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## SORUNLARI ÇÖZMEDE MÜZAKERE SÜRECİ YETERLİ Mİ?

## IS NEGOTIATION PROCESS SUFFICIENT FOR RESOLVING DISPUTES?



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**Bridging Civilizations: The  
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Alliance of Civilizations in a  
Fractured World**

**Dijital İpek Yolu:  
Kazanım ve Riskler**

**French-Turkish Relations:  
Between Political  
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**A**vrasya Dünyası dergimizin 16. sayısı ile karşınızdayız. Yine bahar mevsimine denk gelen başka bir sayımız bu. Uluslararası ilişkiler camiası için; ilkbahara has yenilenme duygusu, dünyada barış umutlarını da yeşerten bir nitelik taşır. Dünya siyasetine yön veren aktörlerde olabilecek değişiklikler de huzur ve istikrar atmosferini olumlu yönde etkileyebilir.

2025 yılı için Nisan ayının ortalarına geldiğimiz şu günlerde ne yazık ki bu dilek ve temennilerimizi karşılayan bir ortamda değiliz. Rusya'nın 3 yıl önce Ukrayna'ya karşı başlattığı saldırı bütün şiddeti ile sürüyor. İlgili alanımız dışında olmakla beraber, Gazze başta olmak üzere Orta Doğu coğrafyasındaki gelişmeler endişe vermeye devam ediyor. Dünya siyaset sahnesinin yeni aktörü ABD Başkanı Trump'ın dış politika adımları Batı İttifakı içerisinde depreme yol açarken, uluslararası ekonomideki hamleleri bütün dünyada telaş ve belirsizlikler yaratıyor. Askeri çatışmalara ilaveten ticari ve ekonomik savaş olasılıkları da gündemimize girmeye başlıyor.

Avrasya Dünyası olarak etrafımızda olup bitene daima tarafsız ve yapıcı bir açıdan yaklaşmaya çalıştığımızın en yakın tanıkları siz değerli okurlarımızdır. İyimser olmayı her zaman yeğledik. Bu yaklaşımlarımızdan hareketle, dergimizin bu sayısında da dikkat ve ilginizi çekeceğini umduğumuz bir makale demetini size sunuyoruz.

Selam ve sevgilerle.

**Yiğit Alpogan**  
Editör

# from the editor

**Dear Readers,**

**W**e are here with the 16<sup>th</sup> issue of the Eurasian World journal. This issue also coincides with the spring season. The sense of renewal that is unique to spring has a nature that raises hope for peace in the world for the international relations community. Possible changes in the actors that shape world politics could positively affect the atmosphere of peace and stability as well.

Unfortunately, as we approach the middle of April 2025, we are not in an environment that meets these wishes and desires. The attack that Russia launched against Ukraine 3 years ago continues with all its intensity. Developments in the Middle East, especially in Gaza, continue to cause concern, although it is outside our field of interest. While the foreign policy steps of the new actor of the world political scene, US President Trump, are causing tremors within the Western Alliance, his moves in the international economy are creating anxiety and uncertainty all over the world. In addition to military conflicts, the possibility of trade and economic wars are also starting to enter our agenda.

As the Eurasian World, you, our valued readers, are the closest witnesses to the fact that we always try to approach what is happening around us from an impartial and constructive perspective. We have always preferred to be optimistic. Based on these approaches, we present you a series of articles that we hope will attract your attention and interest in this issue of our journal.

With greetings.

**Yiğit Alpogan**  
Editor

## KAPAK / COVER



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# BRIDGING CIVILIZATIONS: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS IN A FRACTURED WORLD

At its core, UNAOC serves as a bridge between cultures, religions, and civilizations, focusing on four key pillars: education, youth, media, and migration. These areas are essential to addressing misunderstandings and stereotypes that fuel conflict and discrimination.

**Ivan Ivanov**

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In a world marked by deepening divisions, rising extremism, and the resurgence of identity politics, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) has emerged as a vital platform for fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation across cultures and faiths. Founded in 2005 as a joint initiative between Spain and Türkiye under the auspices of the United Nations, UNAOC was established to counter the growing tensions between the Western and Muslim worlds in the wake of global conflicts and the rise of radical ideologies.

However, nearly two decades later, its mission has evolved beyond just fostering interfaith dialogue. It has become a key player in addressing the root causes of division, from hate speech and xenophobia to youth radicalization and migration crises. As the international order faces profound shifts, UNAOC's relevance is only increasing, particularly in regions like Eurasia, where historical and contemporary challenges require urgent attention.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed concerns about the effectiveness of global governance structures, including the Security Council. In his remarks at the Doha Forum on December 10, 2023, he stated: “The United Nations Security Council is paralysed by divisions. Global governance is failing in the face of the climate crisis, in the face of the lawless development of new technologies, and in the face of the multiplication of conflicts.” This acknowledgment underscores the challenges within the UN system and highlights the need for alternative platforms like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to foster dialogue and cooperation among member states.

### A Platform for Peace and Dialogue

“Dialogue must go beyond mere talking. It must lead to mutual understanding, respect, and ultimately, peaceful coexistence.” Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, has often reiterated. At its core, UNAOC serves as a bridge between cultures, religions, and civilizations, focusing on four key pillars: education, youth, media, and migration. These areas are essential to addressing misunderstandings and stereotypes that fuel conflict and discrimination. The Alliance’s work extends from grassroots initiatives to high-level diplomatic engagements, ensuring that policies promoting tolerance and coexistence are implemented across diverse societies.

In an era where geopolitical tensions are resurging across Eurasia, UNAOC’s role in preventing conflicts before they arise is more crucial than ever. The region, spanning from Eastern Europe to Central Asia, is home to a mosaic of ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities. While this diversity is a strength, it also presents challenges, particularly when external actors manipulate identity politics for political gains.

### Hate Speech and the Challenge of Misinformation

One of the most pressing issues UNAOC addresses today is hate speech and the weaponization of digital platforms. With the explosion of social media, disinformation and inflammatory rhetoric have become powerful tools in exacerbating divisions. Eurasia is no exception. From ethnic tensions in the Caucasus to rising Islamophobia in parts of Europe, digital platforms often amplify prejudices rather than counter them.

In response, UNAOC has launched initiatives like the #SpreadNoHate campaign, which works with journalists and social media influencers to combat misinformation

and promote narratives of inclusion. The campaign aims to challenge the narratives that frame immigrants, religious minorities, or marginalized communities as threats, a trend that has intensified in many Eurasian nations.

In an interconnected world, the battle for peace is also a battle for truth. We must ensure that our digital spaces are not hijacked by those who seek to divide us.

### Youth as Agents of Change

A major aspect of UNAOC’s work is empowering young leaders. The organization recognizes that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the active participation of the next generation. In a “Youth Meet-Up” organized by the European Union and the African Union focusing on the role of youth in peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict and radicalization, Moratinos stated: “One of today’s main challenges is uncertainty, but young people have to remain hopeful and work to have their voices heard.” Through programs such as the Youth Solidarity Fund and the Intercultural Innovation Hub, UNAOC supports young activists and social entrepreneurs who are creating community-based solutions to counter division and foster coexistence. Many of these initiatives take place in Eurasia, where youth engagement is crucial in bridging historical animosities.

Similarly, in the Balkans, UNAOC’s youth programs have facilitated dialogue between Serbian, Bosniak, and Croatian communities, promoting shared historical narratives rather than divisive interpretations of the past.

### International Center Alliance of Civilizations and Ivanov School for Young Leaders: Advancing Intercultural Partnerships for Global Peace

A significant partnership in the Balkans is between UNAOC and the International Center Alliance of

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Civilizations (ICAC) based in Skopje, Macedonia. In November 2023, during the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, ICAC and UNAOC formalized their collaboration by signing a partnership agreement. This agreement focuses on promoting

intercultural and interreligious dialogue, fostering social inclusion, combating xenophobia, hatred, and religious intolerance, implementing the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, sharing best practices and knowledge, and empowering young individuals from diverse backgrounds to become advocates for intercultural understanding and cooperation.

The Balkans hold a pivotal position in promoting alliances due to their rich tapestry of cultures, religions, and histories. The region has experienced periods of conflict rooted in ethnic and religious divisions. Therefore, fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding in the Balkans is essential for reconciliation and peacebuilding. By supporting initiatives that bridge divides and promote mutual respect, organizations like UNAOC and ICAC contribute to creating a more harmonious and cooperative environment, not only within the Balkans but also as a model for other regions facing similar challenges.

A significant project of the International Center Alliance of Civilizations (ICAC) is its co-organization of the School for Young Leaders, an initiative founded by former Macedonian President Dr. Gjorge Ivanov in 2010.





This prestigious annual program aims to cultivate leadership skills among young professionals from diverse backgrounds. ICAC contributes by shaping the curriculum, inviting globally recognized lecturers, and supporting participants throughout the experience. With over 500 participants and 300 distinguished speakers since its inception, the program has become a hub for emerging leaders. In 2018, it was honored as the Best Socially Responsible Project in Europe by the World Business Angels Investment Forum.

In recent years, the interest among students from Asia has been steadily growing, reflecting a desire to build stronger ties with Europe. This East-West connection is vital for fostering mutual understanding, cross-cultural collaboration, and innovative partnerships that transcend borders. The School serves as a bridge, enabling young leaders from Asia and Europe to connect, exchange ideas, and develop a shared vision for a more peaceful and interconnected world.

### Migration and the Path to Social Cohesion

Another critical area where UNAOC has been instrumental is migration and refugee integration. The Eurasian region, particularly at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, has witnessed waves of migration due to conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

Migration often triggers social anxieties, leading to xenophobic policies and anti-immigrant sentiments. UNAOC works with municipal governments, civil society, and international organizations to ensure that migrants are not just seen as statistics but as individuals with rights, cultures, and contributions to host societies.

The Intercultural Cities Program, in collaboration with the Council of Europe, supports local governments in developing policies that promote the integration of migrants while preserving cultural diversity. Cities like İstanbul, Moscow, and Athens have benefited from such initiatives, creating inclusive urban environments that celebrate rather than suppress multiculturalism.

### Eurasia's Role in the Emerging World Order: A Crossroads for Civilizational Alliance

Zbigniew Brzezinski, in *The Grand Chessboard*, highlights: "About 75 per cent of the world's people live in Eurasia, and most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil. Eurasia accounts for about three-fourths of the world's

known energy resources." If the 20th century was defined by the Atlantic world and its institutions, the 21st century is increasingly being shaped by what happens across the vast and complex space of Eurasia. Stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, and from İstanbul to Ulaanbaatar, Eurasia is more than just a geographic region. It is a civilizational meeting ground. It is where East meets West, where Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and secularism intersect, and where the legacies of empire, colonization, and resistance still reverberate. In the context of building an *Alliance of Civilizations*, Eurasia holds an irreplaceable role, not just as a theater of tensions, but as a crucible for solutions.

First, Eurasia is the microcosm of global diversity. Nowhere else is there such a concentration of linguistic, religious, ethnic, and cultural plurality. This diversity is both a source of richness and a trigger for potential fragmentation if not managed inclusively. From the Balkans to the Caucasus, from Central Asia to the heart of Russia, the narratives that shape identity have often been framed in oppositional terms. Yet, these same regions are also home to centuries-old traditions of coexistence, trade, and shared culture.

Second, Eurasia is emerging as a geopolitical center of gravity. As the world transitions into a multipolar order, powers like China, Russia, Türkiye, and the European Union are all projecting influence across the region. But with influence comes responsibility. Eurasian nations have the opportunity to lead not just in strategic affairs, but in shaping a new ethic of coexistence. In this way, Eurasia can be a laboratory for post-Westphalian diplomacy: one that does not merely balance power but fosters mutual recognition, intercultural dialogue, and collaborative governance. Another aspect is the role of the European Union.

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However, the European Union can maintain and even enhance its global relevance if it succeeds in establishing a coherent and unified foreign policy, something it currently lacks. In the absence of such a strategy, the EU's influence in global affairs is increasingly being challenged by rising powers, particularly from Asia. Countries like China, India, and regional coalitions in Southeast Asia are stepping into geopolitical vacuums, offering alternative models of engagement, investment, and diplomacy. This growing presence underscores the urgency for the EU to move beyond fragmented national approaches and assert itself with a common

voice on the world stage. Only through strategic coherence can the EU remain a credible actor in shaping the international order.

Third, Eurasia is essential for the UNAOC's mission to succeed on a global scale. Peace in Eurasia is not a regional concern, it is a bellwether for global stability. If interethnic tensions flare in the Caucasus, if migration crises in Eastern Europe are met with xenophobia, or if nationalist narratives dominate Central Asian discourse, the ripple effects are felt far beyond the region. But the reverse is also true: when reconciliation is achieved, when inclusive cities flourish, and when young leaders promote intercultural understanding, Eurasia can become a source of global inspiration.

In practical terms, this means UNAOC's work in the region should not be peripheral, it should be central to the architecture of future peace. By partnering with Eurasian governments, civil society, academic institutions, and faith communities, UNAOC can help unlock the region's potential to become a bridge, not a battleground between civilizations.

It also means expanding investment in regional platforms: from youth forums in the South Caucasus, to media literacy programs in Central Asia, to interfaith summits in Eastern Europe. Peace cannot be outsourced or imposed. It must be built from the ground up, and Eurasia is rich with local actors ready to lead the way.

As the world edges toward new forms of alignment and confrontation, Eurasia's path forward will either



reinforce global divides or become the hinge through which a more cooperative world order turns. The mission of the Alliance of Civilizations, when grounded in Eurasia, is not simply to prevent conflict, it is to reimagine the future as one in which identity is not weaponized, but woven into the fabric of peace. In this sense, the question is no longer whether Eurasia matters, but whether the rest of the world is ready to listen, learn, and build with it.

### **The Return of Diplomacy and the Shift in Geography**

A striking feature of today's evolving international landscape is not only *what* is being discussed in diplomatic circles—but *where*. For much of the modern era, cities like Geneva, Vienna, and Oslo served as the quintessential backdrops for peace talks, international treaties, and multilateral negotiations. These European capitals stood as symbols of neutrality and the liberal international order born out of postwar consensus.

But in recent years, diplomacy has begun to migrate—both symbolically and strategically—eastward. Cities such as Riyadh, Jeddah, İstanbul, Doha, and Astana are increasingly hosting high-level dialogues and peace efforts, reflecting a broader geopolitical transformation. The shift is not just about geography—it's about ownership. These regions are no longer just the subjects of international diplomacy; they are becoming its architects.

The upcoming UNAOC Global Summit in Riyadh captures this new reality. That a global forum on intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding will be held in Saudi Arabia, a country actively reshaping its regional and global role while underscores a world in flux. It highlights the emergence of new diplomatic centers, especially across Eurasia and the Middle East, where the lines between East and West, Global North and Global South, are being renegotiated.

Recent events illustrate this transformation vividly. In early 2024, Jeddah hosted a series of critical negotiations involving the United States and Russia, signaling a willingness, even among adversaries to find common ground in new venues. Saudi Arabia, traditionally a quiet player in high-level diplomacy, is now stepping into the role of convener, leveraging its strategic location and expanding global partnerships. The Jeddah talks, initially focused on grain corridor security and nuclear risk reduction, marked one of the rare moments of U.S.-

**Inclusivity in diplomacy means recognizing that no region holds a monopoly on peace. If we want a truly global dialogue, we must meet not only in familiar rooms, but in new spaces where fresh perspectives can reshape the future.**

Russia engagement since the escalation of the Ukraine conflict, yet another indication that traditional diplomatic capitals no longer hold exclusive sway.

