



ANKASAM

bulletin

9 July 2023
ISSUE: 2023/27



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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Rise of Far-Right in Germany: Why is AfD Gaining More Votes?

Germany is among the leading European countries where far-right views thrive. This is due to the country's past experience with the Nazi era, which has facilitated the acceptance of right-wing populist nationalism and, consequently, neo-Nazi ideologies by various groups. In this context, while the country witnesses ille-

gal movements like PEGIDA, it has also experienced an incident in December 2022 where a coup plotter group called "Reichsbürger" aimed to declare Prens 13. Henrich, who currently works as a real estate agent in Frankfurt, as emperor and was apprehended in the act.



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Clearly, there is a rising trend of far-right ideology in Germany, which also enables the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a political party operating within the legal framework, to expand its voter base. It is worth noting that AfD received 10.3% of the votes in the 2021 elections. While this is a significant percentage, a survey published in June 2023 by DeutschlandTrend, a monthly poll, suggests that AfD's support has reached 18%.[1] This situation raises the possibility of the far-right coming to power in Germany in the future.

The question that needs to be asked at this point is why and how the far-right has risen and become a focal point in Germany. Considering that xenophobia lies at the core of far-right ideology, it can be argued that uncontrolled migration movements have facilitated the internalization of far-right views by society. Additionally, the fact that these migration movements have predominantly originated from Muslim countries has contributed to the rise of Islamophobia over the years.

Therefore, it is possible to assert that Islamophobia, which gained momentum after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks organized by the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization and has its roots dating back to the 1973 Oil Crisis, reached its peak with the Arab Spring and particularly the migration movements following the Syrian Civil War. This, as seen in the example of Germany, paves the way for the strengthening of the far-right. During such periods, when economic problems deepen in countries receiving migrants, nationalist reflexes come to the forefront among the masses. This, in turn, directs groups who are uneasy with economic, sociological, and demographic changes towards far-right ideologies. In such an environment, it is observed that populist politicians opt for radical rhetoric to capitalize on the situation for electoral gains.

Indeed, the support that AfD has gained in the public opinion polls in June 2023 is not solely related to Islamophobia. There is a much deeper development that has profoundly shaken Europe, and that is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, which started on February 24, 2022. Following the war, European Union (EU) countries have attempted to implement common policies and imposed sanctions targeting the Moscow government. However, the energy crisis that ensued and the increasing problems in meeting energy demands have exacerbated economic issues in Germany as an industrial powerhouse. Additionally, the rising food prices due to the Grain Crisis have seemingly strengthened nationalist reflexes in Germany.

In this sense, the idea that Germany should act in line with its own interests has gained strength, and criticisms of the EU's policies have emerged. Although the argument of defending democracies holds to some extent, fundamentally, the German right-wing is concerned about the cost of estranging Russia for the sake of Ukraine.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the issue of Ukrainian migrants has also played a role in the rise of the far-right within the context of anti-immigrant sentiment. As employment issues increase, people tend to search for culprits for the problems they face and target migrants. The rise of AfD can also be understood through these factors. In fact, the impact [2] of the 2022 surge in irregular migration to Europe, reaching the highest level since 2016, seems to have resulted in increased support for AfD in Germany in June 2023.

As expected, the rise of AfD may lead other political ideologies to develop more nationalist rhetoric in order to reach the electorate. This, in parallel with the rise of a sharp nation-state understanding, can undermine the sense of solidarity within the EU. In other words, the rise of the far-right indicates a divided Europe.

Furthermore, the prominence of national ambitions will increase objections to the United States' global hegemony. This will deepen the rift in transatlantic relations. The growing popularity of right-wing populist politics in various European countries, including Germany, can result in a "divided West." Of course, this situation would harm the global goals of the United States.

In conclusion, the xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment that gained momentum after the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War have strengthened the far-right in various European countries. The addition of the Russia-Ukraine War to this process has further accelerated the rise of the far-right. Although this situation is not limited to Germany alone, surveys indicating increased interest in AfD in the country serve as an important example.

[1] "German far Right Surges in Polls, Alarming Mainstream Parties", Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/2023/06/02/german-far-right-surges-in-polls-alarming-mainstream-parties>, (Date of Accession: 03.06.2023).

[2] "Migrant Entry Numbers into Europe Hit Six-Year High in 2022", The Hindu, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/migrant-entry-numbers-into-europe-hit-six-year-high/article66373517.ece/amp/>, (Date of Accession: 03.06.2023).



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Papua New Guinea in the Context of China-US Competition

China has the world's second largest and strongest economy.[1] At the same time, Beijing is at the top of the global supply chain.[2] On the other hand, China's growing political and economic power and increasing global influence cause it to compete with the United States of America (USA). In addition to all this, Beijing aims to compete with the rules-based international order designed by the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As a matter of fact, all these issues cause an international struggle between the West and China.

