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Far Right AfD's Alternative Europe Plan in the Run-up to the European Elections



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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Far Right AfD's Alternative Europe Plan in the Run-up to the European Elections

It has been announced that European Parliamentary elections will be held in the European Union (EU) member states on June 6-9, 2024. With the date set, parties that want to shape European politics have started to formulate their electoral strategies. One of these parties is the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The party held its 14th Federal Party Congress in

Magdeburg on August 6, 2023. At the congress, candidates for the European Parliament elections were selected and party programs were announced. In the election program, AfD officials stated that they see the European Union (EU) as a failed project in all important areas, including migration and climate policy.[1]



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The EU, which consists of 27 members, is considered a successful project that brought peace to the European Continent, where wars with devastating effects were experienced and enabled different groups to live together with the understanding of multiculturalism. However, the economic crises that started in the 2000s and the intensified migration flow as of 2015 have prepared a suitable ground for the organization of Eurosceptic and nationalist names and groups. Likewise, the AfD was founded in 2013 and has gradually expanded its base with the impact of the ongoing crises in Europe. Shaping its main discourses on the axis of anti-Islam and anti-immigrant, xenophobia, Euroscepticism and ethnic nationalism, AfD criticizes the EU for “ignoring the will of the peoples of Europe”. The party also claims that the EU is developing policies that will harm European identity and nation states.

Despite all these criticisms, the AfD attaches importance to the elections to the European Parliament, an important institution of the EU. Together with the Council of the EU, the European Parliament is responsible for making laws and adopting legal regulations binding on the member states. In addition, the European Parliament is also responsible for approving the EU budget together with the Council of the EU and supervising other EU institutions. Following the elections, MEPs belonging to political groups are in charge of electing the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council. Therefore, the more the AfD and other far-right parties in Europe increase their number of seats in the European Parliament, which is an important institution for the functioning of the EU, the more effective actors they will become in making decisions that will affect the fate of the EU in line with their policies.

As the only body of the EU directly elected by the people, the composition of the European Parliament reflects the political picture of Europe. From this perspective, the current political atmosphere in EU member states gives an idea about how the Parliament will be shaped.

When European countries are analyzed, it is noteworthy that far-right political parties have increased their vote rates. The AfD, which has managed to appeal to a wide range of voters, is one of the parties that has increased its vote rate. For example, the town of Sonneberg in the eastern part of Thuringia elected Robert Sesselmann of the AfD with 52.8% of the vote as a district administrator, the equivalent of a mayor. AfD co-leader Tino Chrupalla said: “This was just the beginning. We will convince the people with our policies. We will change the situation for the better.”[2] In other words, the party emphasizes society's discontent with the current policies. At this point, the conjuncture also gives the AfD an advantage. While problems such as the economic crisis and migration continue, the economic and social repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine war on Europe have increased the discontent of the society. The sanctions imposed on Russia by EU member states and Russia's response by using the energy card have had negative consequences in almost every field, from the decline in the production sector to the decline in the welfare level of households, especially in countries with close energy relations with Russia, such as Germany. This situation led to the rapprochement between the AfD, which criticized the support for Ukraine, and significant segments of the society and the expansion of the party's base.

It can be said that the fact that all these developments are taking place in the run-up to the 2024 elections will also affect the AfD's votes in the European elections. The political group Identity and Democracy, to which the AfD belongs, has 9 deputies in the 751-person parliament, which will serve between 2019 and 2024, and 73 deputies.[3] According to the surveys, if the European Parliament elections were held today, it is estimated that far-right political parties would increase their votes compared to the center parties. Similarly, polls suggest that the AfD would increase by 15 seats.[4] Therefore, while the current situation favors the AfD, the authorities are developing strategies to gain the support of more voters.

In this direction, the AfD officials, who adopted an election program for Germany to leave the EU (Dexit) before the Bundestag Elections in 2021 and expressed that the EU should be disbanded in a controlled manner in the draft text published after the party congress held in June 2023, changed their discourse and determined a program for voters who care about European integration but are uncomfortable with the policies of the central political parties. Instead of repeating ideas such as Dexit and the disintegration of the EU in the European Parliament election program statement, it is understood that the AfD wants to increase its vote potential by developing

an alternative European plan in the process leading to the European Parliament elections. From this point of view, the new program emphasizes that the EU should be rebuilt as a federation of European nations and that the euro should not be used as a common currency. The aim here is to achieve an integration in which the majority of control lies with the nation states. The main objectives of the envisioned federation are explained as securing external borders against migration, seeking strategic autonomy in security policies and protecting the identity of European nations.[5]

These objectives of the Federation are based on the main issues on which the AfD often criticizes the EU. Immigration has been the most emphasized and securitized issue of the AfD since its foundation. The party claims that immigrants from Africa and the Middle East harm European values and identity in general and German values and identity in particular. Migrants have also been targeted as a threat to the economic welfare of Germans. Especially the open-door policy implemented by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the terrorist attacks in Europe have provided a ground for the AfD to adopt these observations about immigrants by the society. Thus, AfD started to use more emphasis on anti-immigration and protection of national identities in its discourse.

Similarly, the AfD advocates that European states should formulate their own security policies in line with their own interests. While the Party supports NATO acting in line with German interests,[6] there are views that NATO is conducting activities to maintain US supremacy and that this is not in line with German interests. In order to regain its former power, Germany needs to develop its capabilities independently from other actors.