Türkiye, too, continues to position İstanbul as a dynamic forum for global dialogue. Its efforts to mediate during the early phases of the Ukraine war, and its hosting of interfaith and intercultural initiatives, are grounded in its unique civilizational identity as both a European and Asian power. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan's capital, whether referred to as Astana or Nur-Sultan, has quietly become a trusted site for international negotiations, particularly in multilateral formats involving Central Asian security and interreligious understanding.

This geographic shift also reflects a deeper phenomenon: the *return of diplomacy* in an age of multipolar uncertainty. As polarization, conflict, and populist nationalism erode long-standing multilateral frameworks, new diplomatic spaces are not only welcome—they are necessary. Platforms like UNAOC are capitalizing on this momentum to bring dialogue into regions often overlooked by the traditional centers of global governance.

Inclusivity in diplomacy means recognizing that no region holds a monopoly on peace. If we want a truly global dialogue, we must meet not only in familiar rooms, but in new spaces where fresh perspectives can reshape the future.

The road to peace in the 21st century will not be paved solely in Geneva or Vienna. It will pass through Riyadh, Jeddah, İstanbul, and Astana, places where old narratives are being challenged and new conversations are beginning. UNAOC's presence in these cities is not just symbolic; it's strategic. It affirms that in a fractured world, diplomacy must be both mobile and inclusive—rooted in respect, shaped by diversity, and driven by shared responsibility.



# RUSSIAN AMERICAN DREAM

As the climax of Russian neo-imperial Reconquista comes to an end, it is possible to compare its results to the initial plan. Subsequently, it permits to formulate an assessment of an evolution of Russia's place in the international system: how close or how far it is from reaching its objectives.

**Dr. Jakub Korejba**

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**A**s a result of the collapse of the USSR, Russia lost not only territory, population and military might. It lost its international status of a superpower, the only one capable of challenging the USA. To make a try to recover its international prestige, Moscow started the war in Ukraine and as it comes to an end, it is possible to recapitulate the results.

## Introduction

During the Cold War Russia was never equal to the USA in any other domain than territory and military might. Its economy, social system, standard of life, material and mental freedom were never compatible to the Western ones. That fact finally led to the implosion: people in the Soviet Union simply refused to live under the Soviet system – the USSR first become unmanageable internally and then lost its external possessions. At the same time, Russian military potential of destruction was parallel to the Western one and never defeated. Russian army was dismantled by two factors: the secession of its parts relocated to the republics that gained independence and the refusal of the newly independent Russia to maintain what remained in the heartland.

For the generation of Vladimir Putin, the one that witnessed the implosion of the USSR, it was logical that the restoration of Russia's position in the world is unrealistic through economy, technology or culture and can only be realised by reestablishing military might. And this required to reverse the two abovementioned aspects:

rebuilding of the army inside Russia and recapturing Russia's "strategic depth" to the West from its borders together with its demographic and economic potential as a bonus. The first objective has been realized since Putin came to power. The second one started in a hybrid mode in 2014 with a conventional culmination in February 2022. As the climax of Russian neo-imperial Reconquista comes to an end, it is possible to compare its results to the initial plan. Subsequently, it permits to formulate an assessment of an evolution of Russia's place in the international system: how close or how far it is from reaching its objectives.

## Results of the War

**Militarily**, Russia performed much below the general expectations, both inside Russia and by international experts. Evgenii Prigozhin famously said, "Russian Armed Forces started this war as a second army in the world, then became second army in Ukraine and finished as a second army in Russia". The war demonstrated the fact that Russia is incapable of realizing its ideas of reintegration of Ukraine, the key-element of the post-Soviet space by force. Therefore, it stands before a fundamental dilemma: either it has to scale down its ambitions of becoming a regional hegemon or it needs assistance of an external force to realize them. Either option is equal to Moscow's resignation from being an independent centre of power. Moreover, the fear factor that traditionally played a substantial role in Moscow's relations with its former and to-be satellites is to a great extent lost. Threatening post-



Soviet republics or NATO's Eastern Flank countries with a military solution could have worked only when those countries perceived Russian Army as an ultimate instrument of imposing Russian political will. They do not any more: if Ukraine managed to resist it for three years and still remain a sovereign country, it is all the truer for countries with better geographical location, more efficient organization and formal powerful allies.

**Territorially**, even taking into account the maximally favourable post-war delimitation, Russia did not manage to enlarge itself in a way to fundamentally modify its internal potential and its position for external projection of power. The initial plan was to suppress an independent Ukrainian statehood and to functionally transform its territory into a part of Russian strategic depth with full military control and no-interference from any external forces. The annexation of three or even five Ukrainian regions without eliminating Kiev as an independent decision-making centre does not fundamentally change Russia's strategic position vis-à-vis any of its major partners. Moreover, if what rests of Ukraine remains an actively anti-Russian state, if it reforms itself and starts integrating into European economic and political entity, the Russian-controlled 20% of pre-war Ukraine may easily transform into a major factor of its own destabilization if not disintegration. The same is true for the **demographical** factor: as a result of war, Russia not

**If Russia engages in ceasefire negotiations before reaching any one of its initial strategic objectives, it is not because it does not want to achieve them, but because it cannot. The size, structure and dynamics of Russian economy simply does not provide enough potential for a war designed to realize strategic objectives set up by Vladimir Putin.**

only reduced its own potential in numbers but seized vaguely emptied territories whose population moved to other Ukrainian regions or abroad.

**Strategically**, isolated Moscow is more than ever in the last three decades from its partners in Europe, who, during the pre-war period of Putin's rule, were ready and apt for a compromise division of Eastern Europe based on a pragmatic and mutually assured stability. Germany, France and other Western European countries more than once showed their readiness to consider the post-Soviet states a part of a Russian zone of influence, if only the peaceful business is assured by Moscow. But when Russia showed itself a factor of destabilization instead of a factor

**The fundamental objective of Vladimir Putin since the very beginning of his rule was to receive a double security guarantee: inside Russia (security of the internal order) and outside of it (state security in the classical sense). And the only force capable of giving Russia such a guarantee has been and remains the only global superpower: the USA.**

of stability, Western Europeans have no interest in a partnership that can break off in a conflict at any moment. And even, if theoretically they wanted, Moscow's immediate neighbours located between Russia and the West declare it an existential security threat and invest substantial means in what is in fact a new Iron Curtain. The strategic awakening of Europe, that started after the outbreak of the war and has all the chances to continue and produce results, is probably the most unexpected, paradoxical and lamentable – from the Kremlin's point of view – result of this war. Before 2022, Russia's European partners were composed of two groups: Western Europe, that had potential to contain it but did not want it and Eastern Europe that wanted it but had

no potential. As a result of the war, Europe goes through a double adaptation: the West adapts Eastern mentality (towards Russia) and the East adapts its armies to the Western technological standards.

**Economically**, Russia showed itself not able to pursue a military intervention without a fundamental harm to its financial, infrastructural and social structure, in the way that the USA did during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The war in Ukraine became a perceptible, if not the major factor for a vast majority of Russian citizens, modifying basic parameters of their everyday life, starting with interest rates and inflation and ending with travel plans limited by sanctions. If Russia engages in ceasefire negotiations before reaching any one of its initial strategic objectives, it is not because it does not want to achieve them, but because it cannot. The size, structure and dynamics of Russian economy simply does not provide enough potential for a war designed to realize strategic objectives set up by Vladimir Putin.

**Ideologically**, Russia has lowered its image among Western societies and political elite to a lowest point for decades without any tangible compensation of a growth of its reputation among the Global South. Apparently, by describing its attack on Ukraine as an attempt to halt the Western expansionism, Russia intended to position itself as a leader of global anti-occidental counter-culture. But a more than modest military performance did not give it





a strategic boost and therefore compromised Moscow in the eyes of anti-Western part of the world as a force that can't change the global balance of power in favour of them.

All abovementioned results represent a net loss from the point of view of Russian national interests and its operational potential to realize them. But from the Kremlin's point of view, all that is a price worth paying for one single objective that seems to be reachable as the war comes to an end: Recognition of Russia by the United States as a great power.

### **Russia's Motivation**

Russian American Dream, that is to say a search for USA's acceptance of Russia 'as it is' consists of a recognition of the Putinist system as a legitimate element of national and international reality. Achieving this approval was the driving force of Russian foreign policy for last two and a half decades. In a larger sense, the claim for an approval has been Russia's leitmotiv since it has started to play a major role in European and then global politics. And the lack of that approval was a source of a deep and lasting insecurity, not only for the actual ruling elite but for the Russian statehood in general.

The fundamental objective of Vladimir Putin since the very beginning of his rule was to receive a double security guarantee: inside Russia (security of the internal order) and outside of it (state security in the classical sense). And the only force capable of giving Russia such a guarantee has been and remains the only global superpower: the USA. As the war comes to an end Putin seems to be closer than ever to receive it. And this uncovers his and therefore Russian rationality that stands behind the decision to launch this war and to prolong it regardless of the evident cost it implies.

Russian sense of insecurity has deep objective reasons. In the material sense, the country has no naturally marked borders and therefore could (an in fact several times in history was) easily attacked, especially from the West. In the non-material sense, the regime (of an authoritarian nature, missing a democratic legitimacy and a formal mechanism of power rotation) has no borders to secure itself from potentially destructive ideological influences that could (and indeed several times did with previous Russian regimes) provoke its ideological and organizational erosion and collapse. Democracy, human rights, accountability of the state and good governance practice, market economy and freedom of speech are not only appealing slogans but a marker of a quality of life that Russian citizens were aware of and could potentially

claim for. And, as the practice of Putinist rule demonstrated over the last twenty years, those standards are incompatible with the existence and prolongation of the actual regime. Between the West and its standards on one side and Russia and its reality on the other exists a relation of a zero-sum game which makes a confrontation inevitable.

What Putin intended to gain by attacking Ukraine was obviously not this or that territory but establishing a border between outside world (especially the West) and Russia to secure not only national borders, but first and foremost its internal political order. And, as the ceasefire seems to approach, it seems that those two objectives which are for Putin, for Russian ruling elite and for Russian society are the United States will be, at least formally, accepted at the last resort. If Russian borders and Russian regime are accepted by Washington, its legality and legitimacy can hardly be challenged by anyone inside or outside Russia. And, being a pragmatic realist, Putin does not expect from this war anything more.

### **American Response**

Being a pragmatic realist as well, Donald Trump seems to be ready to put an end to this war by accepting Russia's conditions. Firstly, by declaring an ideological non-interference in Russia's internal affairs, that is to say the sovereign right of Russian ruler to organize and run the country according to his own norms. Secondly, by admitting the existence of a Russian zone of privileged interests and exclusive responsibility down the perimeter of its national borders. The exact parameters of Russia's zone of influence, a minor question from the Kremlin's point of view – may be and seemingly are actually subject to negotiations. But the confirmation of an absolute sovereignty and untouchability of the regime is a 'must' – a non-negotiable red line – and will not be revised by the Kremlin at any price as the basis of Russia's future that the regime and its leader equate to their own.

The actual American administration seems to be ready to recognize Putin in his right to organize Russia according to non-Western norms and values. From Trump's point of view, it is a concession worth making in the context of a possible Russia's *désintéressement* in the approaching Sino-American confrontation. Especially that in reality, declaring Russian disclaimer from Western norms does not really make Russia immune to their impact. The Soviet Union collapsed because its citizens did not believe in the official ideology and did not accept the model of life proposed by the Kremlin. If the USSR collapsed, it can also be true for Russian Federation (and

much more so given the impact of the actually existing and developing mass communications). Trump can guarantee to Putin anything, but he simply has no technical means to assure him the loyal comportment of Russians, let alone of other post-Soviet nations. If Ukraine – a deeply corrupt and dysfunctional state with demoralized society – was motivated enough to fight Russia for three years in the name of being a part of the West (as they imagine it), the others, including Russian citizens (especially those of non-Russian nationality) may one day decide that opposing the regime represents for them a rational choice compared to a passive submission required by the Kremlin. In the sense of a real and durable security of the regime, neither Trump nor any other external force can guarantee anything to Putin, simply because of the fact that no policymaker in the world controls what people – in this case Russian people – feel and think. Therefore, the non-interference in the internal affairs, a fundamental concession, as it is seen by the Kremlin, represents in fact a purely formal declaration realization of which cannot be assured by any technical means. Any undemocratic regime lacking a popular support will remain insecure by its nature and not because of any “plots” aimed at her. Putin’s regime is on its own the main destabilizing factor of Russia’s political order and this will not change independently of what the USA, Europe or Ukraine will commit themselves in the form of a ceasefire.

### Regaining the “Near Abroad”

The structure and dynamics of a possible future Russian zone of influence in the post-Soviet space may also be easily put into question independently of any guarantees given by the USA to Russia. The peaceful and durable international order in Eastern Europe may only be based on a solution respecting objectively the existing factors that both Moscow and Washington seem to ignore. During this war, the will of Ukrainian nation demonstrated its validity as a factor of international relations. The will of other nations surrounding Russia may become a factor as well. If the Heads of States agree to a solution, it does not mean automatic implementation. The formally established international

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order could be in practice shattered by sub-national factors even without an active and intended interference from other countries. Attack on Ukraine was a part of Russia’s strategy to impose itself on its Western partners as an indispensable element of the international system – if not constructively, then by destruction. The fear of troubles coming from Moscow in the post-Soviet space and beyond, were to motivate Europe and the USA to leave Russia alone with its internal regime and its zone of influence around it. In the present phase Moscow is likely to succeed in convincing the West that granting autonomy to Russia is a cheaper, safer and more rational option than trying to oppose it.

Russia seems to be exiting the war with its internal sovereignty and external buffer zone represented by Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova granted. Successful it may seem in the short term, this victory may be a trap in a long one exactly because it ignores non-state sub-national factors. Russia’s ‘realistic’ approach simplifies reality and ignores factors that are not controlled by state actors: even the president of the United States has no power to decide what Ukrainians and other objects of Russian expansion are to feel and think. Therefore, a regional order based on a relation between Moscow and Washington does not take into consideration a potentially destructive national and social dynamics coming from within the zone of influence attributed to Moscow. The USA may agree for this or that ‘oblast’ to change its sovereign affiliation, but it cannot prevent people living on that territory to oppose the choice. And given the economic, social, infrastructural and moral condition of Russia nowadays, those forces have all the chances to disturb the order established by a Trump-Putin agreement.

Eastern Europe has been an object of this sort of imperial deals for many centuries and each time ignoring national aspirations of peoples who populate it resulted in the annihilation of the empires that colonised them. If the Soviet Union collapsed under the national movements of peoples it occupied, the much smaller, weaker and globally isolated Russia takes a great risk to its territorial integrity by following the same path. If Moscow did not manage to subjugate Ukrainians by three years of military intervention, it will hardly do by administrative manipulations or ideological coercion, especially given the fact that an independent Ukraine supported by at least a part of the West will remain a point of reference for the people living in the “new territories”. And the actual tendencies do not predestine Russia to become a champion of a civilizational competition with Europe, even if the latter is evidently not in its best condition compared to previous periods of the history.



## The Great Deal

The uncertain future of Moscow's agreement with Washington over the future of Ukraine, does not discourage Russia to engage all its forces and resources to achieve it. Moscow's American Dream, being a fundamental emotion, defines Russian way of thinking about winning and losing this conflict. What is more, an almost achieved 'great deal' with America will, not only for Putin personally, but for the elite and a large portion of Russian nation, as well, compensate all losses of the war and humiliation of last three decades. In fact, Donald Trump may demand almost anything, and he will get it, if only the USA agrees to symbolically admit Russia's great power status.

What the USA should technically agree from Moscow's point of view was described by the Lavrov's ultimatum in December 2021 right before the decision to enforce it by a military intervention. From Moscow's point of view, the ideal peace between Russia and the West shall be based on three elements: absolute sovereignty of Russian regime, Russian zone of exclusive interests in the post-Soviet countries and a demilitarized buffer zone in Central-Eastern Europe ('post 1997 NATO territories'). This is the framework of 'Putin's Doctrine'

for the Eurasian Heartland – a Russian analogue of Monroe's Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere.