Moreover, based on its political experience, the USA wants to apply the containment strategy against China, which it achieved results by applying against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War. This adds a regional feature to the competition between the two countries. This brings along a geopolitical struggle and therefore regional alliances and collaborations.

In this context, it can be argued that the USA has made regional moves and established important partnerships with the aim of containing China.



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It can be said that Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam are among the countries with which Washington cooperates. On the other hand, it can be said that the USA has chosen Papua New Guinea as a new ally.

In this context, remembering that Papua New Guinea was included in the Commonwealth of Nations first is useful.[3] So King of England III. Charles' Kingdom rule also applies in Papua New Guinea. Because this situation brings Port Moresby closer to the West cyclically.

In addition, the USA's signing of a defense agreement with Papua New Guinea proves the aforementioned situation. The Washington administration signed a defense agreement with Port Moresby on May 22, 2023.[4] In a statement on the subject, the US State Department said that this agreement creates a framework that will help improve security cooperation, increase Papua New Guinea's defense power and ensure regional stability.[5] The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, James Marape, said:[6]

"We have problems with sovereignty as well as our internal security. We are making this agreement so that we can be sure of the security of our borders and not worry."

At this point, it can be argued that Papua New Guinea has internalized a Western-based positioning in the Asia-Pacific Region, where it aims to develop its military power. Moreover, the fact that this country is located in the north of Australia gives the country a geostrategic importance. It can be said that this has increased the importance of Port Moresby for the USA, which carries out a containment policy against China.

Moreover, Papua New Guinea has a population of around 10 million.[7] This makes the country the most populous island country in the Pacific.[8] As a matter of fact, it can be argued that this situation is one of the factors that attracts Washington to the region.

As a result, it can be said that the effectiveness, influence and alliances of the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region are increasing day by day. It can be predicted that this situation will increase the security concerns of states such as China and North Korea and deepen the security dilemma in the region. As a matter of fact, although it is said that the main purpose of the West and NATO is to create deterrence against the states they see as their rivals, it can be claimed that these actions will have a provocative effect on Beijing and Pyongyang. On the other hand, all these actions of the USA may also lead to the acceleration of China's unification plans with Taiwan.

[1] "Top 10 Largest Economies in the World", Business Insider India, <https://www.businessinsider.in/top-10-largest-economies-in-the-world/articleshow/70547252.cms>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[2] "Inventory and the Role of China in Global Supply Chain", Foundation for Future Supply Chain, <https://futuresupplychains.org/whitepaper/inventory-and-the-role-of-china-in-global-supply-chains/>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[3] "Member Countries", The Commonwealth, <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[4] "U. S. Signs New Security Pact with Papua New Guinea Amid Competition with China", Associated Press News, <https://apnews.com/article/united-states-pacific-security-china-papua-new-guinea-blinken-a4a052e05ff3f03f9e392e66cca74018>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[5] Aynı yer.

[6] Aynı yer.

[7] "India's Modi to Visit Papua New Guinea in Outreach to Pacific Island Countries", Voice of America News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/india-s-modi-to-visit-papua-new-guinea-in-outreach-to-pacific-island-countries/7098634.html>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).

[8] "Pacific Island Nations 2023", World Population Review, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/pacific-island-nations>, (Date of Accession: 22.05.2023).



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The Importance of the Zangezur Corridor

The Zangezur Corridor stands out as a strategic gateway in the South Caucasus. It is a transportation and trade route that connects Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic with its motherland and includes Armenia in regional economic integration. The importance of the Zangezur Corridor should be evaluated together with the political, economic and security dynamics in the region. This is because Zangezur was a region with a predominantly Muslim Turkic population until the Soviet Union.

When it was annexed to Armenia by the Soviet Union in the 1920s, the demographic structure of the region began to change.[1]

The Zangezur Corridor has historically been a connecting point between different cultures, ethnic groups and states in the region. Currently, the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is separated from the main territory of Azerbaijan by the Meghri Region.[2] Therefore, the Zangezur Corridor will connect Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan and ensure the in-



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tegration of this region into Azerbaijan's political, economic and social structure. The corridor will facilitate Nakhchivan's opening to the outside world and its participation in regional cooperation, while reinforcing Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.[3]

From an economic perspective, the Zangezur Corridor can play a strategic role in revitalizing trade and transportation in the region. The corridor will facilitate Nakhchivan's access to the Black Sea and Europe, despite its limited geographical location with Azerbaijan and Turkey. This will enable Nakhchivan to play an active role in regional economic integration.

At the same time, the Zangezur Corridor through Nakhchivan will facilitate the access of Central Asian and South Asian countries to European markets. This will contribute to increasing regional trade and stimulating economic growth.