In conclusion, the AfD, which wants to be decisive in European politics, wants to send more deputies to the European Parliament. For this reason, in the process leading up to the 2024 European Elections, it has created an election program for the arguments it defends. In this program, the failure of the EU, which is held responsible for the problems and crises in Europe, was emphasized and an alternative Europe Plan was presented by stating that the EU should be transformed. Although the AfD has presented a reformist perspective with this plan, its minority position in the Parliament shows that the party does not yet have the power to implement a reform on the EU. Nevertheless, given the political strengthening of the far-right in many European countries outside Germany, such as Italy, Sweden, France and Spain, it is clear that the AfD needs to find a compromise with the far-right support base for the survival of the EU in the long term.

[1] “German Far-Right Says the EU Is A ‘Failed Project’ As It Prepares for European Parliament Elections”, The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/06/germany-far-right-alternative-afd-election-europe/6e9f61e0-3454-11ee-ac4e-e707870e43db_story.html, (Erişim Tarihi: 11.08.2023).

[2] Kate Connolly, “Far-Right Afd Wins Local Election In ‘Watershed Moment’ For German Politics”, Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/26/far-right-afd-wins-local-election-watershed-moment-german-politics>, (Erişim Tarihi: 14.08.2023).

[3] “European Parliament 2019 – 2024”, European Parliament, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/germany/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 14.08.2023).

[4] “Right Wing Set for Big Gains In 2024 EU Election, Polling Shows”, Politico, <https://www.politico.eu/article/european-election-2024-polls-right-wing-big-gains/>, (Erişim Tarihi: 11.08.2023).

[5] “German Far-Right Says the EU Is A ‘Failed Project’ As It Prepares for European Parliament Elections”, a.g.e., (Erişim Tarihi: 11.08.2023).

[6] “Manifesto for Germany”, AfD, https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-04-12_afd-grundsatzprogramm-englisch_web.pdf, (Erişim Tarihi: 14.08.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Role and Importance of the Philippines in the China-US Competition

The Asia-Pacific Region is a region where the fault lines of global security pass and the main site of the new great competition. As a matter of fact, the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are trying to establish influence in the region in order to surround China and counter North Korea's nuclear activities. For this reason, the Western Alliance led by the USA; They focused on winning

the states of the region through joint exercises, alliances and organizations based on Western ideology.

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



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

In the Asia-Pacific Region, the borders between the sides are getting sharper. For this reason, the environment of consensus is gradually moving away and an atmosphere emerges in the region where everyone should choose their side. In a context where the security conjuncture has become so fragile, it can be said that the Philippines has chosen the West as an ally. At this point, it can be argued that the Philippines is seen as an important ally for the West due to its Western-based structure, its geopolitical and geostrategic location, and the problems it has with Beijing over the South China Sea.

As a matter of fact, the Philippines is already a state with a Western perspective. However, it can be said that Manila is trying to improve its dialogue with China by following a multi-vector foreign policy. Therefore, it can be deduced that the West wants the Philippines as an ally on its side and is trying to establish this through the USA-Japan-South Korea triangle. Because there are important developments related to this issue in the region. [1]

The first is that the Philippines gave four military bases to the United States[2] and that Philippine Minister of National Defense Carlito Guancing Galvez Jr. granted US access to the Philippines' military bases was not intended for aggression, but only to increase its ability to defend itself against external threats. is to say, Galvez stated that they were not prepared for war, only trying to develop national defense strategies. [3]

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

It can be said that military bases will disturb China and push it to make a counter move within the scope of its national security. While these bases increase the American presence in the region; it will also escalate the struggle for global influence.

On the other hand, it is of great importance that the Philippines turns to Japan to strengthen its presence in the South China Sea and tries to develop a cooperation with Tokyo. At this point, the

news that the Philippines will buy five large patrol ships from Japan and that it will cooperate for the construction of a new pier and headquarters is noteworthy.[4] This move could increase tensions in the South China Sea. Moreover, the fact that this ship purchase is made with Japan may create an extra uncomfortable situation for China.

In this context, the tension in the Asia-Pacific Region pushes the states to choose sides and join a pole. In such a conjuncture, it can be said that the Philippines has internalized the Western perspective in its foreign policy. Because, it can be argued that this situation may manifest as the Philippines' taking place in the Western Alliance or the development of relations on the Manila-Taipei line in the future.

As a result, it can be said that the Philippines attracts the attention of the West. It is clear that the West is also planning to increase its influence over the Philippines, as seen in the example of South Korea and Japan, and therefore aims to expand its presence in the Asia-Pacific. The tension in the Asia-Pacific Region is not expected to be resolved in the short term.

[1] "U.S. to Boost Military Role in The Philippines in Push to Counter China", The New York Times, <https://shorturl.at/qNPQ2>, (Date of Access: 04.08.2023).

[2] "U.S. to Boost Military Role in The Philippines in Push to Counter China", The New York Times, <https://shorturl.at/qNPQ2>, (Date of Access: 04.08.2023).

[3] "Expanded US Access To Philippines Bases 'Not For Aggression', Defence Chief Says", Channel News Asia, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/expanded-us-access-philippines-bases-not-aggression-defence-chief-says-3320006>, (Date of Access: 04.08.2023).

[4] "Philippine Coast Guard Turns To Japan For More Boats", NHK World-Japan, https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20230121_03/, (Date of Access: 04.08.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Contributing to Regional Prosperity, Stability and Peace: Tajikistan-Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan Tripartite Summit

Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are three Central Asian states, each of which has a different strategic importance. They have recently begun to make a name for themselves on the international stage with their win-win policies in the context of good relations. From a geopolitical perspective, the three countries play an important role in ensuring regional stability and transportation in Central Asia through their transportation networks.