Putting aside the question of an American political consent for such an exclusive zone (and the price of it) and Russian technical ability to control and organize it, the appearance of such an enlarged and empowered Russia gives way to the question: what shall be its international identity and the role in international system? If not being a leader of a global anti-Western counter culture, then what?

Basing Russia's international identity on anti-Western and specifically anti-American principles granted Moscow a certain international appeal and subsequently, a space to manoeuvre in its relations with allies and sympathizers, both state and non-state, including in the anti-American *milieu* in the West. Logically, basing Russia's place in the world on an alliance with Washington, narrows its decision-making corridor to the extreme. If Russia is an American ally, its lieutenant and subcontractor, what sense does it make to count for it as a defender against America? In the world where the USA is the strongest power, it is the simplest thing to become American client. If Russia is not an alternative to the USA, there is no rationality for other players to invest into building



**Finally, after losing the Cold War, losing control over Central Europe, losing post-Soviet territories and almost losing grip over its own internal structure, Russia has a chance to be admitted in a status of a great power and an equal partner of America.**

autonomous relations with Moscow because dealing with its new 'older partner' is easier, faster and more efficient.

If Russia, as a result of the Trump-Putin deal becomes a part of an American order, all countries and non-state actors who perceived it as a potential balancer against the USA will lose hope and immediately start looking for an alternative. All anti-American forces will automatically become anti-Russian and given Moscow's already uneasy position, this will substantially add to the challenges. The same is true for the USA: if Washington renounces its role of a defender of smaller states against powers including Russia, willing to gain an imperial control over them, all anti-Russian forces will start looking for an alternative. In short, the deal elaborated by Moscow and Washington will have the potential to make both sides weaker.

### **A Chance Lost Twice**

Given its territorial, energy and military potential, Russia could have been, and in many parts of the world (including in Europe) indeed was perceived as a potentially interesting partner ready and apt to help limiting boundless American global ambitions. Russia could construct its identity and functionality in the international system as a challenger of American hegemony. But if Russia's role consists in defending Pax Americana (in its new, Trumpist version), it will confront challenges that its state and social structure may not be ready to resist. And, if it fails to defend the regional order around its borders as well as its internal integrity, it is hardly imaginable, that the USA will be willing to actively support it when the troubles begin. Any attempt to change sides again will result in American pressure supported by a strategic blackmail: either Moscow continues to comply to American interests (towards Europe, China, Iran and the rest of Muslim world), or America lifts its support and then Russia stays alone. So much so that the hope and trust of all forces sceptical to American order will be gone. This can happen even

without any major shifts in the international relations by a simple force of internal factors in the USA during the next electoral cycle: sooner or later Trump will be replaced and Moscow has no warranty that the following American president will not denounce Washington's acquiescence to Russian claims about strategic autonomy in the post-Soviet space and ideological sovereignty at home.

If this war ends up with a Russian-American deal, it may be perceived as a personal success of Vladimir Putin in securing the stability of his rule over Russia as well as Russian interests in the immediate neighbourhood (the so called 'near abroad'). But this deal will not be accepted not only by Ukraine, but also by a plethora of other international actors for whom an appearance of American-Russian alliance will mark a change for the worse. Durability and persistence of an order based on Trump-Putin deal will not be guaranteed by the international community and at least by a half of American political, diplomatic and military establishment. Not only not accepted but actively disputed. In fact, it will represent no more than a gentlemen's agreement between two individuals and will most probably lose its relevance once one of them is not in power any more.

### **Conclusion**

A new quality of relations with the USA is the only tangible positive result of this war to Russia under President Trump. Moscow's American Dream seems to come true as a result of the negotiations with the Trump administration. Finally, after losing the Cold War, losing control over Central Europe, losing post-Soviet territories and almost losing grip over its own internal structure, Russia has a chance to be admitted in a status of a great power and an equal partner of America.

The great material and moral price to be paid for that purely symbolic achievement demonstrates a psychotherapeutical nature of a deal proposed to Putin by Trump. No single Russian postulate is guaranteed, all the gains may easily transform into problems making Moscow's position worse than before the war. Nevertheless, Russia pushes towards destruction – not only of Ukraine but of the post-bipolar world order, the one that represents for it a period of national humiliation. In Moscow's view, the revision of the borders is just a first step towards a new order but no one, including Donald Trump, may guarantee that it will represent a better one for Russia.

# FRENCH-TURKISH RELATIONS: BETWEEN POLITICAL DISAGREEMENTS AND NECESSARY COOPERATION

French-Turkish relations are characterized by the absence of long-term conflicts. Indeed, historically, the two countries have not often been opposed to each other. The periods of alliance between them have been longer and more important than the periods of war.

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**S**ince the beginning of the 2020 decade, it seems that France and Türkiye are trying to improve their bilateral relations. In a global geopolitical context that is evolving quickly, both countries have a mutual interest in cooperation. Historically, there have been no particularly serious conflicts between France and Türkiye. Over the past few decades, the two countries have certainly experienced tensions and political crises that have damaged their bilateral relationship. However, these problems are not linked to their fundamental interests, but rather to political divergences which could be solved. If Paris and

Ankara successfully make progress in solving these issues, they can then try to agree on better economic, political, and perhaps even longer-term strategic cooperation.

## **1. Old bilateral relations that have only recently deteriorated**

French-Turkish relations are characterized by the absence of long-term conflicts. Indeed, historically, the two countries have not often been opposed to each



**While the history of France's relations with Germany or Algeria, or of Türkiye's relations with Russia, Greece or Armenia, may be described as complex and painful, this is not the case for the history of French-Turkish relations.**

The periods of alliance between them have been longer and more important than the periods of war. However, there has been a real deterioration in their relationship since the 1970s, but the causes of this deterioration are political, and do not concern their fundamental interests.

### 1.1. No historical conflict between France and Türkiye

Since the alliance between François the 1<sup>st</sup> and Kanuni Süleyman in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Franco-Turkish relations have generally been cooperative. Throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Kingdom of France and the Ottoman Empire faced a common enemy, the Empire of Austria, and cultivated good diplomatic relations with each other. When the French Revolution put an end to the monarchy, the Ottoman Empire was one of the few European powers to maintain relations with revolutionary France.<sup>1</sup>

However, things became more complicated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the start of the "Question d'Orient" [Eastern Question]: observing the decline of Ottoman Empire, France was tempted, like other European powers, to take advantage of its weakening and seize its territories. Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt in 1798 opened the first serious crisis between the two countries. However, the French emperor subsequently tried to improve relations with Ottomans. But the more the Ottoman Empire lost control of its possessions, the more France took the opportunity to seize them, for example Algeria in 1830, or Tunisia in 1881. France also supported Greece during its war of independence (1821-1829). However, against Russia, France and the UK joined forces with Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War (1853-1856). Last but not least, Türkiye's support for Germany in the First World War led to direct confrontations with France. After the Moudros armistice, France occupied Syria and southeastern Anatolia, before retreating when faced with nationalist troops and reaching an agreement with Mustafa Kemal (1921). In 1938-1939, new tensions arose between France and Türkiye over the

province of Hatay, until France granted it independence, allowing Türkiye to annex it.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, even in times of crisis and war, France and Türkiye were not direct enemies. Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition targeted the British, not the Ottomans. Türkiye's alliance with Germany in 1914 was directed primarily against Russia, not France. The two countries competed for control of the Arab world, but not for their vital interests. There was no major case of slaughter, occupation or colonialism between them. This is why, while the history of France's relations with Germany or Algeria, or of Türkiye's relations with Russia, Greece or Armenia, may be described as complex and painful, this is not the case for the history of French-Turkish relations.

In the 1960s, relations between France and the Republic of Türkiye were particularly good. President Charles de Gaulle saw Türkiye as an indispensable partner for guarding Europe's eastern border. In 1963, he supported the Ankara Agreement between Türkiye and the European Economic Community (EEC). Unlike Charles de Gaulle's France, Türkiye did not wish to leave NATO's Integrated Command. But, like France, it also aspired to greater autonomy from its American ally. This situation led to a Franco-Turkish rapprochement on political, diplomatic, economic and cultural levels.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2. A gradual deterioration in bilateral relations from the 1970s onwards

Several issues contributed to the deterioration of relations between France and Türkiye from 1970 onwards. However, it should be noted that these were generally political issues, and did not concern the vital interests of either country.

The first point of disagreement was about relations with Greece. Elected president in 1974, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, unlike his predecessors, felt closer to Greece than to Türkiye. As a result, France criticized Türkiye's position on the Cyprus issue, particularly its military operation in the north of the island. Since then, and to this day, France refuses to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and calls for the reunification of the island. However, this has never been a major topic of French foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

The second point of disagreement concerned human rights. The military coups in Türkiye, especially the one in 1980, were followed by harsh repression that led many political activists to flee to Europe, especially France.



Active in the French political debate, these activists, both left-wing and pro-Kurdish, insisted strongly on the issue of human rights. From this period onwards, France began to take an increasingly critical stance towards Türkiye, particularly with regard to political repression. This criticism was not well received in Türkiye, since the successive Turkish governments perceived it as an interference in their internal affairs.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the rise of Armenian revendications in France also had an impact on bilateral relations from the 1970s onwards. Very active militant groups called for the massacres against Armenians of 1915 to be recognized as “genocide”, and actively lobbied French political and intellectual elites to this end. This activism led France to officially recognize the violence as “genocide” in 2001, a position that Türkiye refutes.<sup>6</sup> However, in 2012, France’s Constitutional Council censured a law that aimed to prohibit anyone from contesting this term. The Armenian issue remains a source of tension between France and Türkiye.

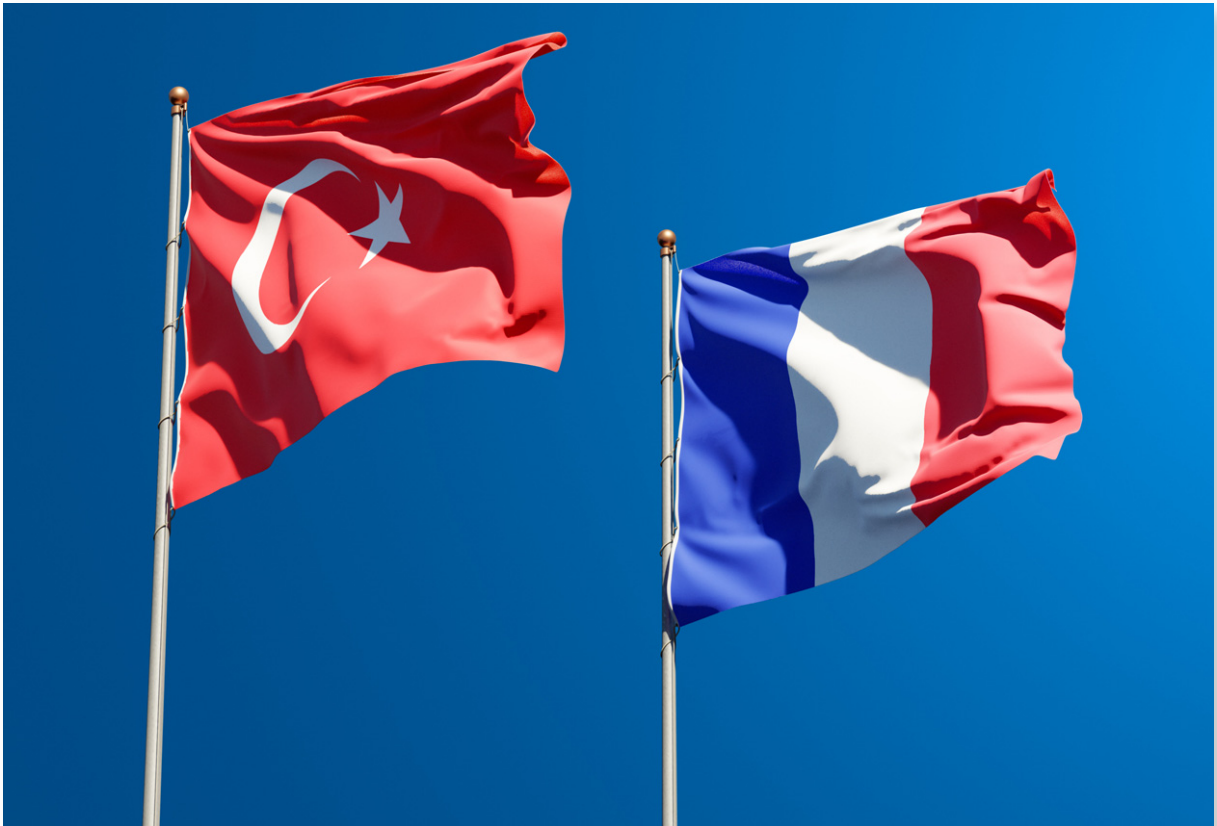
It is clear, however, that none of these issues concern direct geopolitical interests between the two countries. They are rather linked to political disagreements, which can evolve depending on the context. It should be added, on the other hand, that more serious geopolitical

**French-Turkish relations are currently troubled, as both countries have tended to disagree on several key geopolitical issues. Moreover, these tensions have been used by politicians in both countries for domestic political purposes. However, this does not prevent economic cooperation and significant cultural links.**

disagreements have arisen between France and Türkiye in recent years, even if bilateral relations remain important.

## **2. Current state of bilateral relations: crisis and disagreements**

French-Turkish relations are currently troubled, as both countries have tended to disagree on several key geopolitical issues. Moreover, these tensions have been used by politicians in both countries for domestic political purposes. However, this does not prevent economic cooperation and significant cultural links.



### 2.1. Interdependence between domestic and foreign policy and its negative impact on bilateral relations

Since the 2000s, political life in both France and Türkiye has been characterized by the emergence of strong executive powers, built around a charismatic leader. In both France and Türkiye, the President of the Republic, the key figure of the political system, is also the head of strategic and diplomatic policy. This president may therefore be tempted to use foreign policy as an instrument to reinforce his image among public opinion. This trend can lead to clashes with countries designated as a threat or as hostile.

In France, President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) used the reluctance of part of the electorate to Türkiye's admission to the European Union to his political ends. Despite the fact that accession negotiations had begun in 2005, he made repeated statements hostile to Türkiye's candidacy. Even though he did not break off the adhesion negotiations, this reluctance on the part of France weakened the dialogue between Turks and Europeans, and gave Turks a feeling of being rejected.<sup>7</sup> More recently, President Erdoğan and President Macron have engaged in several verbal confrontations. It seems that this face-off has allowed each of them to present themselves as "strong men", standing up against a country portrayed in a negative light. In Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan acted as defender of France's Muslims, accusing France of Islamophobia; he also regularly criticized French action in Africa and the Middle East as being colonialist.<sup>8</sup> In France, Emmanuel Macron referred to Türkiye as a strategic threat to Europeans.<sup>9</sup> These criticisms were essentially rhetorical. They did not always indicate a situation of open hostility between the two countries. But they obviously contributed to a deterioration in bilateral relations.

### 2.2. Fields of confrontation in the Mediterranean and in Africa

There are certainly many areas of geopolitical disagreement between France and Türkiye in recent years. The Arab revolutions, civil wars in Syria and Libya, and coups d'états in Africa, have led to instability in the Mediterranean, Middle East and African zones. Faced with this instability, France and Türkiye have often taken

different sides, which has led them to come face to face, sometimes through allies.