Moreover, the Zangezur Corridor can play a strategic role in terms of energy policies. Energy resources in the region can be transported to European markets through this corridor. Azerbaijan's rich oil and natural gas reserves can be integrated into international energy projects through the Zangezur Corridor, thus ensuring the energy security of the region.[4] This could support the economic and political stability of the countries in the region, while enabling the West to diversify its energy sources.

From a strategic security perspective, the Zangezur Corridor could affect the political balance in the region. By connecting Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan, the corridor will increase Azerbaijan's regional power and include Armenia in regional integration. This will create a favorable environment for peaceful solutions and regional cooperation and reduce the risk of conflict.

In conclusion, the Zangezur Corridor is a strategic transit route in the South Caucasus and has the potential to play an important role in the political, economic and security dynamics of the region. In addition to connecting Nakhchivan to Azerbaijan and promoting regional cooperation and economic integration, the corridor is also crucial for energy policy and strategic security. In this sense, the corridor can be defined as a route to regional prosperity.

[1] "ZengezurKoridoru Adım Adım Gerçekleşiyor", TRTHaber, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/zengezur-koridoru-adim-adim-gercekleşiyor-750954.html>, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).

[2] "The Nakhchivan Corridor Will Boost Connectivity in the Caucasus", Euractiv, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/azerbaijan/opinion/the-nakhchivan-corridor-will-boost-connectivity-in-caucasus/>, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).

[3] Ibid.

[4] "State Agency: Electricity from Azerbaijan's Liberated Areas to Be Exported to Europe Through Zangezur Corridor", Apa, <https://apa.az/en/energy-and-industry/state-agency-electricity-from-azerbajians-liberated-areas-to-be-exported-to-europe-through-zangezur-corridor-397556>, (Date of Accession: 13.06.2023).



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The West's Mediation Attempts in the Kosovo Crisis

The Kosovo Crisis, which started in April 2022 and led to widespread protests in November 2022 with the decision to introduce uniform identity cards and license plates, moved to a new phase in May 2023 with the inauguration of the elected mayors in the Serb-majority regions in the north of the country and violent protests took place in the said region.

As predicted, this process has brought the Belgrade administration, which does not recognize Kosovo's independence, and Pirishtina into

confrontation. Belgrade, which embraces the ideal of "Greater Serbia" and claims to be the protector of all Serbs in this context, has not remained indifferent to the developments in the Serb-majority regions in the north of Kosovo. As a matter of fact, the Serbian Army being put on alert and the extremely harsh statements coming from Belgrade confirm this.

Kosovo, on the other hand, sees the Serbian boycott of the elections in the north of the country as a provocation against its sovereign-



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ty and independence. Moreover, it considers the support of Kosovo Serbs by Serbia as an interference in its internal affairs. This leads to an escalation of tensions on the Belgrade-Pristina line.

Apparently, the escalation of tensions between the parties is closely related to the internal dynamics of the Balkans and the rising Serbian nationalism in this context. However, the escalation of the crisis is not only caused by regional developments but is also influenced by geopolitical developments in the global equation. In this sense, the region's geopolitically fragile fault lines make the Balkans one of the playgrounds of the global power struggle. As a matter of fact, the fact that the crisis has been on the agenda since April 2022 cannot be read independently from the Russia-Ukraine War that started on February 24, 2022.

Currently, Kosovo is a country that is close to the United States of America (USA) and where the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Kosovo Task Force (KFOR) is active. Indeed, it gained its independence with the support of the West.

On the other hand, Russia, like Serbia, does not recognize Kosovo's independence. In fact, Kosovo's declaration of independence in spite of Russia was a clear defeat for the pan-Slavism policy of the Kremlin administration, which wanted to instrumentalize the Serbs in line with its own interests in order to increase its influence in the region. In other words, Kosovo was the place where Russia was reminded by the US and its allies of the limits and limitations of pan-Slavism. Nevertheless, Moscow wants to be influential in the Balkans through Serbs and Serbia within the framework of pan-Slavist arguments. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the crisis escalated in the wake of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In fact, the war in Ukraine is closely related to the growing influence of pan-Slavism in Russian foreign policy.

Exhausted by the collective sanctions imposed by the West and unable to achieve the desired results on the ground due to the military support to Ukraine, the Moscow administration is sending a message to the European Union (EU) through the Balkans, i.e. Southeastern Europe, that it can destabilize its immediate neighborhood. In other words, the Kremlin hints that a war in which it would be defeated could evolve into a process in which the West, and especially Europe, would lose.

In this regard, it should be emphasized that Serbia's EU membership aspirations prevented the crisis from spiraling out of control and Belgrade's delicate balancing act kept the negotiation channels open. As a matter of fact, the EU, which does not want a crisis in its immediate neighborhood, is also making an effective effort in mediation. It is obvious that if weapons explode in the region, the EU will face a serious migration burden, radicalization in the context of the far right and the heavy economic cost of the process. Therefore, the EU has been trying to reconcile the two actors by bringing the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia together on various platforms. In other words, the EU is trying to prevent conflicts from turning into wars.