Cooperation between these three countries aims to improve land, rail, sea, and air transportation and increase transit potential. The parties strive to ensure fast and smooth transit of the products to be exported. This issue contributes to the development of mutual relations. The fast and effective operation of this corridor will bring great benefits to the countries in the field of logistics.



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Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, hosted the trilateral summit on August 4, 2023. President of Turkmenistan Mr. Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Tajikistan Mr. Imamali Rahman and President of Uzbekistan Mr. Shevket Mirziyoyev addressed important issues during the trilateral talks.[1] The leaders stressed the importance of bilateral and multilateral relations at every opportunity and came together to strengthen cooperation in the security, economic, cultural and scientific fields and signed several agreements. They initiated a process to strengthen their unity through regional and international Cooperation.

Countries renew their unity on issues such as friendship, good neighborliness, culture, civilization, and common history at every opportunity. Increasing security and development through improved relations is one of the main goals. The development of multilateral relations in Central Asia is constantly on the agenda. Thus, the three countries are in contact on projects that are mutually beneficial and promote relations. Thanks to the agreements, it is expected that development will take place not only around these three countries, but around all peoples of Central Asia and within the framework of common interests.

Leaders have also held discussions on oil and gas issues. They are making great efforts to create new opportunities and conditions that will support the expansion of partnerships in all areas. Another topic of discussion was peace and stability. They agreed to cooperate on important issues such as preventing terrorism, corruption and all forms of separatist movements, illegal migration, cybercrime and human smuggling.

The expansion of trade in border regions is very important for the countries' interests. Therefore, cooperation in construction companies, textile companies and the production of chemicals has been agreed upon. In addition, the parties wish to expand the market for agricultural products and export their products to different regions.

Another important topic of the meeting was the use of water resources of the Amuderya River. The countries worked meticulously on this issue. An agreement was reached on the protection of biodiversity and the establishment of a partnership in the future. In addition, important issues such as desertification, climate change and melting glaciers were jointly agreed upon. The use of hydroelectric facilities under construction was discussed in accordance with the countries' interests and various steps were taken in this regard.[2] With this step taken to avoid water scarcity shows that the countries in the region are paying attention to environmental factors.

Discussions were also held on the development of infrastructure projects for the benefit of the countries of the region. This was a strategic step to continue long-term cooperation.

Other items agreed upon are:[3]

Establish good relations with higher education institutions, media, art and cultural associations, etc, to promote cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian fields,

Support for agro-industry and sustainable climate policies,

Assessing the possibilities of joint activities in the energy sector, meeting at the level of energy ministers in the second half of 2023 to discuss cooperation in the oil, gas and electricity sectors.

In conclusion, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have once again demonstrated their strategic importance in Central Asia thanks to the agreements concluded between the three countries. By supporting cooperation in all areas, these three countries set an example for other players in the region. Decisive progress has been made with these agreements, especially in the areas of water, energy and transport. The agreements play an important role in ensuring regional and global unity. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan continue to be present in Central Asia as critical players in managing energy, transportation, and trade. Cooperation with other countries in various areas is likely to evolve over time.

[1] “Лидеры Туркменистана, Таджикистана и Узбекистана подвели итоги саммита в Ашхабаде”, Central Asia News, <https://centralasia.news/23246-lidery-turkmenistana-tadzhikistana-i-uzbekistana-podveli-itogi-sammita-v-ashhabade.html> (Date of Accession: 09.08.2023)

[2] “Бердымухамедов, Рахмон и Мирзиёев подвели итоги саммита в Ашхабаде”, SNG Today, <https://sng.today/ashkhabad/31231-berdymuhamedov-rahmon-i-mirziyev-podveli-itogi-sammita-v-ashhabade.html>, (Date of Accession: 09.08.2023).

[3] “Лидеры Туркменистана, Таджикистана и Узбекистана подвели итоги саммита в Ашхабаде”, op.cit., (Date of Accession: 09.08.2023).



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Indo-Pacific Partnership of the United States, South Korea, and Japan

On August 18, 2023, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol convened with the leaders of the United States, South Korea, and Japan at Camp David. This summit aimed to establish a framework for trilateral security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Simultaneously, it marked the first independent summit among these three countries. Previously, there had been 12 trilateral summits, all held as sideline events to larger meetings. The three leaders discussed

how to strengthen security collaboration in response to shared regional threats such as North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations. Additionally, the summit addressed economic security issues like advanced technologies and supply chains.

Kim Tae-hyo, Deputy Director of Security Policy Affairs at the South Korean Presidential Office, remarked on the summit, stating that ‘the three



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countries share a commitment to freedom, peace, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.’ Furthermore, regarding the contentious issue of treated water from Fukushima, South Korea and Japan, who have officially embarked on a path to reduce tensions announced that the discharge program would be determined through the International Atomic Energy Agency by Tokyo.[1]

After all these statements, China expressed its discomfort with the growing alliance among the three countries. Prior to the US-South Korea-Japan Summit, the Chinese state-run newspaper Global Times emphasized concerns that the summit could jeopardize the security of South Korea and Japan. It highlighted the intention of establishing a trilateral military alliance similar to a ‘Mini-NATO’ in Northeast Asia. China stated[2], ‘The path chosen by South Korea and Japan will leave completely different marks in the history books.’ During this period, ambassadors from China and Russia met with their counterparts in Seoul and Pyongyang.[3]

China’s Ambassador to South Korea, Xing Haiming, and Russia’s Ambassador to South Korea, Andrey Kulik, came together on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at the Chinese Embassy in South Korea. Simultaneously, in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, the Chinese and Russian ambassadors also held a meeting.[4] China’s Ambassador to North Korea, Wang Yajun, met with Russia’s Ambassador to North Korea, Alexander Matsegora, to discuss issues related to the Korean Peninsula and international and regional matters.[5]

Major powers like Russia and China might perceive the alliance between the U.S., South Korea, and Japan in the Indo-Pacific as a significant threat from their perspectives. To comprehend how this alliance could impact regional tensions, one must consider strategic and geopolitical factors:

Russian Perspective: Russia views this alliance in the Indo-Pacific as an attempt by the U.S. to enhance its influence, which is seen as a threat to its own strategic interests. The Moscow leadership regards hosting American military presence in Japan and South Korea as a destabilizing factor in the military equilibrium of the region. Moreover, the alliance’s objective of ensuring maritime security could also affect Russia’s energy exports.