In Syria, France and Türkiye both initially supported rebels hostile to Bashar al-Assad. However, with the emergence of jihadist groups and terrorist attacks on its territory, France changed its strategy. It started supporting the Kurdish YPG militia. Türkiye, however, considers these militias to be a subsidiary of the PKK, and therefore a terrorist and hostile movement. In Libya, Türkiye supported Sayez el-Sarraj's National Government of Union (2016-2021) and accused France of supporting Marshal Khalifa Haftar, who was fighting him. Lastly, since 2017, a form of personal rivalry has led President Emmanuel Macron (since 2017) and President Tayyip Erdoğan (since 2014) to make highly negative comments about each other. In autumn 2019, Emmanuel Macron said that NATO was "brain dead"; among other elements, he evoked Türkiye's actions, which he said were not coordinated with the other member states. President Erdoğan advised him to worry about his own brain health.<sup>10</sup> On 10 June 2020, there was a maritime incident between the Turkish and French navies off the coast of Libya. France accused a Turkish frigate of illuminating its corvette Le Courbet and considered this to be a hostile act.<sup>11</sup> All these events led French strategic and political circles to regard Türkiye as a potential threat to French interests, especially in Mediterranean.<sup>12</sup> This situation lasted until at least 2021. There is also a form of rivalry between France and Türkiye in Africa. The Turkish media are generally highly critical of French actions in Africa, which is seen as neo-colonialist.<sup>13</sup> In several countries where France has lost influence (Mali, Niger...), Türkiye is trying to deploy its cultural diplomacy. It should be noted, however, that unlike the Mediterranean, sub-Saharan Africa is not an area where the French and Turks are in open conflict.

### 2.3. Armenian-Azerbaijan issue and its impact on bilateral relations

As mentioned above, the Armenian question was a dividing issue between France and Türkiye. On 23 January 2012, the adoption of a law criminalizing the negation of Armenian genocide was strongly criticized by Türkiye; important protests were organized by Turkish diaspora in France.<sup>14</sup> Even if the French Constitutional Court declared the law unconstitutional and removed it in February, this affair was perceived by Türkiye as a direct act of hostility toward it. It must be noted that at this occasion, Azerbaijan also wished France to leave the co-presidency of the Minsk Group, considering it has lost its neutrality.<sup>15</sup> However, contrary to popular belief, Türkiye's actions in the South Caucasus are not necessarily always

**France wants to appear as a supporter and protector of Armenia, but does not wish to directly oppose Türkiye's actions in the Caucasus.**



viewed unfavorably by France. During the Armenian-Azerbaijani War of 2020, many French politicians expressed their solidarity with Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Media coverage of the Turkish actions was generally very critical. The most significant political action was the Senate's resolution of 25 November 2020 calling on the government to recognise the "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh" as an independent republic. But even if Emmanuel Macron publicly stated that Türkiye's stance was "ill-considered" and "dangerous"<sup>16</sup>, in November 2020, he also reiterated that the Nagorno-Karabakh was part of Azerbaijani territory<sup>17</sup>, and he refused the adoption of sanctions against Baku.<sup>18</sup>

But it must be precised that France perceived Türkiye also as a moderating factor, capable of bringing Armenia and Azerbaijan to a stable peace. There is currently no significant diplomatic cooperation between France and Türkiye on this subject and France, through the delivery of weapons to Armenia, still shows a certain support for Yerevan. However, the attitude of the French diplomatic corps and government to Turkish actions in relation to

the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict is now more distant, and open to evolution. The idea that Türkiye could also encourage Azerbaijan and president Aliyev to develop a more comprehensive and realistic approach toward Armenia is also expressed in diplomatic circles.<sup>19</sup> To sum up, France wants to appear as a supporter and protector of Armenia, but does not wish to directly oppose Türkiye's actions in the Caucasus.

#### 2.4. Maintaining close economic and cultural ties

Despite political crises, economic relations between France and Türkiye remain strong. Bilateral trade between France and Türkiye has steadily developed over the 2010 decade, growing from 11 billion € in 2008 to 14 billion € in 2017, and is still around 13,5 billion € in 2023. This year, Türkiye was France's 11<sup>th</sup> economic partner<sup>20</sup>, while France was Türkiye's 7<sup>th</sup> economic partner.<sup>21</sup> When President Erdoğan traveled to France in 2018, he insisted on the target of increasing bilateral exchanges between the two countries. Moreover, Türkiye is attractive to



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French entrepreneurs and investors. It represents a large market with a population of more than 80 million, and it is a country with an important growth. French also appreciate the high level of quality of the workforce, especially of the high executive, the availability of many basic and semi-finished products, and the very strong network of dynamic small and medium-sized firms.<sup>22</sup>

Cultural relations between France and Türkiye are also relatively rich. The French language is present in Türkiye; since the middle of the 20th century, for many years it is far less important than English, but it continues to be taught. There are numerous French-language schools and institutes of higher education, such as the high schools of Galatasaray, Saint-Benoît or Notre-Dame de Sion in Istanbul, or Tevfik Fikret Highschools in Ankara and İzmir.<sup>23</sup> Cultural cooperation links are also established between municipalities, for example between the Paris and Istanbul City Councils. Travels by French artists to Türkiye and Turkish artists to France are frequent, facilitating contact between the two peoples.

### 3. Perspective of rapprochement and cooperation

The global environment created by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the renewed Israeli-Palestinian crisis, Donald Trump's election and the regime change in Syria, seems favorable to increased cooperation between France and Türkiye.

#### 3.1. Common concern regarding the evolution of global geopolitics

Paris and Ankara share a similar analysis of these most recent crises. Concerning the war in Ukraine, both countries supported the Ukrainian state and its territorial integrity, but wished to keep dialogue with Russia open. As for the crisis in Gaza, Türkiye is much more critical of Israel than France. However, both countries share the same official demands: first a ceasefire, and then a political solution based on two states, a Palestinian and an Israeli

one. The election of Donald Trump and the possibility of a Russian victory in Ukraine have worried France and Türkiye. Faced with the possibility of Washington and Moscow sharing their spheres of influence, Europeans and Turks have an interest in cooperating.<sup>24</sup> Europe is seeking strategic autonomy, and Türkiye does not wish to stand alone against Russia in the Black Sea. Finally, the regime change in Syria could encourage cooperation. France is keen to renew ties with Syria, and Türkiye could play a mediating role.

#### 3.2. Perspective in resolving bilateral conflicts

In the context of this global transformation, it is interesting to note that France and Türkiye seem able to work out their differences on many traditionally contentious issues. The governments of both countries actually seem inclined to want this development to occur. In the crisis between France and Algeria since 2024, Türkiye has been careful not to openly side with Algiers, despite its recurrent criticism of French "neo-colonialism". Reciprocally, after the arrest of Istanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu in March 2025, the French government issued only light criticism of Türkiye. While this attitude has been questioned by the Turkish opposition, it shows that France wishes to avoid further accusations of interference in Türkiye's internal affairs.

In Libya and Syria, national reconciliation processes can help to reduce tensions between the various factions involved, and thus lead to a new dialogue between Turks and French. The situation is similar in the South Caucasus: the signing of a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan could open up a new era of cooperation, in which France and Türkiye would find common interests. Finally, ongoing negotiations between Türkiye and Greece suggest that the period of tension and confrontation of 2019-2020 will not be repeated. Of course, France and Türkiye may remain rivals in specific geopolitical arenas, such as sub-Saharan Africa, but the areas of direct confrontation between them will tend to diminish.

#### 3.3. An important potential for cooperation

In this fast-changing global context, Franco-Turkish cooperation is a real possibility in the coming years, with some more specific areas of application. There are plenty of opportunities for economic cooperation. A major topic of discussion between France and Türkiye could be the modernization of the Türkiye- EU Customs Union. This trade framework, in existence since 1995, is considered outdated, and firms in both countries would like to see it

modernized.<sup>25</sup> If successful, this could boost trade between the Turkish and French economies. It should be noted, however, that Türkiye's long-standing economic crisis could slow down the modernization process.

In terms of geopolitical stability in the Mediterranean and South Caucasus, France and Türkiye can also find interesting areas of cooperation. On the major crises currently affecting the international scene, France and Türkiye could make their positions heard. In particular, both countries have an interest in seeing peace in Ukraine accompanied by very solid security guarantees for Ukrainians. Unlike the United States, the Turks and the French are geographically close to this geopolitical area. They therefore know it well and can propose solutions to ensure peace is maintained. Common action between France and Türkiye (which could include other European countries such as Italy and Germany) could both reassure Ukraine and enable long-term dialogue with Russia. In Middle East, France wants stabilization in Lebanon and the renewal of diplomatic relations with Syria. For both these objectives, Türkiye's support is important. The weakening of Hezbollah has diminished Iranian influence in Lebanon, opening the way for players close to Ankara.<sup>26</sup> In Syria, the new regime has good relations with Türkiye. France could therefore consider participating

**Historically marked by cooperation, relations between France and Türkiye are not structurally conflictual. The recent tensions and crises between the two countries are mainly due to political disagreements.**

economically in the reconstruction of this region, in exchange for stability ensured by Ankara and its partners.

The most ambitious area, but also probably the most difficult to achieve, is cooperation on strategic issues in the framework of European defense. It is difficult to imagine advanced cooperation in this highly sensitive area in the short term. However, at the beginning of 2025, a project to sell French air-to-air missiles to Türkiye was made public.<sup>27</sup> The existence of this project indicates that arms cooperation is not unthinkable. Türkiye already cooperates on defense and weapons with Poland, for example.<sup>28</sup> France sees Poland as a pillar of a potential common European defense. As part of the European Union's strategic autonomy, France could consider Türkiye, like the UK, as privileged defense partners.



#### 4. Conclusion

Historically marked by cooperation, relations between France and Türkiye are not structurally conflictual. The recent tensions and crises between the two countries are mainly due to political disagreements.

These disagreements can be solved. This is becoming increasingly important in an insecure world where Turks, French and Europeans, sharing the same geographical area, have an interest in strengthening their cooperation.

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# AZERBAYCAN-ERMENİSTAN BARIŞ SÜRECİNE GENEL BİR BAKIŞ

İlimli tavrı ile göze çarpan Paşinyan hükümeti, barış antlaşması sürecinde olumlu açıklamalarında ısrar etse de üç hususta ikna edici herhangi bir hamlede bulunmamıştır.

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**2**020'de gerçekleşen ve 44 Gün Savaşı olarak da bilinen İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası, Azerbaycan Ermenistan barış süreci taraflar ve bölge açısından bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. 2018'de iktidara gelen Paşinyan hükümetinin çatışmadan uzak ve ılımlı tavrı süreç için olumlu görünse de bu hususta atılan adımlar ve somut yaklaşımların eksikliği kamuoyunda sürece olan

güveni zedelemiş görünmektedir. Son açıklamalar ile birlikte Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan'ın imzalanması planlanan barış antlaşması metni üzerinde tamamen mutabık olduğu belirtilmiştir.<sup>1</sup> Süreç açısından büyük önem arz eden Anayasa değişikliği konusu ise gündemdeki yerini korumuş, antlaşmanın kalıcılığının ve inandırıcılığının olmazsa olmazı niteliğini sürdürmüştür. Süreci daha detaylı incelemekte fayda vardır.





### Mutabık Olunan ve Olunamayan Maddeler Sorunu

2020'den beri üzerinde çalışılan ve taraflar arasındaki gerilimi kalıcı bir şekilde sonlandırmayı amaçlayan barış antlaşması, özellikle 3 madde üzerinde mutabık kalınamaması nedeniyle devamlı tartışmaların konusu olmuştur. Bu üç maddeden ilki sınırdaki AB Gözlemci Heyetinin görevine son verilmesi, ikincisi varlık amacı Karabağ sorununu çözmek olan Minsk Grubu'nun ilgası, üçüncüsü ise tarafların karşılıklı olarak uluslararası platformlarda birbirlerinin aleyhine hak taleplerinde bulunmayacaklarına dair taahhüt verilmesi idi.<sup>2</sup>

İlimli tavrı ile göze çarpan Paşinyan hükümeti, barış antlaşması sürecinde olumlu açıklamalarında ısrar etse de bu üç hususta ikna edici herhangi bir hamlede

bulunmamıştır. Minsk Grubu'nun barış antlaşmasının imzalanmasıyla birlikte taraflar için bir sorun olmaktan çıkacağına dair yapılan istikrarlı açıklamalar, Azerbaycan bakımından çok yakın bir döneme kadar mutabakat hususunda bekletici niteliğini korumuştur.

AB Gözlemci Heyeti'nin görevine son verilmesinin istenme sebebi temel olarak AB'nin konuya taraflı yaklaşımıdır. Taraflar arasında –henüz barış antlaşması fiilen imzalanmadığı için- zaman zaman yaşandığı iddia edilen çatışmalar, Heyet'in tarafsızca gözlemlemesi ve rapor etmesi gereken durumlardan biridir. Ne yazık ki taraflar bu hususta devamlı olarak birbirlerinin aksine iddialarda bulunmakta ve Heyet de objektif olarak ifa edilmesi gereken görevini yerine getirmekten uzak olduğu için iddialar netliğe kavuşamamaktadır. AB'nin Azerbaycan-Ermenistan gerilimine politik saiklerle yaklaştığı kamuoyu tarafından bilinen bir gerçektir. AB Gözlemci Heyetinin sınırdaki taraflı tutumunu devam ettirmesi, taraflar arasındaki gerilim için bir ittirici güç olmaya devam edecek ve bu sebeple barış süreci için hedeflenen kalıcılık da sağlanamayacaktır. Tarafların ayrı ayrı ve farklı zamanlarda; barış sürecinin yalnızca Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan'ın kendi aralarında gerçekleşmesi gerektiğini, üçüncü ülkelerin sürece dâhil olmasının istenmediğini belirttikleri açıklamalar ışığında,

**AB Gözlemci Heyetinin sınırdaki taraflı tutumunu devam ettirmesi, taraflar arasındaki gerilim için bir ittirici güç olmaya devam edecek ve bu sebeple barış süreci için hedeflenen kalıcılık da sağlanamayacaktır.**

görevini objektif olarak ifa etmekten uzak AB Gözlemci Heyeti'nin varlığı anlamsız görünmektedir.

Azerbaycan Dışişleri Bakanı Bayramov tarafından mutabakat ile ilgili yapılan son açıklama ışığında, barış antlaşmasının maddeleri üzerinde mutabakata varıldığını söylemek mümkündür.<sup>3</sup> Bununla birlikte antlaşma hakkındaki mutabakat, taraflar arasındaki tüm sorunların çözüleceği ve imzanın hemen atılacağı anlamına da gelmemektedir. Azerbaycan'ın süreç içerisindeki başat talepleri henüz Ermenistan tarafından yerine getirilmemiştir. Antlaşmanın üzerinde mutabık olunan tam metni henüz kamuoyu ile paylaşılmadığı için bu konuda net bir yorum yapılamaz, fakat karşılıklı basın açıklamalarından anlaşıldığı üzere, Azerbaycan tarafından önemi defaatle tekrarlanan Zengezur Koridoru ve Anayasa değişikliği gibi önemli sorunlar, masadan kalkmış ya da unutulmuş değildir.

### **Anayasa Değişikliği ve Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi Sorunu**

Ermenistan Anayasası, Ermenistan SSC döneminden kalan 1990 tarihli Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi'ne giriş kısmında şu sözlerle atuf yapmaktadır: "...devletin temel ilkeleri ve Ermeni milletinin hedefleri için Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi'ni temel alarak...".<sup>4</sup> Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi'ne baktığımızda ise Karabağ bölgesinin açıkça Ermenistan toprağı sayıldığı ve bu yolla da Azerbaycan'ın mevcut sınırları içinde bulunan bir bölgede hak iddia etmekte olduklarını görmek mümkündür.<sup>5</sup> 1990 tarihli bu belgenin -aksi belirtilmediği için- bağlayıcı olan Ermenistan Anayasası'nın giriş kısmında "temel alınmak" derecesinde önemli bir atfa tabi tutulması, barış sürecinin tarafı olan Azerbaycan açısından endişe uyandırıcıdır. Belge bu yönüyle devamlı eleştirilere maruz kaldığı için Ermenistan yetkilileri çeşitli açıklamalar yaparak belgenin yalnızca tarihi bir yönü olduğunu ve hukuken bir geçerliliği haiz olamayacağını ifade etmektedirler. Ne var ki anayasa gücünde bir hukuki metnin, yine aynı güçle bağlayıcı olan giriş kısmının barış için uğraşıldığı iddia edilen taraf devletin sınırları içerisinde bulunan bir bölge üzerinde hak iddia etmesi, yalnızca tarihi olduğu söylenilerek göz ardı edilmeye çalışılan Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi sorununun önemli olduğunu gözler önüne sermektedir.