The latest example of these initiatives was the visit of the EU Special Representative for the Western Balkans Miroslav Lajcak, together with the US Special Representative for the Western Balkans Gabriel Escobar, to Pirishtina and Belgrade. On June 12, 2023, Lajcak made statements regarding these visits, stating that the EU is continuing its efforts to reach a political solution to the crisis between the parties, and that despite some positive signals, tensions between Kosovo and Serbia are still high.^[1]

Apparently, this statement reveals that the differences between the parties are very evident and that the EU is not yet close to achieving a concrete result in stabilizing the Balkans, which it considers in the context of its own security. This reveals the fragility of the process and shows that the possibility of a hot conflict remains.

Overall, the EU believes that if things get out of control in the Balkans, it will be negatively affected by the process and does not want conflict and crisis in its immediate neighborhood. Therefore, it is intensifying its mediation efforts between Kosovo and Serbia. However, reconciliation between Pirishtina and Belgrade does not seem easy. Because, although the crises enter a phase of détente from time to time, there are still structural disputes between the parties. Of course, these issues are not easy to resolve. However, it is possible to predict that the EU will continue its mediation initiatives.

[1] "Lajčak: Nadali smo se boljem rezultatu posjete Prištini i Beogradu", Al Jazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2023/6/12/lajcak-nadali-smo-se-boljem-rezultatu-posjete-pristini-i-beogradu>, (Date of Accession: 14.06.2023).



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Will Economic Competition Turn into a Hot War in the China-US Power Struggle?

The Asia-Pacific is a region of increasing importance as it is at the center of the struggle for influence between China and the United States of America (USA). Indeed, it can be argued that the regional struggle also plays an important role in the global competition between the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the West and China. In this context, it can be said that the struggle between Washington and Beijing has geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic significance.

It is noteworthy that the US is the world's largest economy,[1] while China is the world's second largest economy. [2] On the other hand, China is at the top of the global supply chain.[3] Therefore, these two actors are the most eco-

nomically powerful states in the world. For this reason, it should be emphasized that it is possible that the rivalry between the two countries could harden and even lead to the possibility of a hot conflict in the future, but this possibility opens the door to a scenario that would negatively affect all states.

As a matter of fact, it can be inferred that the main reason for China's decreasing support for Russia in the Russia-Ukraine War that started on February 24, 2022 is due to the same reasons.

[4] This is because the war has had a negative impact on the global economy and supply chains, which is why China wants the war to end as soon as possible.



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On the other hand, given its economic and political importance in the global conjuncture, it can be stated that the US, like any other state, will consider its own national interests and may refrain from hardening the struggle in order not to harm them. In other words, it can be predicted that Washington will not think differently from Beijing on this issue.

It will be recalled that on June 6, 2023, a statement issued by Chinese officials stated that senior diplomats from China and the United States held "frank and productive" talks in Beijing and agreed to keep lines of communication open to prevent tensions from escalating into conflict.[5]

In this context, it was also confirmed that US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink visited China. In the statement made by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, the following statements were made:[6]

"Mr. Kritenbrink and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu agreed to establish a sincere, constructive and productive channel of communication on improving China-US relations and appropriately managing differences."

Similarly, a statement from the US State Department emphasized that "cordial and productive meetings were held" as part of efforts to maintain open lines of communication and enhance high-level diplomacy between the two countries.[7] Therefore, it can be assumed that both actors are conducting a rational foreign policy and will choose to reduce tensions in line with their interests, regardless of their rivalry.

As a result, it can be said that a possible hot conflict over Taiwan or the South China Sea would be to the detriment of both states and would deal a major blow to the economies of these states with both global and regional effects. Therefore, it can be argued that the rivalry between the US and China will continue on an economic basis and will not turn into a hot conflict in the short term.

[1] "The World's Largest Economies, 2022", Ceo World Magazine, <https://ceoworld.biz/2022/09/05/the-worlds-largest-economies-2022/>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[2] "The World's Largest Economies", World Data Info, <https://www.worlddata.info/largest-economies.php>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[3] "Tech War: Xi Jinping Vows to Protect Global Supply Chain as US Tensions, Covid-19 Controls Raise Decoupling Risks", South China Morning Post, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[4] "Ukraine War: Russia Planning 24 February Offensive, Ukrainian Defence Minister Says", British Broadcasting Corporation, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64492938>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[5] "Senior US, Chinese Diplomats Hold 'Candid' Talks to Avoid Escalation of Tensions", Associated Press News, <https://apnews.com/article/china-us-diplomats-meeting-f5b6ed8fd83f79f142eaa3e5da980482>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[6] "US, China Hold Talks to Avoid Escalation of Tension", News Net Media, <https://www.newsnetmedia.com/story/49040322/us-china-hold-talks-to-avoid-escalation-of-tension>, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).