Chinese Perspective: China interprets this tripartite alliance as a strategic move that could alter regional balances. Thus, Beijing might be concerned about how this alliance could limit its own security and strategic influence. Additionally, the deployment of greater military presence by these countries in China’s vicinity could create a sense of encirclement. China’s economic interests are also tied to secure maritime routes in the region, making the alliance’s efforts to ensure maritime security impactful for China as well.

This alliance could potentially lead to various tensions:

1. Military Tensions: The alliance’s military actions or exercises might escalate tensions in the region. This could prompt China to enhance its military capabilities, triggering a response of increased military presence from the U.S. and its allies. Additionally, the presence of North Korea in the region, combined with military exercises conducted by the U.S. and South Korea, frequently leads to heightened tensions.
2. Maritime Security Issues: The alliance’s maritime security operations, aimed at controlling sea routes and facilitating energy transportation, could potentially lead to conflicts.
3. Economic Impacts: The tensions caused by this alliance might affect economic stability in the region. Security concerns over trade routes could impact global trade and energy supply.
4. Regional Instability: As the alliance aims to curtail China’s regional influence, it could result in diplomatic and strategic tensions between China and other countries.

The Indo-Pacific plays a crucial role in China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Infrastructure investments and economic partnerships in the region enable China to expand its economic and political influence. On the other hand, Australia, a close ally of the United States, shares common concerns about China’s growing influence. Australia actively participates in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

strategy. Another significant player in the region, India, continues its ‘Look to East’ policy, aiming to strengthen relations with Southeast Asian countries and Japan. While seeking to enhance its regional presence, India remains cautious in its approach towards China due to historical border tensions.[6]

Japan, a strong ally of the United States, perceives China’s maritime expansion as a security threat and collaborates closely with the U.S. to ensure regional stability. Japan’s investments in infrastructure and development projects in the Indo-Pacific aim to promote connectivity and balance China’s influence.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries respond diversely to the U.S.-China rivalry. While some ASEAN nations prefer stronger economic ties and avoiding direct conflict, others are concerned about China’s assertiveness and opt for closer relations with the U.S. Indonesia, as a neutral country, maintains a balanced foreign policy between the U.S. and China. Jakarta values economic cooperation with Beijing while aiming to uphold sovereignty in the South China Sea disputes.

Within this complex landscape, the U.S.-Japan-South Korea Summit can have significant impacts on regional dynamics. The question of China’s encirclement arises here. Strategic encirclement of China entails political, military, and economic efforts in international relations and geopolitics to encircle China. This strategy involves attempts by other countries or actors to limit or balance China’s power.

Security maneuvers may lead to regional rivalry, an arms race, and military tensions. Moreover, territorial disputes in the South China Sea might escalate. Economic competition could force countries to choose between the U.S. and China, impacting trade, investment, and infrastructure development. Strategic competition could weaken regional stability and hinder efforts to address shared problems like climate change, pandemics, and terrorism.

One way to mitigate the strategic competition between the U.S. and China is to establish the Indo-Pacific as an institutional framework facilitating regional cooperation, thereby promoting broader and deeper regionalism along with multilateralism. However, building institutional structures in the Indo-Pacific is a challenging task. The region faces multiple institutional, ideological, and practical obstacles. Many questions about the profound impacts of Indo-Pacific dynamics on regional order transition remain unanswered.

[1] “Korea, US, Japan to Discuss Security Cooperation At Trilateral Summit”, Korea Herald, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20230813000183>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 13.08.2023).

[2] “Camp David Summit Could Be Dangerous For Japan, South Korea: Global Times Editorial”, Global Times, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295785.shtml>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 13.08.2023).

[3] Same quote.

[4] “Envoys Of Russia, China Demonstrate Close Ties Ahead Of S. Korea-US-Japan Summit”, Korea Times, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/08/113_356949.html, (Eriřim Tarihi: 13.08.2023).

[5] “Russian Ambassador To North Korea Meets With Chinese Counterpart In Pyongyang”, TASS, <https://tass.com/politics/1659639>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 13.08.2023).

[6] Kai He-Mingjiang Li, “Understanding The Dynamics Of The Indo-Pacific: US-China Strategic Competition, Regional Actors, And Beyond”, International Affairs, 96(1), 2020, s. 1-7.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

West-Russia Tensions in the Context of the Russia-Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine War,[1] which started on 24 February 2022, has deeply shaken the global system and created a new competitive environment. The Cold War-era rivalry between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA) resurfaced with this war in the form of US-Russia tension. We can say that this is the biggest tension between Washington and Moscow after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989[2] and the end of the Cold War in 1991[3].

The justification for this war was the over-expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Eastern Europe and its encroachment on national borders. [4] In this context, the European Union (EU) and EU member states have implemented serious sanctions[5] against Russia, including the oil price ceiling[6]. It is known that many of these sanctions were imposed at the request of the USA. As a matter of fact, considering that Europe has also been badly affected by the sanctions in question, it is a question mark how long Brussels can continue this Washington-based struggle.