2018'de Paşinyan hükümetinin iktidara gelmesinden sonra mevcut anayasanın demokratik açıdan güncel değerlerle uyumadığı cihetiyle bir değişikliğe gidilmesi önerisi kamuoyu ile paylaşılmıştır. Hükümetin günümüzdeki en büyük dış politika meselesi olan ve sosyal, politik, ekonomik, ticari bütün ilişkilerin tesisi ya da ilerletilmesi için büyük önem taşıyan Azerbaycan ile barış antlaşmasının imzalanması isteği, günümüzde

**Anayasa gücünde bir hukuki metnin, yine aynı güçle bağlayıcı olan giriş kısmının barış için uğraşıldığı iddia edilen taraf devletin sınırları içerisinde bulunan bir bölge üzerinde hak iddia etmesi, yalnızca tarihi olduğu söylenilerek göz ardı edilmeye çalışılan Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi sorununun önemli olduğunu gözler önüne sermektedir.**

tartışılmakta olan anayasa değişikliği önerisine başka bir veçhe katmaktadır. Yalnızca demokratik olmadığından söz edilerek sürdürülmeye çalışılan ve Karabağ üzerindeki hak iddiası ile bir ilgisi olmadığı belirtilen anayasa değişikliği sürecinde bir soru akılları meşgul etmektedir: Yaşanılan savaş sonrası işgalden kurtarılan ve Azerbaycan'a ait olduğu Paşinyan tarafından da defaatle ikrar edilen Karabağ üzerinde hak iddia edilmesi modern dünyadaki demokratik ilkelere ve uluslararası hukuk kurallarına uygun mudur?

Ermenistan Adalet Bakanı ve Paşinyan tarafından ayrı ayrı yapılan açıklamalar göstermektedir ki anayasa değişikliği 2027 yılında gerçekleşecek bir referandum ile yürürlüğe girecektir. 2026'ya kadar taslak çalışmalarının biteceğinin öngörüldüğü de yine açıklamalardan edindiğimiz bilgiler arasındadır.<sup>6</sup> Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi'ne yapılan atfın kaldırılmasını içeren anayasa değişikliğine dair referandumun başarıyla sonuçlanabilmesi, şüphesiz, halkın Paşinyan hükümetini ve barış sürecine yönelik ılımlı politikalarını desteklediği anlamına gelecektir. Bölge refah ve istikrarı açısından olumlu gelişmelere yol açacağı görülen bu durumun, yeterli oy çoğunluğunun sağlanabilmesi adına, ivedilikle masaya yatırılmasının gerekliliği de açıkça görülebilen unsurlardandır.

### **Ermeni Diasporası ve Ermenistan'ın Yol Ayrımının Barış Sürecine Yansımaları**

Ermeni diasporasının sesi duyulan militan kesiminin barış sürecine olan yaklaşımı, genel itibarıyla olumsuzdur. İkinci Karabağ Savaşı esnasında ve sonrasında yaşanan göç hareketleri ve çatışmalar sebebiyle Azerbaycan'la yapılacak herhangi bir barışın destekçisi olmadıkları, çeşitli uluslararası Ermeni topluluklarının demecileri ve bildirilerinden kolayca anlaşılabilmektedir.

Paşinyan, mevcut Ermenistan devletinin çıkarları ve diasporanın isteklerinin birbiriyle uyumadığını daha önce ifade etmiştir. Savaştan sonra, komisyonlar



**Savaşta sonra, komisyonlar aracılığıyla belirlenen sınırlar bakımından herhangi bir itiraz ya da taşkınlığı görülmeyen Paşinyan, diasporayı tarihte takılı kalmak suretiyle mevcut Ermenistan'ı göz ardı etmek ve umursamamakla suçlamıştır.**

aracılığıyla belirlenen sınırlar bakımından herhangi bir itiraz ya da taşkınlığı görülmeyen Paşinyan, diasporayı tarihte takılı kalmak suretiyle mevcut Ermenistan'ı göz ardı etmek ve umursamamakla suçlamıştır. Paşinyan'ın geçtiğimiz aylarda açıkladığı ve tepki alan bu bakış açısı, geçmişte yaşanan ve süreci çözümsüz kılacağı düşünülen çatışmaların bir kenara bırakılarak hem Ermenistan hem de bölge bakımından geleceğe yönelik olarak hareket etmenin daha faydalı olacağını ileri sürmektedir.<sup>7</sup>

Diaspora, finansal ve politik desteğini çatışmalar ve gerginlikler aracılığıyla sağlaması yönüyle bu uzlaşmacı tavırdan da oldukça uzaktır. Karabağ'da savaşta sonra göç eden Ermenilerin zorla yerinden edildiğine ve savaş esnasında da etnik temizliğe maruz kalan Ermeniler olduğuna dair birçok açıklama yapılmıştır. Elbette ki bu

iddialar, hukuki bir zemine oturtulacak nitelikte olmadıkları için yalnızca bir propaganda malzemesi olarak kalmaktadır. Azerbaycan tarafından Ermeni sivilere uygulandığı kanıtlanan herhangi bir toplu şiddet eyleminin söz konusu olmadığını ve savaşın tarafı olan Ermenistan'ın hükümetinin bu konuyla alakalı diasporanın iddialarını destekleyecek herhangi bir açıklamada bulunmadığını da belirtmek gerekir.

### **Ermenistan'ın Silahlanması ve Batı'nın Sürece Yaklaşımı**

Ermenistan, barış süreci ve antlaşmanın maddeleri üzerinde mutabakat sağlanmaya çalışıldığı dönemlerde savunmaya ayrılan bütçesini artırmıştır. Yine bu dönemde Hindistan ve Fransa'dan büyük miktarlarda silah alımı yapılmıştır.<sup>8</sup> Hindistan'ın Ermenistan'a göstermiş olduğu bu desteğin yanında Batı'nın da sürece bakışı önem taşımaktadır.

Bir ülkenin savunma harcamalarını artırması ya da bu konudaki tercihlerini değiştirmesi, egemenlik yetkisinden ve bağımsızlığından ileri gelen doğal hakkıdır. Bu konuda Ermenistan açısından dikkat çekici olan husus, yetkililerin Ermenistan'ın Azerbaycan dâhil olmak üzere herhangi bir ülkeden gelecek herhangi bir saldırı ihtimali nedeniyle





hazırlık yapmadığına ilişkin açıklamalarıdır. Bununla beraber Ermenistan'ın savunma alanında yapığı harcamalar, mevcut zamanda ya da en azından yakın gelecekte herhangi bir askeri tehlikeye maruz kalma tehlikesi olmayan bir ülkenin yapacağı standart harcamaların oldukça üstünde görünmektedir. Ermenistan'a silah ihracatı yapan ülkelerin bu hususta bir çekinceleri olmadığı da bilinmektedir. Fakat özellikle Fransa'da yetkililer tarafından Azerbaycan-Ermenistan gerilimi konusunda yapılan açıklamalar bölgede barışın sağlanmasının gerekliliği ve hem ticari hem de politik olarak barışın vazgeçilmez olduğu yönündedir. Ne yazık ki, bu yönde Batı tarafından somut arabuluculuk çabası süreç boyunca görülmemiş, bilakis Ermenistan'a silah satılmış ve diasporanın propagandalarına fırsat verilmiştir.

AB Gözlemci Heyeti'nin sınırda görevlendirilmesinin süreç açısından Batı'nın objektiviteden uzak görünümünden dolayı zedeleyici niteliğinden daha evvel bahsetmiştik. Bunun gibi bir diğer örnek de İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası Azerbaycan tarafından yargılanması devam eden siyasi tutuklular meselesidir. Taraflar arasında yaşanan bir savaş sonrası tarafların yargı yetkileri dâhilinde bir hukuki süreç yürüttükleri ve bu yargı yetkisinin bağımsızlığı herkesçe bilinen gerçeklerdir. Batı medyası ve diaspora, yargılaması devam eden siyasi tutukluların politik saiklerle "esir" tutulduğunu,

**Ermenistan'ın savunma alanında yapığı harcamalar, mevcut zamanda ya da en azından yakın gelecekte herhangi bir askeri tehlikeye maruz kalma tehlikesi olmayan bir ülkenin yapacağı standart harcamaların oldukça üstünde görünmektedir.**

yargılamaların dünya kamuoyu nezdinde meşruiyet yaratmak için uydurulduğunu ve sahte olduğunu iddia etmektedirler. Yargılama süreci sona ermeden ve kişilerin suçu sabit kılınmadan bu konuda net açıklamalar yapılması, hukuki süreci zedeleme tehlikesi taşıdığından; objektif olarak henüz iki taraf lehine de yorum yapılmaması doğru olacaktır. Yine de şimdiye kadarki yargılamalar süresince uluslararası hukuk ilkelerine ve insan haklarına aykırı herhangi bir eylemde bulunulduğuna dair henüz herhangi bir kanıt bulunmadığının belirtilmesinde fayda vardır.

### **Azerbaycan'ın Sürece Bakış Açısı ve Antlaşmanın İmzalanması İçin Sunulan Şartlar**

Ermenistan tarafından süreç hususunda Azerbaycan'a yöneltilen en büyük eleştiri, Aliyev ve diğer yetkililerin



**Aliyev'in İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası kurduğu askeri ve politik üstünlük, Paşinyan hükümetinin içinde bulunduğu ılımlı tavrın somut eylemlere dönüşmesi beklentisini güçlendirmiştir.**

antlaşmanın imzası için devamlı olarak şartlar sunmasıdır. Paşinyan hükümeti çoğunluğu ekonomik olmak üzere birçok farklı sebepten antlaşmanın bir an önce imzalanmasını isterken Azerbaycan, barış sürecinin kalıcı ve istikrarlı olması gerektiğini ifade ederek mutabık olunan maddelerle haricinde bir takım şartlar ön sürmektedir.

Bu koşullardan en önemlisi daha önce bahsettiğimiz gibi anayasa değişikliği meselesidir. İkinci mesele aslen Karabağ sorununun çözümü için kurulan ve mevcut durumda birlikte varlık amacını yitiren Minsk Grubu'nun ilgasıdır. Paşinyan yaptığı son açıklamalar ile ilga için müzakerelere başlamaya hazır olduklarını belirtmiştir.<sup>9</sup> Süreç açısından konuşulması gereken bir diğer husus ise Zengezur Koridoru meselesidir. Azerbaycan ve özerk Nahçıvan arasında doğrudan kara yolu bağlantısı sağlayacak olan Zengezur Koridoru, Azerbaycan ve Nahçıvan'ın içinde bulunduğu ilişkiden ötürü Aliyev'e göre Ermenistan'ın toprakları üzerindeki egemenlik hakkına tecavüz teşkil eden bir nitelikte değildir. Bu

sebeple koridorun bir an önce açılması ve Nahçıvan ile bağlantının kurulması Azerbaycan açısından gayet önemlidir.

Aliyev'in İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası kurduğu askeri ve politik üstünlük, Paşinyan hükümetinin içinde bulunduğu ılımlı tavrın somut eylemlere dönüşmesi beklentisini güçlendirmiştir. Azerbaycan'ın talepleri (anayasa değişikliği, Minsk Grubu'nun dağıtılması, Zengezur Koridoru'nun açılması) makul ve sürecin istikrarı açısından da önemlidir. Paşinyan'ın, bu taleplerin süreci çıkmaza soktuğuna dair açıklamaları ve iddiaları, Azerbaycan açısından haklı bir zemine oturmamaktadır. Görüldüğü üzere, savaşın galibi olan Azerbaycan barış antlaşması üzerindeki taleplerinde ısrarcı olmaktadır.

### Sonuç

İkinci Karabağ Savaşı sonrası bölgedeki düzenin kökünden değiştiğini görmek mümkündür. Bu düzen, barış antlaşmasının imzalanması ile sağlamlaşacak ve bölgenin refah ve istikrarı açısından önemli yenilikler de görmek mümkün olacaktır. Paşinyan hükümetinin sürece olan çözüm yanlısı tavrı, antlaşma metni üzerinde mutabakatın sağlanmasının da verdiği güven ile somut hareketlerle pekiştirildiği takdirde taraflar açısından kalıcı bir barış sağlanması muhtemeldir. Güney Kafkasya'da Azerbaycan-Ermenistan gerginliğinin sona ermesiyle birlikte ticari, ekonomik ve politik olarak birçok duvar da kendiliğinden ortadan kalkmış olacaktır.

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# FOR THE TSAR AND AGAINST PEACE: ON THE HOSTILITY OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA'S NATIONALISTS TO THE FUTURE PEACE TREATY BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND ARMENIA

In 1878, during the Russian-Ottoman war, another nationalist revolt took place in Zeytun, and, Russia imposed the mention of reforms for the Ottoman Armenians (but not for the Muslim majority) in the peace treaty of San Stefano. The relevant article in the treaty was rewritten the same year (after a firm intervention by the United Kingdom) that was more acceptable to the Ottoman government.

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**O**n 13 March 2025, Azerbaijan and Armenia announced that the text of peace treaty between the two state was finalized, as both sides finally agreed on each article. Three days later, Arsen Torosyan, a member of the Armenian Parliament, chairman of the Health Committee and board member of the ruling party Civil Contract, tweeted:<sup>1</sup>

“Our nation has to know its ‘heroes’

There is a group of Armenian lobbyists based in Washington, DC, known as Armenian National Committee of America @ANCA\_DC, who are actually the U.S. branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), or Dashnaksutyun.





These guys' main goal has always been to diminish Armenia's sovereignty and independence and to justify that we cannot live without Russia. This is the most ironic part of their job: based in DC, they lobby for Moscow. All this is done with the sauce of patriotism, nationalism, Armenian values preservation, etc."

This courageous statement did not receive the attention it deserves. The aim of this article is to demonstrate the accuracy of this tweet based on three aspects: The historical background, the recent (2022-2025) moves towards a peace treaty, and the current campaign of support for the former leaders of the (now self-dissolved) Armenian separatist entity in Karabakh.

**Far from being limited to words, the Russian support for the Armenian separatists was materialized by a supply in weapons and ammunitions for the future rebels in eastern Anatolia, a supply that made possible the Armenian nationalist insurrections in 1914-1915.**

## Historical Background

A whole book would barely be enough to deal with the use of Armenian nationalism by Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union (USSR), and contemporary Russia. Only some key elements will be exposed here. The first Armenian nationalist revolt in the Ottoman Empire took place in Zeytun in 1862, and was largely inspired by Russian Armenians.<sup>2</sup> In 1872, a part of the Armenians of Van province (TR: vilayet) asked to become Russian.<sup>3</sup> In 1878, during the Russian-Ottoman war, another nationalist revolt took place in Zeytun, and, Russia imposed the mention of reforms for the Ottoman Armenians (but not for the Muslim majority) in the peace treaty of San Stefano. The relevant article in the treaty was rewritten the same year (after a firm intervention by the United Kingdom) that was more acceptable to the Ottoman government.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, until 1880, Benjamin Disraeli, a self-described Turkophile, was in power.