[7] "Senior US, Chinese Diplomats Hold 'Candid' Talks to Avoid Escalation of Tensions", St. Joseph News-Press, https://www.newspressnow.com/news/world_news/senior-us-chinese-diplomats-hold-candid-talks-to-avoid-escalation-of-tensions/article_33477435-3788-59f5-8224-e5e77f1f0d33.html, (Date of Accession: 09.06.2023).



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Efforts to Accelerate TAPI

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline Project (TAPI) is at the center of the search for energy-based cooperation along the Central Asia-South Asia route. The project can be interpreted as an important symbol for the search for regional security, development and prosperity with its peaceful approach that puts cooperation in the face of crises and conflicts on the agenda.

The project, which aims to export Turkmen gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and from there to the world via the Indian Ocean, was an initiative that came to the agenda in the 1990s and gained momentum with the finan-

cial support of the Asian Development Bank in 2003. However, it has not yet been completed due to both Afghanistan-based instability and disputes in Pakistan-India relations. However, in addition to increasing Turkmenistan's energy exports, the project offers other stakeholder states the opportunity to meet their energy needs and increase their geopolitical and geoeconomic importance as an energy corridor.

The 1814 km TAPI project envisages the supply of up to 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Galkynysh, the world's second largest natural gas field and Turkmenistan's largest,



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to Fazilka in northern India, near the border with Pakistan.[1] TAPI is therefore an important regional cooperation initiative that offers profitable opportunities for all stakeholders. For this reason, the parties have periodically taken initiatives to accelerate TAPI.

In this framework, it is seen that initiatives to make progress in TAPI have gained momentum as of June 2023. In fact, Turkmen Turkmen State Concern Chairman Maksat Babayev and Pakistani Prime Minister Mian Mohammad Shahbaz Sharif signed an agreement on a joint plan for the accelerated implementation of TAPI, namely the roadmap, and the parties mutually reaffirmed their confidence in the project.[2]

It is known that Turkmenistan has come to the forefront as an important actor in the context of the increasing energy needs of the West, especially after the Russia-Ukraine War. At this point, Ashgabat is focusing on Caspian-based energy projects and the Central Corridor on the one hand, and on initiatives that will both meet the needs of the regional states and reach the Indian Ocean on the other. Therefore, determining the road map of TAPI and putting forward a concrete will to accelerate the work on the project is of great importance both regionally and globally.

On the other hand, given that Pakistan is an energy importer and continues to source energy from Russia despite the sanctions and may even have to face Western scrutiny for this, accelerating TAPI is also important for Islamabad. In such an environment, the approach of the Taliban, which dominates Afghanistan, regarding the fate of TAPI is crucial. Indeed, Taliban Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani stated on June 12, 2023 that there are promising developments for the construction of the Afghanistan section of the project.[3]

In today's conjuncture where Afghanistan is isolated by the international community and in a sense the West is punishing the Afghan people while acting to punish the Taliban regime, it can be argued that the Taliban's participation in TAPI is also critical for Afghanistan. Because through TAPI, Afghanistan will be able to gain gains in terms of integration into the international community as well as attract serious investments. This will increase Afghanistan's geopolitical and geoeconomic gains. Therefore, the Taliban has a positive attitude towards TAPI and states that it will fulfill its responsibilities regarding the project.

Finally, to mention the Indian dimension, it should be emphasized that there was no statement from New Delhi regarding the de-

velopments in June 2023. However, considering that India has recently reduced its reservations about the Taliban and activated its embassy in Kabul, and even adding to this information the New Delhi administration's statement that it will continue its humanitarian aid activities, especially food, to Afghanistan, it can be predicted that India will continue to support TAPI.[4] In fact, India has frequently underlined that it welcomes the project. Moreover, it is possible that India and Pakistan, which are at odds over the Kashmir issue and border disputes, will develop a cooperative approach through TAPI, and thus the project will push regional rivalry to the background and put cooperation at the center. Therefore, it can be argued that TAPI holds significant opportunities for India, Pakistan and the region.

Conclusively, developments regarding TAPI have intensified as of June 2023. The agreement signed between Turkmenistan and Pakistan confirms this. Haqqani's statement revealed that there is no problem in the Taliban dimension. India is also expected to continue its support for the project. This will increase regional and global cooperation in terms of energy, paving the way for the development of a win-win relationship between the actors and increasing the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of the stakeholder states.

[1] "Saudi Arabia Expresses Its Support for TAPI Gas Pipeline Project", Business Turkmenistan, <https://business.com.tm/post/7631/saudi-arabia-expresses-its-support-for-tapi-gas-pipeline-project>, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).

