district of Jawzjan province and reaching Andhoy district of Faryab province has a length of 177 km. The third step involves the distribution of sub-channels to agricultural lands. [5]

The Taliban attach great importance to the aforementioned project. It can be said that they see this job as an indicator of proving himself. For this reason, intensive activities are being carried out to complete and implement the canal as soon as possible. In the statement made by the Taliban, it was stated that 5,500 people were working simultaneously at 120 points to speed up the works on the construction of the canal. At the same time, it has been announced that more than 3,300 machines are in use.

Over 200 local companies also work as subcontractors under the supervision of the Afghanistan National Development Corporation. It is known that the Taliban made the first phase of the project worth 91 million dollars with their own revenues. For the next two phases, funds are planned to be obtained from the sale of the mines, primarily the Dar-e-Souph Mine.[6]

In the statement made by Zabihullah Amiri, the Head of the Project, on March 29, 2023, it was stated that 70% of the construction works of the first phase were completed and approximately 7,000 people were employed in the project. It was also stated that the first phase will be completed in a shorter time than planned.[7]

It seems that the Taliban have set the project as a high priority. For this reason, it tries to carry out the works as quickly as possible. News that more than one third of the canal has been excavated is on the agenda. It can be said that the project has a symbolic significance for the Taliban officials, who stated that they assured the nation that this project would be completed at any cost.

The canal is an important test of the Taliban's ability to rule. Emphasizing that they benefit from the national budget in the construction of the project, the Taliban try to highlight self-sufficiency in the development of the country and to give the message that

there is no need for external support. It can be said that the Taliban also aim to reduce international pressures through the canal. In this sense, the Taliban administration is willing to provide assurance for the future by showing what it can do. In this way, it also aims to show that progress can be made towards the goals of taking part in regional projects and attracting investment to the country.

In addition to all these, the project is likely to cause some new tensions in regional balances. In this respect, while the Taliban is trying to prove itself inside; it can be predicted that there will be difficulties in foreign relations. Because after the collapse of the Soviet Union, no agreement was made between the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan on the water of Amudarya. [8] However, it can be said that the water equations and status quo in Central Asia may change in the near future with the Qush Tepa Canal Project.

[1] "1st phase of Qush Tepa Canal Project Due to Complete", The Kabul Times, <https://thekabultimes.com/1st-phase-of-qush-tepa-canal-project-due-to-complete/>, (Date of Accession: 04.04.2023).

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31 May 2023

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

31 May 2023

ANKASAM President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol evaluated the meeting between the Prime Minister of Qatar and the leader of the Taliban in the TVNET 19th Hour News Bulletin.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Chief Advisor Prof. Dr. Cem Karadeli evaluated Türkiye-West relations in A Haber.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Foreign Policy Expert Dr. Doğan Başaran evaluated Turkish foreign policy in A Haber.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Energy Chief Advisor Dr. Cenk Pala evaluated Turkey's energy policy in A Haber.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Turkic World Chief Advisor Prof. Dr. Selma Yel made evaluations about the Turkish World in Turkish foreign policy in A Haber.

3 June 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin EROL, President of Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), evaluated the 2nd Central Asia-EU Summit for Dunyo, one of the leading news agencies of Uzbekistan.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Chief Advisor Prof. Dr. Cem Karadeli evaluated Türkiye-West relations on TVNET.

3 June 2023

ANKASAM Foreign Policy Expert Dr. Doğan Başaran evaluated Turkish foreign policy on TVNET.



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JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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