General Arthur Tchérép-Spiridovitch was sent to the United States in 1907 to defend the Tsarist regime and to incite the American Armenians to seditious activities against the Ottoman Empire and their Western supporters to "war" against the Turks.<sup>5</sup> He went there as "special representative of the czar."<sup>6</sup>



Regardless, the major turning point was in 1912 when ARF (in conflict with the Tsar's authorities since 1900s) reconciled with them, at the initiative of St-Petersburg.<sup>7</sup> Antuan Bérézovsky-Godinsky, a Russian agent previously expelled as a trouble-maker by Austria-Hungary, travelled in Eastern Anatolia in 1913 and delivered a self-explanatory speech to Armenians of Bitlis:

"[...] You must arm yourself. [...] You know well, probably, that all our [diplomatic] representatives in Turkey jointly work with the Dashnaks [...]"

Russia does not want, and never wanted to send you missionaries. She prefers to send you her cannons and soldiers instead of missionaries. [...] I have had a lot of relations with the competent people of the Russian government."<sup>8</sup>

Sent in 1912 to Paris, General Tchérép-Spiridovitch re-launched his campaign of 1907-1908, advocating the dismembering of the Ottoman Empire and the "annexation" of Eastern Anatolia by Russia.<sup>9</sup> Incidentally, it needs to be noticed that Tchérép-Spiridovitch finished his life as a professional anti-Semitic agitator in the UK<sup>10</sup> and later in the US, being a ghost-writer for Henry Ford's *The International Jew*<sup>11</sup> and publishing in New York (under his own name) another book, recommended by the World Nazi propaganda service.<sup>12</sup>

Far from being limited to words, the Russian support for the Armenian separatists was materialized by a supply in weapons and ammunitions for the future rebels in eastern Anatolia, a supply that made possible the Armenian nationalist insurrections in 1914-1915.<sup>13</sup> By comparison, France refused to provide weapons to Armenian nationalists against the Ottoman Empire until 1916<sup>14</sup> and, in UK, the collection of funds to clothe and equip the Armenian volunteers of the Russian army, starting on 2 April 1915 (well after Russia), was a private initiative.<sup>15</sup>

The Soviets imitated the Tsar, using the Dashnaks as willing executioners to crush the patriots of Azerbaijan<sup>16</sup> and Central Asia, with the bloodiest methods, in 1918-1919.<sup>17</sup> In 1928-1929, in the context of the Stalinist radicalization of the bilateral crisis with Ankara, Moscow funded a combination of Armenian nationalists, Kurdish nationalists (Hoybun) and Turkish monarchists.<sup>18</sup> In 1939, Türkiye signed bilateral agreements with the UK and France, then a trilateral alliance with the two Western European democracies, causing the ire of the totalitarian powers (Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Stalinist USSR), now linked by another triple alliance.<sup>19</sup> USSR claimed Kars and Ardahan for Soviet Armenia and organized an irredentist agitation inside its borders.<sup>20</sup> A part of the

**USSR claimed Kars and Ardahan for Soviet Armenia and organized an irredentist agitation inside its borders. A part of the diaspora's Armenians was sensitive to this agitation.**

diaspora's Armenians was sensitive to this agitation. René Massigli, the French ambassador in Ankara (dismissed by the Vichy regime at the end of 1940 after protests of the Nazi diplomacy, then de Gaulle's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1943 to 1944<sup>21</sup>) reported on 20 October 1939:

"I cannot stress enough the need to monitor the actions of Armenian circles, whether in the Levant or elsewhere.

It is important, indeed, not to lose sight of the fact that the Armenians have always been the instruments of Russian policy against Turkey [Türkiye]: Precisely as Russian imperialism is reborn and Turkey is drawing closer to us, we must reckon with the exploitation, by Soviet agents, of the Armenians' tenacious hatred for their former persecutors."<sup>22</sup>

The Stalinist claims on Kars and Ardahan were reiterated in 1945-1948. They were endorsed by a "sacred union" of the Armenian diaspora's organizations.<sup>23</sup>

The first book promoting the "Armenian Genocide" claims in a Western language was an English translation, published in January 1965, of a Soviet book printed in 1963.<sup>24</sup> The *Pravda* supported these claims in long articles published in April 1975 and April 1985.<sup>25</sup> More concretely, the building of a memorial was discussed at least in 1963, approved in 1964, announced in 1965<sup>26</sup> and built in 1967. The 10<sup>th</sup> point of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)'s declaration of principle, published on 10 July 1978, explained: "Soviet Armenia is the unique and irreplaceable basis of the Armenian people; it is a free Armenian land; the USSR is a friendly country."<sup>27</sup> Even after the Soviet Union stopped supporting the Armenian terrorism, in mid-1983, ASALA continued to spread the Soviet propaganda on late Ottoman history about the "Jewish bankers behind [Sultan] Abdülhamit" and the "Jewish-Masonic conspiracy behind the Committee of Union and Progress."<sup>28</sup>



The collapse of the Soviet Union hardly changed anything. The Armenian separatists of Karabakh were used as a pawn, and directly supported by Russia, not unlike the Russian separatists of Transnistria against Moldova and the Abkhaz separatists against Georgia at the same time. The Russian Duma “recognized” the Armenian genocide claims as early as 1995<sup>29</sup>, well before the French (1998-2001), Canadian (2004), and German (2015) parliaments. The Ukrainian and Georgian parliaments, for instance, never adopted any resolution in this regard.

From 1971 to the collapse of the regime in December 2024, ARF was a loyal ally of the Baath regime in Syria, since 1980s has been allied with Iran, and since 1996-1997 and even more since 2005, has been an ally of Hezbollah.<sup>30</sup> In other words, ARF was integrated to the Iranian network even before the emergence of the Russian-Iranian alliance.

### The Game of Russia Against Peace And Its Armenian Nationalist Pawns (2022-2025)

After the ceasefire agreements of November 2020 and January 2021, Russia established a new military facility

in Armenia. In February 2022, the Armenian delegation was the only one to support Russia in the vote deciding the suspension of this country from the Council of Europe.<sup>31</sup> As late as August 2022, Armenia took part in a drone competition with Russia and Iran.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, the peace process did not advance. The situation changed drastically after the clashes of September 2022 at the (not yet delineated) Armenia-Azerbaijani border. Kazakhstan vetoed the Armenian demand for an intervention by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Russia, facing considerable -and unexpected- difficulties in Ukraine,<sup>33</sup> did not intervene either.

As early as 6 October 2022, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan co-signed the Prague Declaration, the first formal recognition, by the Armenian government, of Karabakh as an Azerbaijani territory:

“Armenia and Azerbaijan confirmed their commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Alma Ata 1991 Declaration through which both recognize each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. They confirmed it would be a basis for the work of the border delimitation commissions and that the





next meeting of the border commissions would take place in Brussels by the end of October.”<sup>34</sup>

In 2023, Armenia did not take part in the annual drone competition organized by Russia and Iran. In September of the same year, the last elements of the Armenian army finally withdrew from Khankendi, just before the Azerbaijani army liberated the territory controlled by the last remnant of the Armenian separatist entity in Karabakh (self-dissolved on 1 January 2024). In absolute contrast with the war of 2020, the Armenian army did not fire a single shot to defend the separatists. Prime Minister Pashinyan confirmed on a written form his recognition of the Azerbaijani territory, this time with the number of square kilometres, which makes clear he recognizes both the whole Karabakh and the enclaves as Azerbaijani territories.<sup>35</sup> In December 2023, for the first time in history, Armenia and Azerbaijan supported each other on the diplomatic field, Yerevan withdrawing its candidacy to the organization of the COP29 in exchange of the Azerbaijani support for the Armenian participation in the bureau of the conference.

Then, the delineation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border made unprecedented progress during the year 2024,<sup>36</sup> including the peaceful restitution of four Azerbaijani villages, occupied since 1992 but located outside of Karabakh. Meanwhile, Armenia ended the Russian control of the Yerevan airport, announced its suspension of its participation in the Collective Security

Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and then confirmed its plan to eventually depart from the said organization.<sup>37</sup> Armenia made important gestures toward Türkiye as well. On 14 April 2024, Antranik Kocharyan, chairman of the Armenian Parliament's Defense and Security Committee, stated to *Radio Free Europe's* Armenian Service:

“This is a simple goal for us to know the addresses and locations of each of our 1.5 million compatriots [who allegedly perished in the ‘Armenian Genocide’]. It is very important for the building of our relations [with Türkiye] in the future as well. 24 April is approaching. Was it 1.5 million, two million or less? It should be strictly addressed. But if we don't record it, the other side can always say that no such thing happened.”

**Meanwhile, Armenia ended the Russian control of the Yerevan airport, announced its suspension of its participation in CSTO, and then confirmed its plan to eventually depart from the said organization. Armenia made important gestures toward Türkiye as well.**

**Since the end of 2023, ARF and other Armenian nationalists have vehemently supported the past leaders of the defunct separatist Armenian entity in Karabakh who were arrested by Azerbaijan.**

The wording was calibrated for an Armenian audience, but the meaning is clear; neither Armenia nor anybody else can produce the list of the “1.5 million Armenian victims” for the simple reason that the total losses of the Ottoman Armenians from 1914 to 1915 were in truth about 600/650,000,<sup>38</sup> including 150,000 who died of malnutrition and illness during the relocation of 300,000 of them to the Caucasus by the Russian army and ARF in 1915-1916,<sup>39</sup> 50,000 who died during the epidemics in Yerevan in 1918-1919,<sup>40</sup> and the various fighters (volunteers for the Russian army in 1914-1918, volunteers for the Greek army in 1920-1922 and loyal Armenians in the Ottoman army in 1914-1918) killed in action.

Then, on 29 January 2015, Nikol Pashinyan stated: “We need to revisit the history of the Armenian Genocide. We need to understand what happened, why it happened, and through whom we perceived the events.”<sup>41</sup> He also pointed out the role of the Soviet Union, which followed a political agenda. As a result, it is a fact that the less Russia is involved in Armenia, the more the peace process with Azerbaijan and the reconciliation with Türkiye advance. Given the historical background, this is by no means a surprise.

The day after the Prague Declaration, the “parliament” of the separatist entity in Khankendi asked for the “recognition of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic”;<sup>42</sup> “Given the recognition of independence of Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic by the Russian Federation and the reunification of the aforementioned territories, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions to Russia on September 30, 2022.” The day this declaration was published, a huge portrait of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin was deployed near Khankendi.<sup>43</sup> Even after the collapse of the so-called “republic”, the opposition in Armenia continued to consider any concession to Azerbaijan to be a betrayal, and connected this issue with the supposedly indispensable alliance with Russia.<sup>44</sup>

Months after the clashes of September 2022, *The Armenian Weekly*, an ARF organ, blamed Nikol Pashinyan for starting to distance Armenia from the CSTO:

“The planned CSTO peacekeeping exercises, unveiled by the Russian Ministry of Defense on the first day of the New Year, would logically bolster the peacekeeping mission in Artsakh and send a defiant message to Ankara and Baku following joint Turkish-Azeri drills which saw Turkey keep its forces ominously stationed in place — as was done in the runup to the 2020 aggression.”<sup>45</sup>

Apparently unimpressed by the hemorrhagic losses<sup>46</sup> of the Russian army (especially for the armored vehicles and artillery), Franck “Mourad” Papazian, a member of ARF’s world bureau who is also co-chairman of the Coordination Council of France’s Armenian Associations (CCAF) stated in 2024:

“Restoring relations with Russia is a strategic priority for Armenia. You cannot have an anti-Russian government in Armenia. Looking at the map, we see that Armenia is surrounded by enemies, and the friend and partner we had has almost turned into an enemy. [...] The EU wants to delegate Turkey to deal with matters in the Caucasus, but Turkey is not a neutral country, so there is reason to be worried. France won’t send troops to Armenia if there is a war.”<sup>47</sup>

In May of the same year, he even called the Caucasus “not a French zone but [...] a Russian or Soviet zone.”<sup>48</sup> This has been his consistent position.<sup>49</sup> The same man was banned from entering Armenia in 2022, officially because he organized an aggressive demonstration against Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan in Paris,<sup>50</sup> unofficially because he was suspected attempting to instigate a coup d’état.

Former ASALA spokesman Jean-Marc “Ara” Toranian, who is, for reasons impossible to verify with open sources only, the less virulent critic of Prime Minister Pashinyan among the Armenian nationalists, regardless criticized, as late as 30 December 2024, the pro-Western turn of Armenia and its decreasing dependency on Russia.<sup>51</sup> He implicitly compared the peace process to the collaboration of the Vichy regime of France with Nazi Germany during the Second World War, a wording unprecedented in his writings, regarding any Armenian government.

Another contributor to Toranian’s website (by far the most read of the French Armenian websites), known in March 2022 for his inflammatory support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine<sup>52</sup> and for having advocated massive cyber-attacks against the Western powers in December of the same year,<sup>53</sup> insisted in March 2024 on blaming the





changes of the Armenian policy, not only toward Azerbaijan and Türkiye, but also toward Russia.<sup>54</sup> He repeated the Russian narrative that the rapprochement with the West will lead Armenia to a fate similar to the one of Ukraine. Still another contributor, also notorious for his fierce support for Russian President Putin,<sup>55</sup> reiterated his views in February 2025, including to vituperate the rapprochement between Armenia and the West, and even to attack the President of France Emmanuel Macron directly.<sup>56</sup>

Remarkably, these articles and declarations have continued so far, in spite of the collapse of the Baath dictatorship in Syria, of the serious weakening of Hezbollah in Lebanon and of the Iranian regime military losses on its own soil during the year 2024.

**The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention “considers that the allegations against Mr. Vardanyan are particularly serious” and are based, at least for a part, on material evidence, such as the “military equipment” discovered.**

### For The Men of Vladimir Putin

Since the end of 2023, ARF and other Armenian nationalists have vehemently supported the past leaders of the defunct separatist Armenian entity in Karabakh who were arrested by Azerbaijan.<sup>57</sup> Their trajectories show that the solidarity among the Armenian nationalists, especially for those involved in the only case of territorial expansion of Armenia since the formal attribution of Zanguezur to Armenia by Soviet Russia in 1921, is not the sole reason for this activism.

A Russian citizen, Ruben Vardanyan became a billionaire in Russia during the 1990s and 2000s, namely at a time when the Russian big business knew nothing but the law of jungle. He did not stop there, as “records from the Troika Laundromat leak show that employees at his bank built and ran the Troika Laundromat, an all-purpose financial system that took in US\$4.6 billion from 2006 through early 2013.”<sup>58</sup> In 2022, he was designated by Ukraine as one of the sources of funding for the Russian invasion and he is, as a result, wanted by the Ukrainian Secret Service (SSU, domestic intelligence agency).<sup>59</sup> The anti-corruption organization founded by Alexei Navalny shares the same conclusion.<sup>60</sup>

It was precisely in 2022 that Vardanyan went to Karabakh. He was appointed as “State minister” in



**It is crystal clear that Haroutiounyan is, according to his own public statements in 2020, a war criminal, and that Azerbaijan is fully entitled to prosecute him.**

December of that year. The date is important; this was after then Armenian President Armen Sarkissian, an opponent to peace with Azerbaijan and normalization with Türkiye, resigned and after the Prague declaration by which Armenia and Azerbaijan recognized each other's territorial integrity (October 2022). Before 2022, Vardanyan had been involved in Armenian nationalist activities, such as the Aurora Prize, co-established with Samantha Power, author of a book (*A Problem from Hell*, 2002) where the Armenian genocide allegation is entirely based on the "testimony" of ARF terrorist Soghomon Tehlirian. Yet, this testimony was proved misleading even by his own memoirs, by ARF archives and by his obituary in the *Armenian Review*, an ARF journal.<sup>61</sup> Regardless, as this example shows, Vardanyan was focusing on Türkiye, not Azerbaijan. His sudden interest in the Karabakh issue,

in sharp contrast with his absence of initiative during the war of 2020, could not have been a mere coincidence.