[2] "Turkmenistan, Pakistan Agree on Plan to Accelerate Implementation of TAPI Project", Trend News Agency, <https://en.trend.az/business/energy/3760364.html>, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).

[3] "Haqqani Seeking Control of Afghanistan Section of TAPI Pipeline, Says UN Report", The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/haqqani-seeking-control-of-afghanistan-section-of-tapi-pipeline-says-un-report/article-show/100924618.cms>, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).

[4] "Amid Taliban Outreach, India to Boost Food Aid to Afghanistan", AKI Press, https://akipress.com/news:714028:Amid_Taliban_outreach_India_to_boost_food_aid_to_Afghanistan/, (Date of Accession: 12.06.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Energy, the Main Basis of China-Iraq Relations

China has initiated a global transformation through the Belt and Road Initiative. It has increased its economy-based partnerships and developed critical cooperation with many countries. The reflection of increasing partnerships has been the development of joint projects in various sectors in bilateral relations. Strengthening its influence in the Middle East region, Beijing's influence, especially in Iraq, has recently intensified. Recently, Chinese companies, which have been carrying out some activities in Iraq's oil and gas fields, are going through negotiations and agreements with Iraqi companies.

On June 9, 2023, negotiations were held between the Iraqi state-owned Missan Oil Company (MOC) and the Chinese company Geo-Jade to develop the Huwaiza block in Maysan. Geo-Jade signed a Development and Production Agreement for the license in February after winning the block in

Iraq's 2018 Fifth Licensing Round. In a statement on 1 June 2023, the MOC stated that the talks were "in preparation for the implementation of the signed contract". Geo-Jade has committed to spend a "minimum \$60 million" over three years under the contract. A Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) is also expected to be submitted within six months of approval on 21 February 2023.[1]

On the same date, the Dhi Qar Oil Company (DQOC) of Iraq announced that the construction of the 3.15 million barrels Nasiriyah New Crude Oil Storage Project, which will store and assist in the evacuation of crude oil in Dikar and Wasit provinces, has started again. The warehouse is planned to consist of seven 450,000 barrel storage tanks, with the first phase reaching 2.52 million barrels from 3.15 million barrels in total. In a statement made by DQOC on June 5, 2023, China Petroleum Pipeline Company



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(CPP), a subsidiary of Chinese state firm CNPC, is expected to deliver the project by 2025.[2]

In the 1980s, China turned to the Iraqi market in order to meet its increasing energy needs. Since that period, energy has been in a strategic position in the relations on the Baghdad-Beijing line. Oil trade can be characterized as the main component of bilateral relations. The commercial relations between the two have also developed considerably over the years. During the visit of former Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to China in 2015, numerous memorandums of understanding were signed between the parties, including diplomatic, military and energy fields. In addition, in 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed for the implementation of projects in Iraq as a result of various meetings between the Iraqi and Chinese delegations.[3]

In 2016, Beijing became the number one investor in the Middle East geography. In this direction, relations between Iraq and China have also strengthened. Cooperation between the parties has deepened with the "Restructuring for Oil" program, which was formalized in 2019 with the Iraqi Government's commitment to supply China with 100,000 barrels of oil per day.[4]

Moreover, China's capital in the region has grown by 360% since 2021.[5] In 2021 alone, Beijing made over \$10 billion worth of infrastructure deals in Iraq. Moreover, Baghdad wants to secure more Chinese investment in the infrastructure sector.[6] As it can be understood, the need for energy necessitated the development of Beijing's connections with the countries of the region. Especially for China, which has increased its dialogue with the Gulf countries, Iraq is the third largest supplier. China imports nearly 40% of Iraqi oil.[7]

At this point, the increase in the rate of oil imported by China from Iraq is important. Iraq, which exported 22 billion dollars worth of oil in 2018, exported 49 billion dollars in 2022. The total oil imported by Beijing in 2022 is around 55.49 tons. The said rate indicates an increase of 47.49%. Therefore, the process has a return of 39 billion dollars.[8] This increase in energy trade also affects the development of cooperation between the parties. Cui Wei, Chinese Ambassador to Baghdad, also stated that Iraq is an important partner as China's largest partner in terms of contracts and its second largest commercial partner.[9]

The main Chinese companies operating in the country include four major oil groups such as China National Petroleum Cor-

poration, Sinopec, China National Offshore Oil Corporation and Zhenhua Oil. Companies that have deepened their activities in the country are working to open new areas of cooperation. The mentioned activities of Geo-Jade and CPP can also be evaluated within this scope. In addition, United Energy Group (UEG) has signed an agreement to develop the Sindbad field located in the vicinity of Basra.[10] Therefore, in addition to energy supply, various studies such as pipelines, field management, drilling and infrastructure are carried out in order to improve bilateral cooperation.