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On the other hand, this competition seriously hardened many European states against Russia. This situation was expected to bring about Euro-Western consolidation. At the same time, these policies have further widened the distance between Europe and Moscow. On Friday 11 August 2023, German local media Spiegel Online and Zeit newspaper reported that a person identified as Thomas H. had obtained crucial information on Germany's modern combat systems. The information reportedly includes the procurement of technology for surveillance and jamming of opponents' radio systems, as well as the shutdown of enemy radio or air shielding systems. It also includes information on modern weapons used by elite commandos in the army. [7]

Citing anonymous security sources, Spiegel Online reported that the person in question had "extensive access" to the electronic capabilities of the German Army. At this point, it is suspected that this person is providing information about German military divisions to Russian diplomatic missions. According to the allegations, he allegedly did so with the intention of passing this information on to a Russian secret service.

According to Die Zeit and Tagesspiegel, he also has ties to Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. This comes shortly after the German internal security organisation BfV warned of the risk of an "aggressive Russian espionage operation".[8] In April this year, Germany also expelled several Russian diplomats on suspicion of espionage. In retaliation, Russia ordered more than 20 German diplomats to leave the country. [9]

As a result, it can be stated that Germany is also affected by this rivalry. This is because Berlin follows a hawkish policy against Russia from time to time, especially with Leopard tanks. In this context, it can be predicted that the tension between Europe and Russia will not decrease unless there is a softening in the context of the Russia-Ukraine War.

[1] "February 24, 2023-It's Now One Year Since Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Began", Cable News Network World, <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-02-24-23/index.html>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 07.08.2023).

[2] "What Was the Berlin Wall and How Did it Fall?", IWM, <https://shorturl.at/dexRW>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 07.08.2023).

[3] "Mikhail Gorbachev: The Soviet Leader who Helped End the Cold War", British Broadcast Corporation News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13669848>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 07.08.2023).

[4] "Did NATO Expansion Really Cause Putin's Invasion?", American Foreign Service Association, <https://afsa.org/did-nato-expansion-really-cause-putins-invasion>, (Eriřim Tarihi: 07.08.2023).

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Importance of Economic Cooperation in the Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

Uzbekistan's foreign policy envisages developing relations with other countries in the Central Asian region, ensuring regional stability and promoting economic cooperation. Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan declared their independence in 1991 following the collapse of the Soviet Union and this process has been one of the cornerstones of their foreign policies.

Kyrgyzstan is an important neighboring country for Uzbekistan, and the two countries' relations are shaped around various factors. Relations between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have had different characteristics at different periods in time, and while relations between the two countries have generally been concentrated in the diplomatic, economic and security fields,



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they have sometimes become tense. While issues such as border disputes and the sharing of water resources can strain Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan relations, both countries have the potential for cooperation in areas such as trade, energy and cultural exchanges.

Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan recognize the importance of regional partnership and stability. One of the key elements of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is to promote regional partnership and integration. Uzbekistan has used various platforms to strengthen its relations with other countries in Central Asia. One of these platforms has been the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Within the SCO framework, countries such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan cooperate in security, economic and political fields.

Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan economic cooperation takes place in various areas, including regional development, trade, investment and infrastructure projects, and the two countries aim to better advance their economic potential through this cooperation. Increasing bilateral trade volumes is one of the cornerstones of economic relations. Trade through exports and imports supports economic growth in both countries, and trade agreements and free trade zones help facilitate trade.

Agricultural products and the food sector play an important role in the economy of both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Both countries have potential for trade in agricultural products and sharing of agricultural technology. Uzbekistan's energy demand and Kyrgyzstan's hydroelectric potential offer significant opportunities for energy cooperation. Electric power trade, energy transit projects and energy infrastructure provide the basis for both countries to work together in the energy field. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are developing joint projects in areas such as construction, logistics and transportation, strengthening regional integration by establishing partnerships in infrastructure investments and projects.

Cooperation in the manufacturing sector offers significant opportunities for the establishment of joint production projects and industrial facilities, promoting the production and trade of high value-added products. Financial partnerships between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are important for financing investment projects and trade facilitation. The banks and financial institutions of the two countries have the potential to work together. Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the tourism sector helps

to increase tourist flows. Through cultural exchange and tourism projects, the peoples of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan will better understand each other and develop closer ties. Cooperation in education and technology also promotes human resource development and innovation.

Economic partnerships between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are of great importance not only for the two countries, but also for the overall stability, development and regional integration of the Central Asian region. At a time when Central Asia is struggling with instability, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan's economic cooperation reduces the risks of conflict in the region. The solidarity of the two countries will increase the overall trade and investment opportunities of the Central Asian region and expand the opportunities for other Central Asian countries to work together.

The efficient use of water and energy resources in the region is critical for the sustainable development of Central Asian countries. Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on energy and water resources management will ensure fair and efficient use of resources in the region. Economic partnerships will contribute to the development of regional identity and solidarity among Central Asian countries. Coming together around common interests will bring greater unity and strength to the region.

As a result, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan's economic relations are an important tool to support regional cooperation, promote economic development and create a wider network of cooperation in the Central Asian region. This solidarity and partnership helps both countries pursue regional stability and development while protecting their national interests.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Reading Asia-Pacific Geopolitics Through China

It can be said that the fault lines of global security have begun to pass through the Asia-Pacific Region and the international political axis is shifting towards this region. The main security dynamics of the global system are now read through Asia-Pacific and comments on the future are made.