Moreover, if he was only concerned about the international sanctions, he had the possibility of moving to Armenia (or another country with an important immigration of Russian businesspeople, such as the United Arab Emirates), and to devote himself to strictly economic activities. That is why he is often considered to have been sent to Khankendi by the Kremlin, first to impede the recovery of this territory by Azerbaijan, then to replace by any possible means Nikol Pashinyan as the Armenian Prime Minister.<sup>62</sup> What is sure, anyway, is that he has publicly and actively supported the Iranian-Armenian alliance,<sup>63</sup> while Iran is an ally of Russia and while the Iranian government is not in favor -this is the least that can be said- of the policy conducted by Pashinyan.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention "considers that the allegations against Mr. Vardanyan are particularly serious"<sup>64</sup> and are based, at least for a part, on material evidence, such as the "military equipment" discovered.

Arayik Haroutiounyan, also incarcerated and now on trial in Baku, openly ordered the bombing of Ganja during the war of 2020.<sup>65</sup> Only civilian buildings were destroyed and damaged during the bombing. 26 civilians and no soldier were killed, dozens of civilians (and once again, no military person) were wounded. Ganja never was close to the frontline at any moment of the Karabakh wars (1992-1994, 2016 and 2020). Yet, according to the article 25 of Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, annexed to Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, The Hague, 18 October 1907, "The attack or bombardment of towns, villages, habitations or buildings which are not defended, is prohibited." Similarly, the 1<sup>st</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts, of 8 June 1977, states:

"4. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited. Indiscriminate attacks are:

- a) those which are not directed at a specific military objective;
- b) those which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective; or
- c) those which employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by this Protocol; and consequently, in each such case, are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.

5. Among others, the following types of attacks are to be considered as indiscriminate:

- a) an attack by bombardment by any methods or means which treats as a single military objective a number of clearly separated and distinct military objectives located in a city, town, village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians or civilian objects; and
- b) an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated."

It is crystal clear that Haroutiounyan is, according to his own public statements in 2020, a war criminal, and

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that Azerbaijan is fully entitled to prosecute him. It is equally clear that he has been a cog of Russian expansionism. In February 2022, he stated:

"On behalf of the authorities and the people of the Republic of Artsakh, I welcome the decision of Russian President Vladimir Putin to recognize the independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. The right of nations to self-determination and to build their own state is inalienable for every nation and is a fundamental principle of international law [sic]. We congratulate the peoples of Donetsk and Luhansk on this historic event. We hope that lasting peace and stability will once again be established in this once prosperous country."<sup>66</sup>

To defend these more than dubious persons, ARF announced the initiative titled "Europeans for Artsakh," which is a thin cover for this Armenian extremist party. In January 2024, the demonstrations of Paris,<sup>67</sup> Athens,<sup>68</sup> and Brussels<sup>69</sup> each rallied only some dozens of persons, and those in Romania, even less. No similar initiative has been organized after these failures, and one demonstration in Brussels in March 2025 gathered at most... ten persons.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, ARF's demand to ban Azerbaijani athletes from the Paris Olympic games was not accepted.<sup>71</sup> Despite costly efforts, the Western media coverage remains minimal, largely due to the invasion of Ukraine, and to the largely commented choices of the Donald Trump administration of the US.

CCAF announced a complaint against Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in February 2025,<sup>72</sup> but this complaint was a sign of despair than anything else. No government has supported this complaint. Except some X (Twitter) posts from the (small) Armenian National Committee of UK (a branch of ARF), other groups of the Armenian Diaspora have shown no particular interest in this initiative. The lawyer representing CCAF is Sévag



Torossian, who was never involved in any important court case of the “Armenian cause” (trial against the Turkish consulate in Paris, defense of Jean-Marc “Ara” Toranian, intervention of CCAF against Doğu Perinçek in front of the European Court of Human Rights’ [ECtHR] Grand Chamber, defense of Charjoun leader Loris Toufanian, sentenced in June 2023 for having damaged the door of the Azerbaijani embassy in Paris, etc.). None of the lawyers who pleaded the above cases joined him, an indication of the lack of validity of the legal arguments he has used before the court.

And here arrives the most regrettable aspect of the issue: the recent (March 2025) vote at the European Parliament, endorsing ARF’s claims on the pro-Russian war criminals currently on trial in Baku. Blaming only prejudices and Armenian lobbying organizations would be a mistake. Nationalist Armenian groups are virtually without audience in countries such as Hungary and are extremely weak in Spain, Ireland, Denmark, etc. whereas Türkiye managed to defeat several resolutions on the

tragedy of 1915 in the European Parliament in 1985, 1986, 2007, 2008, 2009, etc.

## Conclusion

Arsen Torosyan’s appraisal of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation is fully justified. Armenia is recovering its sovereignty in choosing the way of peace instead of opting for endless war and racial hatred.<sup>73</sup> The sooner this situation will be explained to those who are still misled by ARF propaganda, the better will it be for everyone. For the first time, Armenia is conducting a policy independent from the toxic organizations of the Diaspora, and from Russia and Iran. This is a necessary step for the opening of channels of communications between Türkiye, Azerbaijan and, beyond, Central Asia. This is in the interest of Turkic states as well as of EU members -but this must be fully understood and, if necessary, demonstrated, like in this article.

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# WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE STATES HAVING NOT RATIFIED THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA 1982 (UNCLOS)?\*

The 168 states are party to UNCLOS now; however, 30 countries are not either. Of these 30 non-party states, 14 signed but did not ratify, 16 countries neither signed nor acceded to the Convention.

İnci Çevrim

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**O**n December 10, 1982, a new age began in the seas while effectuating a comprehensive system of the legal regime in the oceans and seas of the world. The main aim of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) about is how the oceans and their resources will be used and shared. It includes traditional rules for the limitation and uses of the seas, moreover introduces new concepts and principles. This Convention

has emerged after a long and challenging process. It was started to be discussed in 1973 and completed in 1982.

The subject of the study is the determination of the reasons for states' reluctance in adopting the UNCLOS. This study covers states that have not signed or ratified the UNCLOS. It consists of examining the situation of states that have not signed or ratified this Convention, which was written and adopted in 1982.

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**It is crucial to understand the difference between signing and ratifying a convention to analyze the roles of non-party states at the convention. Ratification defines an international act by which a State indicates its consent to be bound by a treaty if the parties intend to demonstrate their consent by that Convention.**

In the study, a two-tier approach will be made among the States listed first those of signed but did not ratify, or neither signed nor became a party to the UNCLOS. The subject will be examined in the light of the countries' concerns, and the relevant laws will be discussed by comparing with other legal arrangements.

## **I. Relationship with Unclos and United Nations**

The United Nations is an international organization formed in 1945 by 51 countries to maintain international peace and security, establish positive relations among nations, and improve social progress, higher living standards, and human rights.<sup>1</sup> Each of the 193 member states of the United Nations is also a member of the General Assembly. The number of countries has also changed since the date UNCLOS was first signed. Palestine has accepted UNCLOS even if it has only observer status. There have been some new states that emerged after the dissolution of the USSR. Some of them chose to be a party to UNCLOS, some did not.

The number of states participating in the UN Third Conference on the Law of the Sea is very different from the 1958 Geneva Conference on the Law of the Sea. While the UN Third Conference held with 151 state participants, the 1958 Geneva Convention with 85 states. Numerical superiority is in underdeveloped and developing countries. The fact that the asymmetry mentioned above is not in favor of developed states provides an advantage to developing countries with numerical superiority in conference negotiations.<sup>2</sup> The UNCLOS replaced the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Law of the Sea as per article 311/1.

Some countries are not recognized by the UN, but are recognized by some UN member states: The Republic of Abkhazia, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Kosovo, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the State of

Palestine, the Arab Republic of the Sub-Saharan Democratic Republic, and the Republic of South Ossetia. Finally, some countries are recognized by the United Nations, but some countries do not recognize them: China, Armenia, the Republic of Cyprus, Israel, North Korea, South Korea.<sup>3</sup>

## **II. Non-Party States and Their Reason for Reluctancy**

### **A) Overview**

The 168 states are party to UNCLOS now; however, 30 countries are not either. Of these 30 non-party states, 14 signed but did not ratify, 16 countries neither signed nor acceded to the Convention.

**14 UN member states have signed but not ratified the convention:** Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Liechtenstein, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates,

**Other 16 UN member States have neither signed nor ratified the Convention:** Andorra, Eritrea, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, San Marino, South Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Holy See (Vatican), Venezuela, USA.

It is crucial to understand the difference between signing and ratifying a convention to analyze the roles of non-party states at the convention. Ratification defines an international act by which a State indicates its consent to be bound by a treaty if the parties intend to demonstrate their consent by that Convention. In the case of bilateral treaties, ratification is usually accomplished by exchanging the instruments required. In contrast, in the case of multilateral treaties, it is the usual procedure for the depositary to obtain ratifications of all the instruments required.

At the same time, since landlocked states will be examined under a separate heading, it is necessary to define this as well. Article 124 of the UNCLOS defines a land-locked State as a state with no sea coast. So, each land-locked state wants to reach and access the seas; it depends on its neighboring state.

“Transit State means a State, with or without a seacoast, situated between a land-locked State and the sea, through whose territory traffic in transit passes.”<sup>4</sup>

Though land-locked states are given legal right of





access to and from the sea and freedom of transit under Article 125 (1), such rights are put along with significant practical restrictions. Accordingly, Article 125 (2) states that:

“The terms and modalities for exercising freedom of transit shall be agreed between the land-locked States and transit States concerned through bilateral, sub regional or regional agreements.”<sup>5</sup>

Even though one cannot deny the relevance of international law of the sea to the land-locked states’ overall rights on the sea, the fact remains that the very enjoyment of those rights is contingent upon the

negotiation to be made between land-locked and transit states.<sup>6</sup>

## B) Neither Signed Nor Acceded

### 1- The United States of America

The United States of America (USA) conceived a legal framework for deep-seabed mining. The USA thought it secured title to oil and gas resources located on the USA extended continental shelf. They hesitate to expose climate change lawsuits and other environmental actions brought against it by other members of the Convention.



**Israel has a hesitation about the Tiran Strait and the transition regime there. Further, Israel will not withdraw from the Sinai unless there is a guarantee that there will be a settlement of, inter alia, its rights of passage in the Straits of Tiran.**

<sup>7</sup> The United States opposed part XI of the Convention for several reasons. Moreover, in the United States' opinion, Part XI was unfavorable to American economic and security interests.<sup>8</sup> In the United States, the Convention will set other undesirable precedents, such as mandatory technology transfer and the allocation of funds to national liberation movements.<sup>9</sup>

Part XI of UNCLOS includes the international seabed, and there are strong criticisms of the United States against these regimes in UNCLOS. With being a large and technologically advanced country, U.S was concerned about being obliged to pay the International Seabed Authority (ISA) exorbitant costs for redistribution to developing countries. As a result, the United States has

accepted UNCLOS except for Part XI as customary international law.

## 2- Israel

Israel has not signed UNCLOS, despite being a signatory to the 1958 United Nations Convention on the Continental Shelf.

Israel was one of four countries to vote against UNCLOS because of a provision allowing revenues generated from seabed activities to benefit '*peoples who have not yet attained full self-governing status*'.<sup>10</sup> Following international law and established practice, Israel has reached an agreement with the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) to delimit its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the official reasons for Israel's refusal to sign and ratify the UNCLOS is Article 15 of the Rules of Tribunal, which may require Israel to comply with the mandatory procedures of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).<sup>11</sup> Israel believes that if these disputes go to compulsory jurisdiction, a decision will come against them.



Israel's main concern is related to the discovery of important oil and gas resources in the eastern Mediterranean basin. It is necessary to clearly delineate the exclusive economic zone before exploration and development of such resources can begin.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to these, Israel has a hesitation about the Tiran Strait and the transition regime there. Further, Israel will not withdraw from the Sinai unless there is a guarantee that there will be a settlement of, inter alia, its rights of passage in the Straits of Tiran.<sup>13</sup> Israel does not want a change in the transition regime in the Tiran Strait.

### 3- Venezuela

Venezuela has claimed a large swathe of the Caribbean Sea based on applying a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) around Bird Island, which is situated some 550 km to the north of Venezuela and 110 km to the west of Dominica. Due to the unique nature of the Caribbean Region, Venezuela does not want to accept the definition of islands in UNCLOS 121 and the conclusions drawn from the article.

Regarding the strife between Venezuela and Guyana, the two states have locked horns concerning overlapping maritime claims stemming significantly from the Essequibo dispute. Consequently, both argue that they acted lawfully within their maritime zones.<sup>14</sup>

Venezuelan officials underlined “*practical settlement of controversy*” to exclude all other phrases from the relevant provisions. Shortly after that, they called the issue a “*controversy*.” However, Guyana stated *no* “*territorial controversy*”; only disagreement over Venezuela's claim that the 1899 arbitration award was invalid.<sup>15</sup>

### 4- Türkiye

Türkiye avoided signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, because the convention did not allow reservations even though some provisions of the UNCLOS can be interpretable in parallel with Turkish arguments.<sup>16</sup> Article 3, 33 and 121 are the most problematic provisions of UNCLOS for Türkiye. The Aegean Sea is a semi-enclosed sea that lies between mainland Türkiye and Greece, so there are many tiny islands and islets. The primary reasons of contention between Türkiye and Greece are these islands and islets.<sup>17</sup>

Türkiye's eventual decision to not becoming party to the UNCLOS, as well as its subsequent unwillingness to sign and ratify it, was caused by two causes. The first

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factor was the prohibition of reservation.<sup>18</sup> The second reason for Türkiye's non-ratification of UNCLOS is that marine delimitation regulations for states with opposing or near coasts was uncertainty.

Türkiye actively proposed several texts on enclosed and semi-enclosed seas during the negotiations. Türkiye initially contemplated and proposed the principle of equity for states bordering enclosed or semi-enclosed seas, implicitly including delimitations matters.<sup>19</sup> Although it was included in the final text that the parties should agree before the limitations and do so in the framework of equity, Türkiye was not ultimately convinced that the ratification of the UNCLOS could successfully resolve its disputes with Greece in the Aegean.<sup>20</sup>

### 5- Eritrea

Eritrea has not ratified UNCLOS and UN Fish Stock Agreements. Eritrea is a fisheries country, and the provision of UNCLOS about fisheries is not acceptable for Eritrea.<sup>21</sup> The Arbitral Tribunal in Eritrea/Yemen also recognized the existence of traditional fishing rights of Eritrea's fishermen to continue to have access to and use of waters around the islands, the islands themselves, and access to Yemen's port.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, maritime zones such as the Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are not yet defined. Nevertheless, according to international customary law, it should be bound by the convention. Consequently, it allows innocent passage in its TW (Territorial Waters) and only interferes in cases involving a grave and imminent threat to its coastal areas.<sup>23</sup>

### 6- Peru

Peru is not part of UNCLOS because the state thought that signing that treaty was unnecessary to resolve Chile's dispute. It is a political and strategic movement. Peru claims 200-mile territorial seas and refuses to become parties to the Convention.<sup>24</sup> The Court

evaluated whether, as Chile asserted, there existed an agreed maritime border extending 200 nautical miles from the Parties' respective coasts in its January 27, 2014, judgment. After a lengthy procedure, Peru and Chile finalized the coordinates of their maritime boundary on March 25, 2014.<sup>25</sup>

### 7-Syria

Between 1963 and 2003, it claimed a 6-mile contiguous zone seaward of its excessive 35-mile territorial sea boundary before reducing the claim to 12 miles and the contiguous zone claim to 24 miles.<sup>26</sup> The other reason is that all of Syria's territorial seas require prior permission or license for foreign vessels to sail through.<sup>27</sup> Syria considers claiming an EEZ despite not having ratified the UNCLOS; jurisprudence has long recognized that the concept of an EEZ is part of customary international law.<sup>28</sup>

### 8- Landlocked Countries that have neither Signed nor Acceded

Landlocked Countries that have neither signed nor acceded are: *Andorra, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, San Marino, South Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Vatican.*

When the landlocked state passes across part of the whole of the territory of another State, it should be established by common agreement among the States concerned, with due regard to the multilateral conventions to which these states are parties. This situation can be unstable and hesitant.<sup>29</sup>

Humanity turns to the sea for subsistence as our needs for food, fuel, and other resources increase. Due to the development of science and technology, the vast ocean depths are actually within the reach of mankind. As the utility of the sea has broadened, its role has also evolved from a medium of communication to a repository of wealth.<sup>30</sup> In this direction, the difficulties experienced by these landlocked countries and their desire to reach the sea would also be considered in future.