As a reflection of the energy partnership, China's investments and infrastructure works in related countries have also developed over the years. At this point, the Chinese presence in Iraq has also increased significantly. However, Beijing is showing its influence on the stability and infrastructure developments of exporting countries in order to secure oil supply and secure energy connectivity. At this point, Iraq is China's main partner in the region. The power vacuum created by the US withdrawal from the region can also be seen as a factor that increases Beijing's influence.

However, after the influence of the terrorist organization Devlet al-Iraq and al-Sham (DEAS) in Iraq was broken in 2017, Chinese investments in the country began to increase. For example, in 2019, it was announced that Chinese companies will build more than 8 million homes in Iraq as part of the oil deal in return for multi-billion-dollar projects signed between the two countries.[11] During this period, the Iraqi Government also invested in energy resources to ensure the development of the country.

On the other hand, Iraq has a very important position in terms of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative activities. Its geostrategic location and its resources have further reinforced the value of Baghdad and the strategic importance of Iraq has increased within the scope of the initiative. Energy and infrastructure works are also implemented for the Belt and Road Initiative. In 2021, Iraq was the largest beneficiary of the Belt and Road Initiative, with construction contracts worth approximately \$10.5 billion.[12]

Both the activities of Chinese companies and intergovernmental cooperation indicate that the proximity on the Beijing-Baghdad line will increasingly continue. It is seen that China's influence in Iraq will deepen with investment and project activities within the framework of energy cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative.

tive. With its resources and geostrategic location, Iraq is of critical importance for China and for the objectives of the Belt and Road Initiative. As a result, it is likely that the parties will be involved in the implementation of new projects on infrastructure and investments. In this context, various diplomatic visits may also take place.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Nuclear Threat in Asia-Pacific and North Korea

The fact that North Korea is one of the largest nuclear powers in the world^[1] and its authoritarian structure creates a serious danger especially in the Asia-Pacific Region and in the whole world in general. On the other hand, Pyongyang is increasing both its nuclear tests and researches and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) tests. Moreover, 2022 was the year that North Korea conducted the most tests.^[2]

On the other hand, it can be said that Pyongyang is an actor who aims to oppose the rules-based international order based on the United States (USA). As a matter of fact, there is a serious rivalry between the USA, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and North Korea due to both the nuclear danger it creates and the situation in question. In this context, the USA and NATO organize exercises in the Asia-Pacific



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Region in partnership with South Korea and Japan. In addition to all these, the danger posed by Pyongyang is also used as a justification for the West's goal of creating a pole and gaining influence in the region through its opposition to China. In short, the presence of North Korea is used as a legitimating tool in the West's containment policy against Beijing in the region.

Moreover, North Korea also gains an advantageous position in the global system both in the competition between China and the USA and due to the Russia-Ukraine War that started on February 24, 2022. As a matter of fact, both situations constitute issues that the USA and NATO should spend their resources and energy on. Therefore, the current conjuncture enables Pyongyang to find space for its own activities and to carry out its actions in a much more comfortable way.

In this context, the sanctions decisions that the West tries to take against North Korea within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are also rejected by the votes of China and Russia. As might be expected, this causes the West not to be sufficiently channeled into the North Korean issue.

As a matter of fact, the Pyongyang administration continues its missile tests and drills by increasing it. In this context, North Korea last attempted to launch a spy satellite on May 31, 2023.[3] This caused serious concerns in the surrounding countries, especially in South Korea and Japan. Because, about fourteen minutes after the launch, the authorities in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, both issued a warning from the speakers in the city and sent messages to their mobile phones that the public should go to safe places. Japan, on the other hand, has activated a missile warning system for the city of Okinawa.[4]

All these developments have revealed that Pyongyang's aforementioned action has created a very serious concern in the region. This, in turn, could lead to a hardening of South Korea and Japan's stance towards North Korea. At the same time, this development indicates that the tension on the Washington-Pyongyang line will escalate. However, rather than deterring Pyongyang, the actions to be taken by the USA, Japan-South Korea partnership; will provoke.

At this point, it should be stated that; North Korea's said attempt failed and the satellite launch rocket fell into the sea. According to the statement made by the North Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the rocket landed on the west coast of the Korean Peninsula after losing its propulsion. In his statement on the subject, US National Security Council Spokesperson Adam Hodge said that the US strongly condemns North Korea for using banned ballistic missile technology, increasing tension in the region and destabilizing the regional-global security environment.[5]

At this point, it is noteworthy that North Korea accepted the failure. Because the failure of an international satellite launch is difficult to accept by authoritarian governments like Pyongyang.

As a result, threats originating from North Korea will not be resolved in the short term; it can even be argued that it will continue to increase. Therefore, the tension between North Korea and the USA-Japan-South Korea trio will continue.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Is Normalization Possible in Russian-Greek Relations?