As a matter of fact, the region in question is home to many critical problems and globally important actors. Because the bilateral problems between the states in the Asia-Pacific arouse a lot of repercussions on a global scale as well as regionally. By reason of the problems between the actors in the region in question both create regional crises and attract attention from a global perspective. In this context, it can be argued that the Taiwan issue is the first thing that comes to mind in this situation.

China is also a state that advocates multipolarity against the United States of America (USA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and thus against Western hegemony. After the global economic crisis that started in 2008[1], China surpassed Japan in 2010[2] to become the second largest economy in the world after the USA[3]. With these developments, Beijing has risen to the top of the global supply chain.[4] This reveals the importance of China in terms of the global system.

On the other hand, there is the South China Sea problem. As a matter of fact, stakeholder states in China and the South China Sea cannot reach an agreement on this region. Beijing has some claims about the sea in question. Through a system called the Nine-Dash Line[5], China states that it has cer-



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tain rights over this sea. However, states such as Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia also assert their own claims. This is why there are problems in the South China Sea. In the context of this problem, although calls are made within the framework of compliance with international maritime law, the tension in this region does not decrease and the stress does not decrease.

The Taiwan problem and the South China Sea problems increase the global interest in the region. Moreover, considering that China is also a party to these problems, it can be argued that Beijing has a significant place in the Asia-Pacific Region being a region where the basic building blocks of the international system and basic security approaches can be perceived.

In addition to all these, the global struggle with China is the basis of the US and NATO's interest in the region. Because Washington is developing alliances with many countries in the region. In this context, the most prominent states are; Australia, South Korea, New Zealand, Vietnam, Japan and the Philippines.

Moreover, the United States also implements many military cooperation in the region. The ANZUS Agreement[6], which was created in 1951 with the cooperation of Australia, USA and New Zealand; The Quadruple Security Dialogue (QUAD)[7], implemented with the cooperation of India, Japan, USA and Australia, and the AUKUS Pact[8], established with the partnership of the UK, USA and Australia, are concrete examples of these partnerships.

The current conjuncture of the Asia-Pacific Region and its geopolitical position in the global system are now being read through the rise of China. In this context, China's increasing regional and global activities are challenging the West's unipolar world understanding.

Once for all, China has the power and capacity to radically change not only Asia-Pacific geopolitics but also global geopolitics.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Era of “Multinational” Alliances in Asia-Pacific

Senior defense and foreign officials from the United States (USA) and Australia on July 28, 2023 at the “33rd Australia-USA Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN)”. The sides agreed to further cooperate with India, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea to ensure the security

and the stability of the region. During the meeting, the two countries decided to increase their cooperation with the Asia-Pacific countries through a series of exercises. In addition, in the statement, they welcomed Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Tonga for the first time in



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the “TALISMAN SABER 2023” exercise held in the US and Australian registers; as well as India, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines sending observers[1].

Other matters that were agreed within the scope of AUSMIN are; reaffirming the commitment to transparency, maritime security and increasing maritime space, cooperating to put a stop to illegal fishing, accelerating consistency of the alliance and more regular visits by American submarines to Australia. The two countries also agreed to maintain a global order, based on international law; including the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial structure. According to the statement, a set of keys is targeted to guide multiple pairs, partnerships, triple and multilateral security arrangements.[2]

Concerns frequently emphasized by Western actors regarding the Asia-Pacific are as follows; increased military actions in the South and East China Sea, security problems in and around the Taiwan Strait and destabilizing or coercive unilateral actions that undermine regional peace and stability in general. Australia and the United States have called for the peaceful resolution of regional issues through dialogue without the threat or use of force or coercion. In addition, the two countries have stated that they support Taiwan’s participation in international organizations, noting that Taiwan is a leading democracy[3]. In order to prevent a possible conflict in this regard, attention was drawn to the establishment of reliable and healthy communication channels with China. Western powers emphasize the importance of establishing constructive relations with Beijing, increasing transparency and cooperating with China in the areas of common interest.

The United States and its military allies are trying to balance and constrain China by establishing mechanisms at different levels, including bipartite, tripartite or quadruple groupings in the Asia-Pacific. In this balancing act, countries like India, Indonesia, France, New Zealand and Singapore mostly prefer non-military mechanisms. These countries focus heavily on balancing China and seek technical support from the United States to strengthen their military capabilities.

The concept that Western powers often focus on is “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. This concept, coined by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2016, has since been endorsed as a constructive proposition by the US and all of its allies. Those who gave the strongest support to this statement stand out as India and France. Previously, Australia was also a strong supporter of this concept. However, due to the AUKUS Agreement signed with the USA and the UK, Canberra has shown that it is more in favor of regional polarization and defense alliances. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), which was launched in 2017, is also mainly based on the principle of “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”. This dialogue, consisting of the USA, Australia, Japan and India, has gradually moved away from its purpose over the past 6 years. New Delhi plays a calming role in this formation in Washington and Tokyo. Western actors led by the US have accelerated all India’s efforts towards security alliances that will provoke China.

It is seen that India attaches great importance to the understanding of peaceful security and strongly opposes the bloc politics in the bilateral, tripartite and quartet meetings; which often continue in the form of “security dialogues”. In this context, it can be said that New Delhi is trying to take Tokyo away from Washington’s “dangerous steps” by taking Tokyo to its side. This means that, Japan itself is moving away from the “free and open” regional security principle and towards a policy of bloc with the USA. In Japan, there are serious criticisms of the Fumio Kishida administration for moving away from the concept of “free and open”, which is the legacy of Shinzo Abe, and moving to a more proactive defense concept. China criticizes Japan for its bloc policy[4]. Some of the “multilateral” security dialogues interpreted as “forming of blocs” in Asia-Pacific are as follows[5]:

Japan-South Korea-USA

Japan-India-Italy

Japan-England-Australia

Japan-Australia-USA

Japan-India-USA

Japan-Australia-India

Australia-Indonesia-India

Australia-India-France

Based on the above triple mechanisms, it is seen that Japan is trying to develop a multidimensional cooperation network due to security concerns originating from China and North Korea. India, on the other hand, thinks differently from other Western allies regarding the mechanisms to deal with China. New Delhi desires a more “inclusive” regional security architecture rather than Washington’s “against Beijing” rhetoric. Because India is largely reluctant to confront China militarily. Due to the lack of a consistent security mechanism in the Asia-Pacific, the countries of the region desire to benefit from the experiences of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the defence alliance of the West. It is thought that NATO can contribute to establishing a rule-based order in the Asia-Pacific. In this context; Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand participated for the second consecutive year at NATO’s annual meeting held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12 2023. Apart from its intention to open a contact office in Tokyo, NATO is said to be planning to establish an “Individually Tailored Partnership Program (ITPP)” with all four countries. With NATO’s increasing interest in the region, it would not be surprising if the number of alliances in the Asia-Pacific increased.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Azerbaijan–Russia Relations Shaped by the Karabakh Conflict

The Karabakh conflict is an important issue affecting the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia. Although Karabakh was historically recognised as a region belonging to Azerbaijan, the Armenian-backed Karabakh Republic was established in 1991 following violent conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 1994, Karabakh came under the control of Armenia, leading to a ceasefire between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The failure to fully resolve the Karabakh conflict and the issue of the return of Karabakh to Azerbaijan increased the tension between the two countries. The war in 2020 significantly changed the balance in the region. Azerbaijan achieved a great military success against Armenia and recaptured a large part of Karabakh. The Karabakh conflict is a long-standing dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia and is often asso-



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ciated with Russia's influence in the region. Although the Karabakh issue has not been resolved, relations between Azerbaijan and Russia have changed over time. Relationships sometimes experience processes of rapprochement and co-operation, and sometimes they experience tense situations.

Karabakh has caused tensions in Azerbaijan–Russia relations due to the violent clashes in the region in 2016. In 2020, the conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Karabakh region led to the re-ignition of a long-standing dispute, and in 2020 Azerbaijan launched a military operation to regain control of Karabakh. During the 2020 Karabakh War and its aftermath, Russia's role was quite remarkable, and relations between Azerbaijan and Russia were shaped in line with their interests in the region. As a result of this war, Azerbaijan took control of a large part of Karabakh and the Karabakh issue had a great impact on Azerbaijan–Russia relations. This problem is of great importance both for Azerbaijan's national security and regional balance.

As of September 2021, the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia contain very important dynamics in the context of the resolution of the Karabakh conflict and subsequent developments. Russia mediated between Azerbaijan and Armenia and secured a ceasefire at the end of the war. Russia has also assumed the role of sending peacekeeping forces to Karabakh and supervising the implementation of the ceasefire. This situation has brought about some changes in the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia.

Azerbaijan wanted to protect its military successes and territorial gains from the war with Russia's peacekeeping forces in the region, and Baku saw this situation as a kind of balance. Russia has increased its influence in the region and strengthened its diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan through its mediation role for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict. Although Azerbaijan has at times felt that Russia has been close to Armenia, Russia's mediation efforts have helped to maintain dialogue between the two countries. Russia's diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan in its efforts to ensure a ceasefire in times of conflict have aimed to ensure regional stability.

During the Karabakh War, Russia has established military co-operation with both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia continues its military cooperation as a member of Russia's Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), while Azerbaijan has purchased military equipment from Russia. This situation shows that Azerbaijan has to balance independence and the protection of its national interests. The Karabakh conflict affects the overall balance in the South Caucasus region and this situation shapes Russia's policies in the region and its relations with Azerbaijan, taking into account Azerbaijan's strategic position and energy resources.

The Karabakh conflict is a complex part of the relations between Azerbaijan and Russia. The resolution of the conflict and its aftermath affects the dynamics of the relations between the two countries and has a very important place in terms of regional stability and balance. While Azerbaijan is trying to balance its relations with Russia in order to protect its independence and security interests in the Karabakh issue, both countries are very careful in protecting their national interests.



ANKASAM ANALYSIS

The Regional Role of AUKUS in the Context of the Sino-West

AUKUS Pact; It is a security alliance formed in the Asia-Pacific Region with the cooperation of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (USA). This entity is committed to the supply of nuclear submarines to Canberra by Washington and London.[1] As a matter of fact, in today's conjuncture, where global security equations are being read over the Asia-Pacific, it can be said that this union mainly aims to surround China and restrict the activities of the Beijing administration in the

South China Sea. Considering that North Korea is also an important military threat in the region in question, it can be argued that this cooperation creates an area of operation and influence for the West and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Although Australia is in Oceania, it is an actor with a Western perspective in geopolitical and geostrategic terms. It is therefore normal for AUKUS to raise serious security concerns in



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Beijing. The increase in the tension between the West and China over Taiwan is a factor that increases the size of the rivalry between AUKUS and China. In short, it can be argued that there is an important struggle for influence in the Asia-Pacific Region between these two actors.

It is known that the pact in question not only increased the Western influence in the region, but also included the aim of encircling China. For this reason, it can be stated that the current tension in the region has increased and this has gradually turned the region into a playground for the rivalry between the West and China.