After Russia started the intervention against Ukraine, which it called "Special Military Operation" on February 24, 2022, Greece, like other European Union (EU) member states, joined the sanctions targeting the Kremlin administration. As can be expected, the situation in question adversely affected the relations on the Moscow-Athens line. As a matter of fact, the Kremlin has included Greece in the "Russia's Non-Friendly Countries List".

Moreover, not only the Athenian administration's position on the war in Ukraine; it is seen that the general foreign policy understanding is in harmony with the United States of America (USA),

especially in recent years. In a sense, Greece is becoming a country where the United States is stockpiling weapons. The situation in Alexandroupoli confirms this. It is possible to argue that the increase in the military presence of the USA in the region is worrying for Russia.

In addition to all these, Greece is experiencing an armament frenzy and, in this context, imports from countries such as France and Germany, as well as the USA, for land, air and naval forces. This means that Athens is trying to get the military support of the West by instrumentalizing its military modernization discourses. The aforementioned situation is



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confirmed by the military exercises carried out with the participation of the Greek Army and Western states.

At this point, Greece-Western relations are not only related to the EU; It can also be claimed to be important in terms of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) dimension. Because the majority of the actors participating in the exercises in question consist of NATO member countries. The Moscow administration, on the other hand, thinks that NATO is besieging it, and most fundamentally believes that the Russia-Ukraine War is the "Russia-Western War". Therefore, Greece is an important part of the collective West. As a matter of fact, the Athenian administration, like other Western states, provides military aid to Ukraine. This creates discomfort in the Kremlin.

On the other hand, with the projects like East-Med, which are not expected to be successful due to the fact that Greece is not rational, and the alliance relations it has developed, Greece tries to bring itself to the forefront in the face of the energy crisis, and tries to become a supplier country in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean, and where other suppliers are in Europe. positioning as a route country in energy export towards Turkey; in other words, it seems that it wants to become an energy hub. Russia, whose most important source of income is energy exports, is at the forefront of the issues that Russia is uncomfortable with regarding the war in Ukraine, and the end of its energy-based relations with the EU. Therefore, the efforts of Athens on this issue also cause unrest in Moscow.

As can be understood, from the perspective of Russia, Greece is a country that has internalized the Atlanticist line. This makes it extremely difficult to repair the relations on the Moscow-Athens line. Because Greece acts with the aim of turning the Russia-Ukraine War into an opportunity in order to gain maximum gain in the conflicts in its immediate surroundings and carries out appropriate cooperation processes. This can also be called crisis opportunism.

As a reflection of the situation in question, in a statement to Rossiya 24 TV on 9 June 2023, Russian Ambassador to Athens Andrey Maslov stated that his country does not expect any improvement in its relations with Greece anytime soon.[1] Claiming that Athens destroyed its relations with Moscow on its own will, Maslov emphasized that Greece was acting on the EU line.[2]

The main goal of this policy, which enables Greece to gain gains in military relations and energy, is to support the theses that are against international law, which it defends in its immediate surroundings, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean, with the support of the West. On the other hand, the positioning of Athens as part of the anti-Moscow front has some costs for Greece. For example, in 2022, Greece hosted around 40 thousand Russian tourists. This figure is 83 percent less than in 2021 and 94.8 percent less than before 2019.[3]

Despite the aforementioned data, it can be said that Greece finds its current positioning in terms of military and political goals and energy geopolitics more suitable for its own interests. Of course, this situation also complicates the recovery of relations on the Moscow-Athens line. As a matter of fact, Maslov's statements mentioned above also point to this.

As a result, after the Russo-Ukrainian War, Greece was positioned as part of the collective West. Moreover, Athens has been one of the actors who most eagerly defended the ceiling price tariff applied to Russia for oil. It is seen that Athens, which provides military aid to Ukraine and is included in the sanctions targeting the Moscow administration, wants to maximize its own interests in many areas from energy geopolitics to military modernization through this strategy. But Athens' policies are causing discomfort in Moscow. Therefore, as Maslov stated, a significant improvement is not expected in the relations on the Moscow-Athens line, at least in the short term.

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3 July 2023

ANKASAM Chief Advisor to the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, made evaluations about Terror in Europe on TVNET.

4 July 2023

ANKASAM International Relations Expert Dr. Doğan Başaran evaluated the protests in France on Kanal B.

4 July 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM) International Relations Specialist Dr. Doğan Başaran commented on the Wagner Group's uprising attempt for Ulusal Kanal.

4 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), made evaluations to TRT Russian about Turkey's relations with the EU.

5 July 2023

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

5 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), commented on the chaotic situation in France for A Haber.

5 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), evaluated the raising of the level of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Egypt to A Haber.

6 July 2023

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, President of the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM), commented on the Wagner Group's rebellion attempt for Ulusal Kanal.

9 July 2023

ANKASAM International Relations Expert Dr. Doğan Başaran evaluated Zelenski's visit to Türkiye in A Haber.



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

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JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

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