It can be said that the alliance of the said actors over the "anti-Beijing" is making Beijing more uncomfortable day by day and leading it to a more proactive policy. Because the increase in the pressure on Taiwan and the development of the West, especially Washington's relations with Taipei, would be a violation of the "red lines" in Beijing's own words. As a matter of fact, it is known that the People's Republic of China aims to unite with Taiwan until 2049, the centennial of its establishment.[2]

At this point, it can be stated that the USA is trying to accelerate the process through both its relations with Taiwan and AUKUS, and that Beijing aims to increase the probability of failure by forcing China to take a military action before it is fully prepared.

In addition to all these, the presence of countries with a Western perspective such as Japan and South Korea also increases the pressure on China. Because NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Japan and South Korea on 29 January 2023 and talked about "threats originating from China and North Korea" during these visits.[3]

The development in question is extremely remarkable when read together with Japan's claims to join AUKUS. As a matter of fact, considering Japan's rising military expenditures, its policies to expand and expand its defense capacity, its relations with Western states and the military agreements it has implemented, and its hardened rhetoric towards states such as China, Russia and North Korea, Japan is also a part of AUKUS. It has been claimed that the name of the Pact will be expanded as JAUKUS.[4] It can be predicted that the realization of such a situation will increase the pressure on China and Beijing's discomfort with the said pact.

In this context, the increasing influence of the West in the region is not only China; It can be predicted that it will disturb North

Korea as well. This is likely to strengthen the possibility of a hot conflict in the region in the coming period.

As a result, AUKUS members and China are geopolitically regional; however, it is in a global struggle in terms of its effects and causes. It can be argued that both sides will continue to increase the level of competition and a hot conflict may occur in the region over Taiwan and the South China Sea in the future. Despite all this, it is unclear whether the actors would want such a conflict in Asia-Pacific.

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ANKASAM ANALYSIS

Afghanistan's Changing Political Relations with Russia

Relations between Afghanistan and Russia have historically followed a complex and fluctuating course. Bilateral relations were significantly affected by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Since then, relations have been at times friendly and at times tense.

In the period covering 1979-1989, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and caused a protracted war. During this period, the Russians intervened militarily in support of the communist

government in Afghanistan and were severely criticised by the United States of America (USA) and other Western countries. It also faced resistance from the Afghan mujahideen. Due to this resistance, Soviet troops ended the occupation in 1989. During this period, relations between Afghanistan and Russia were strained and with the end of the occupation, relations between the two countries were completely severed.



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After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, the country was plunged into civil war between 1992 and 2001. During this period, bilateral relations were generally tense. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, allegations emerged that Russia was closely monitoring the situation in Afghanistan and had secret relations with the Taliban regime. In addition, the Afghan groups fighting against each other led to increased instability in the country. During this period, due to the terrorist threat in Afghanistan, Russia worked with the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in line with some common interests.

In the period 1996-2001, the Taliban seized power by controlling a large part of Afghanistan, which led to various allegations about the secret relations between Russia and the Taliban. However, the Russian government has always denied these allegations and has publicly stated at every opportunity that the Taliban is a "terrorist organisation".

In the late 2010s and early 2020s, Russia became more actively involved in the political process in Afghanistan and established direct contacts with the Taliban. Russia continued to monitor the situation in Afghanistan and contribute to the peace process and supported the joint approach against the Taliban. Russia has been concerned about the growing influence of the Taliban and has not hesitated to co-operate with the US and NATO in the fight against terrorism. Moscow has also frequently expressed its willingness to contribute to Afghanistan's peace process. However, in 2021, the situation in Afghanistan changed again and the Taliban took control of a large part of the country, and with the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, the balance of power in the region began to reshape. In this process, Russia expressed its willingness to establish dialogue with the Taliban and stated that it would continue to maintain its diplomatic mission in Afghanistan, provided that it did not pose any threat to the Taliban.

Russia's importance for Afghanistan stems from regional and geopolitical factors. Afghanistan, It has a strategic position as it is the cross-roads of Central Asia. Therefore, developments and instability in Afghanistan are important for regional and global security, and Russia's policies towards Afghanistan are shaped by a combination of various factors.

Instability, terrorist organisations and drug trafficking in Afghanistan are increasing regional security threats and Russia is closely monitoring the situation in the country, considering that these threats may affect its own security.

Afghanistan is an important country in the world in opium and heroin production. This drug traffic not only worsens the security situation inside Afghanistan, but also has a negative impact on drug addiction in the region and worldwide. Russia supports efforts to control drug trafficking and prevent its spread. The instability and conflict situation in Afghanistan has a negative impact on other countries in the region. Russia seeks to promote regional stability in order to prevent an increase in migration, terrorism and other security threats due to instability in the region. Russia wants to increase its influence in Central Asia and maintain its influence in the region. Afghanistan is seen as an area for Russia to strengthen its influence in the region due to its strategic location in Central Asia.

Although relations between Afghanistan and Russia have historically fluctuated up and down, they have fluctuated depending on the political conditions of the period. Both countries are evaluating their relations and conducting the political process due to regional security, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking and other common interests. Domestic political dynamics in Afghanistan, the regional situation and international security conditions influence the complexity and volatility of relations between Russia and Afghanistan.

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22 August 2023

ANKASAM International Relations Expert Göktuğ Çalıışkan evaluated the BRICS Summit on the National Channel.

22 August 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol commented on China's search for a multipolar world and its global effects for A Haber.

23 August 2023

Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM) International Relations Specialist Göktuğ Çalıışkan commented on BRICS' expansion strategy and the importance of the New Development Bank for Ulusal Kanal.

26 August 2023

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