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### C) Have Signed, Not Ratified

#### 1- Cambodia - Jul 1, 1983

The country took part in several meetings of the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea, but Cambodia's participation was not very active due to internal problems. So far, the necessary preparations have not been made for the national measures to approve and ensure its implementation at the national level.<sup>31</sup> A significant issue with East Asia's innocent passage regime is generally the requirement of coastal and archipelagic states to seek advance notice or approval of innocent passage of warships.<sup>32</sup>

As far as the 1982 UNCLOS is concerned, in early 1995, the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the creation of an ad hoc inter-ministerial commission to study in detail the implications of the UNCLOS.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from these, there has been significant development in Cambodia. On 30 December 2019, a total of 110 National Assembly members convened to review and unanimously approve seven draft laws in a historic session that saw the Kingdom ratify the UNCLOS.<sup>34</sup>

When considering the validity of this law, it may be necessary to first look at maritime claims. It can be concluded that all maritime claims stated by Cambodia are compatible with UNCLOS, and accordingly, they prepare themselves for UNCLOS.<sup>35</sup>

Three interrelated factors are likely to have weighed on Cambodia's decision to ratify UNCLOS at this time. Cambodia is very keen to be seen as supportive of international law by the international community. The first factor relates to the impending decision by the European Union to consider rescinding preferential tariffs under their *Everything But Arms* (EBA) policy. Cambodia is one of the primary beneficiaries of the EBA scheme. Secondly, Cambodia hopes to take advantage of the

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recent improvement in bilateral relations with the United States by demonstrating its support for a “rules-based” Indo-Pacific region. Thirdly, Cambodia feels isolated and overly dependent on China at this particular time. Some friction has arisen over Chinese Investors, companies and Chinese nationals working and living in Cambodia.<sup>36</sup>

## 2- Colombia - Dec 10, 1982

Geographical location of Colombia did not allow the ratification of UNCLOS. The western Caribbean is full of rich mineral and biological resources. Because of this situation Colombia thought that it should be shared in different ways.<sup>37</sup>

Between Colombia and Nicaragua, there were some conflicts, resulting in problems, especially fish and fishing, which covers a wide area, among the EEZ and continental shelf. Due to that, the Republic of Colombia was subjected to an application instituting proceeding under the first two states of Article 121 regarding a dispute concerning “a group of related legal issues subsisting” between the two States “concerning title to territory and maritime delimitation”<sup>38</sup>, by the Republic of Nicaragua. Although the Court had recognized these two paragraphs of Article 121 as customary international law, the Republic of Colombia objected and affirmed that they did not know about it.<sup>39</sup> At that point, because of the delimitation problems that were caused mutually, Colombia refused to become a party to the convention.

## 3- El Salvador - Dec 5, 1984

El Salvador may have decided not to vote because of their claim to the 200-mile territorial sea.<sup>40</sup> Despite decades of ratification discussions and treaty negotiations, El Salvador still claims 200 miles of territorial waters.<sup>41</sup> It refuses to become parties to the convention. Some of El Salvador’s border problems with Honduras and Nicaragua are also among the reasons for not being a party to UNCLOS.<sup>42</sup>

## 4- Iran - Dec 10, 1982

Even participating in UNCLOS negotiations, Iran criticized the provisions of the 1982 Convention; the most important provisions criticized by Iran are “innocent passage of warships through territorial waters” and “right of transit through international straits”.<sup>43</sup> The most important issue is about the Hormuz Strait. Iran has concerns about the right to passage through the international straits and does not accept transit passage in the Strait of Hormuz.

The extension of innocent passage rights of the naval units over the territorial sea was a contentious problem during the Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea and after the conclusion of the UNCLOS. Iran supports that there should be a provision on notifying beforehand the passage of naval ships of other states over territorial waters to observe requirements of the innocent transition.<sup>44</sup>

Based on this, while signing the UNCLOS, Iran proposed a statement to the UN pursuant to Article 310 of the 1982 Convention that provides states with the convenience to submit a declaration. According to its interpretation and application of Article 34 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, Iran considers that only states party to the UNCLOS shall benefit from the contractual rights in the treaty.<sup>45</sup>

## 5- North Korea - Dec 10, 1982

The incompatibility of North Korea’s perspectives on the law of the sea with general international law and the UNCLOS consists of establishing excessive straight baselines and military boundary zones.<sup>46</sup>

The first problem with North Korea is that the obligation to allow foreign ships the right of innocent passage through their territorial sea is a significant limitation on their sovereignty and a potential threat to their national security.<sup>47</sup> North Korea believes that it had been victimized unjustly by the hostile powers of the outside world in the past.<sup>48</sup> It is mainly about the United States of America and disputes between them. In addition, North Korea has resisted the fact that most provisions of the Convention have achieved the status of customary international law.<sup>49</sup>

## 6- Libya - Dec 3, 1984

In the negotiations of UNCLOS III, Libya, as the State from the Mediterranean Sea interested in adopting





specific rules on the delimitation of maritime boundaries for semi-enclosed seas.<sup>50</sup> Firstly, Libya claims to restrict international airspace out to 100 miles in the vicinity of Tripoli. Secondly, Libya had declared discomfort with the status of historic bays and the presence of the USA in their waters.<sup>51</sup>

Article 8 of UNCLOS clearly states that the provisions do not apply to so-called “historic bays”. Libya’s first claim to the Gulf of Sirte (1973) using a 300 nautical mile closing line is apparently on historic grounds and national security grounds.<sup>52</sup> On 19 October 1973, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya claimed the Gulf of Sirte, which is 290 miles wide, as a historic bay, stating that this Gulf formed part of its territory and that the baseline should therefore not be calculated from the coastline inside the Gulf but the furthest points of land.<sup>53</sup>

Libya has exercised jurisdiction over the Gulf of Sirte for a long time. In response to this, the U.S. Navy has conducted many exercises in the Gulf region, but Libya defended its rights in the Gulf region and clashed with the United States. As evidence supporting its claim, Libya stated that its navy controlled its territorial waters in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>54</sup>

#### 7- United Arab Emirates - Dec 10, 1982

The United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) territorial disagreement with Iran over three small islands is symbolic of the very strained relations between the two countries. It illustrates the UAE government’s deep distrust of Iran.<sup>55</sup>

Another problem is that the UAE has many artificial islands and facilities.<sup>56</sup> UNCLOS describes artificial islands as structures constructed by humans rather than natural processes. These islands are formed by expanding existing islands, building existing coral reefs, or merging several natural islands into one giant island.<sup>57</sup>

**The incompatibility of North Korea's perspectives on the law of the sea with general international law and the UNCLOS consists of establishing excessive straight baselines and military boundary zones.**



According to the 1982 Convention, states' artificial islands cannot be regarded as national borders. Due to the fact that artificial islands cannot engender or develop baselines, territorial seas, and EEZ for the belonging states.<sup>58</sup> The UAE does not benefit from them, although they make huge investments and generalize their plannings on artificial islands.

#### 8- Landlocked Countries that have Signed not Ratified

Landlocked Countries that have signed but not ratified are: *Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Lichtenstein.*

As mentioned above, access to the open sea by states with no access to the sea is subject to all kinds of agreements with coastal states. UNCLOS could have considered potential problems more when making these adjustments, but limits in its scope must have prevented addressing the question comprehensively.

Political instability in transit states prevents landlocked from accessing the sea. Improved transit provisions in the evolving UNCLOS and for assurance of access to and benefits from the resources of the sea.<sup>59</sup> For instance, Burundi had used the transit corridor of Kenya before UNCLOS. The state suffers from not having access to the sea from the Mombasa Port.<sup>60</sup>

### III. Systemetical Analysis of the Reasons

After examining the reasons for the states have not ratified the UNCLOS, it can be seen that the bilateral distinction made is not very decisive. Both groups of countries have some demands and claims. Some signatory countries may have considered that UNCLOS did not contain sufficient provisions for their own countries and would cause some conflicts. Despite playing an active role in the Convention process, non-signing countries do not sign directly because of the prohibition of making reservations. Many countries have accepted UNCLOS provisions as customary law. For example, the United States declared its EEZ even though it did not agree. However, they prefer not to become the Convention, as they cannot make any reservations on the items they experience conflict with it.

In Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), sources of international law were included, and customary international law was arranged among the primary sources.<sup>61</sup> Customary law rules bind all states whether or not they participate. The state, which remains silent in forming such a customary law rule, is deemed to have accepted it implicitly, even if it does not participate in the implementation. The state, which does not want to be bound by customary law rules, should object as persistent objectors when the relevant customary law rule begins to form. Although the contract provisions



have turned into a customary rule, it cannot bind any country that is a Persistent objector.

Many states are concerned that some provisions of UNCLOS are not clear enough and that situations may arise that may affect their national security. The special situation of semi-closed and closed seas is not open enough, and islands on the wrong side of the claimed coastal stands with many loopholes to be fulfilled by jurisprudence and alike that can be observed in specific areas of the UNCLOS. Some countries are concerned about possible outcomes in the compulsory judicial mechanism. Moreover, some countries do not want to share their technology and rich oceans resources with other countries to satisfy their higher appetite with greater demands.

Finally, land-locked countries considered that bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries standing between themselves and their access to oceans could have been made within the framework of UNCLOS regulation, which seems to have been left out as national prerogatives to the parties of the Convention. There is no absolute right of passage. In practical terms, landlocked

countries are located in the interior of continents, hundreds or even thousands of kilometers from maritime ports. Moreover, these kinds of countries need transit states' contentions, and this situation brings some problems. The obligation to make bilateral and multilateral agreements does not consider possible hostile relations between states; neither UNCLOS has such power to make transiting agreements happen.

## Conclusion

In this study, a general classification of the states that are not parties to UNCLOS has been attempted. The difficulties faced during this process and the demands put forward by the countries were tried to be examined. It is true that UNCLOS is an international constitution of the seas. Looking at its process, it can also be seen that it contains long arguments; however, it is not completely clear, understandable and sufficient for non-party states. The idea of UNCLOS as a whole has been the reason why many countries did not become a party. Although many countries have their own reasons, this has been the main determining reason.

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# DİJİTAL İPEK YOLU: KAZANIM VE RİSKLER

Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamında başlayan dijital altyapı yatırımlarının bazıları zaman içinde farklı ülkelerin katılımıyla beraber genişlemiştir. Bu durum Dijital İpek Yolu'nun dâhil olduğu KYG'nin yapısıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir.

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**Ç**in, 2013 yılında Devlet Başkanı Xi Jinping önderliğinde kapsamlı bir altyapı girişimi olan Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi'ni (KYG) ilan etmiştir. KYG esasen Çin'in ekonomik büyümesinin devamı, orta gelir tuzağı riskinden kaçınma, arz fazlası ve aşırı kapasite gibi iç sorunlara ve ABD eski Başkanı Barack Obama dönemindeki "Asya Ekseni" stratejisi, "Malakka İkilemi"

gibi dış tehditlere çözüm arayışının bir neticesi olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Asya Ekseni, genel olarak ABD'nin kendini Pasifik devleti olarak tanımlayarak, ABD'nin algıladığı güvenlik tehdidinin Asya-Pasifik bölgesinden algılandığını ve bu tehdide yönelik stratejilerin geliştirileceğini ifade etmektedir. Malakka İkilemi ise, Çin'in enerji sevkiyatı başta olmak üzere ticaretinin ABD



**2022 verilerine göre, Çin'in dijital ekonomisi gayrisafi yurt içi hasılanın yaklaşık yarısını oluşturmaktadır. Bu durumun Afrika'da Çin'in yumuşak gücünü arttıran bir unsur olduğunu belirtmek mümkündür.**

hâkimiyetindeki Malakka Boğazı'na olan bağımlılığından doğan ekonomik ve güvenlik tehdidini ifade etmektedir. Bu bağlamda KYG Çin'e, alternatif güzergâhlar ve yeni ticaret rotaları sunmaktadır. Söz konusu tehditlere karşı KYG bu açıdan Çin için güvenlik, ekonomi, uluslararası statü, yumuşak güç gibi kazanımlar sunmaktadır. KYG'ye dâhil olan ülkelerin ekonomik, ticari ve güvenlik hedefleri ile Çin'in ekonomik, ticari ve güvenlik hedefleri KYG kapsamında uyumlulaştırılmıştır. KYG'nin Çin ekonomisi açısından en önemli kazanımı kamu iktisadi teşebbüsleri ve özel şirketler aracılığıyla aşırı kapasite ve arz fazlası sorununa çözüm bulmasıdır. Bu bağlamda "Dışa Açılma" stratejisi ile uyumludur. Çünkü KYG, Çin'in son dönemde karşı karşıya olduğu sorunlara kalıcı çözümler sunan uzun vadeli hedefler barındırmaktadır.<sup>1</sup>

KYG, aynı zamanda Başkan Xi döneminde geliştirilen politika hedefleri olan ve Çin'in her açıdan müreffeh bir toplum olmasını hedefleyen "İki Yüzyıl Hedefleri", "Çin Rüyası" hedefleri ile uyumludur. KYG içindeki aynı konudaki yatırımlar, benzer yöntemlerle uygulanarak belirli standartların oluşması hedeflenmektedir. Bütüncül bir yapıda olmayan KYG zaman içinde araçlarını, yöntemini ve kapsamını genişletmiştir. Bu durumda, Çin'in değişen ve genişleyen hedeflerinin yanı sıra, uluslararası sistemdeki değişiklikler, jeopolitik ve jeo-ekonomik rekabetler rol oynamıştır. 2013 yılında ilk olarak İpek Yolu Ekonomik Kuşağı ve 21. Yüzyıl Deniz İpek Yolu olmak üzere, kara ve deniz rotalarının ilan edildiği KYG; zamanla Arktik İpek Yolu, Yeşil Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi ve Dijital İpek Yolu'nun ilan edilmesiyle daha geniş stratejiler ortaya koyulmuş, eylem planları ilan edilmiştir.<sup>2</sup>

Mart 2015 tarihinde, Çin Dışişleri Bakanlığı, Ticaret Bakanlığı ve Ulusal Kalkınma ve Reform Komisyonu tarafından KYG'nin uzun dönemli eylem planı olan "Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi Eylem Planı" duyurulmuştur.<sup>3</sup> Dijital İpek Yolu, ilk kez aynı yıl "Çin-AB Dijital İş Birliği Forumu"nda Çin Siber Uzay İdaresi Müdürü Lu Wei tarafından ifade edilmiştir.<sup>4</sup> Söz konusu Forum'da Lu, Çinli internet şirketlerinin Avrupa pazarlarına girmesini kolaylaştırmaktan, bilgi iş birliğinin teşviğinden, Çin ve AB arasında siber uzayın dijitalleşmesinden bahsetmiştir. Bu dönemde yayınlanan resmi belgelerde "Bilgi İpek

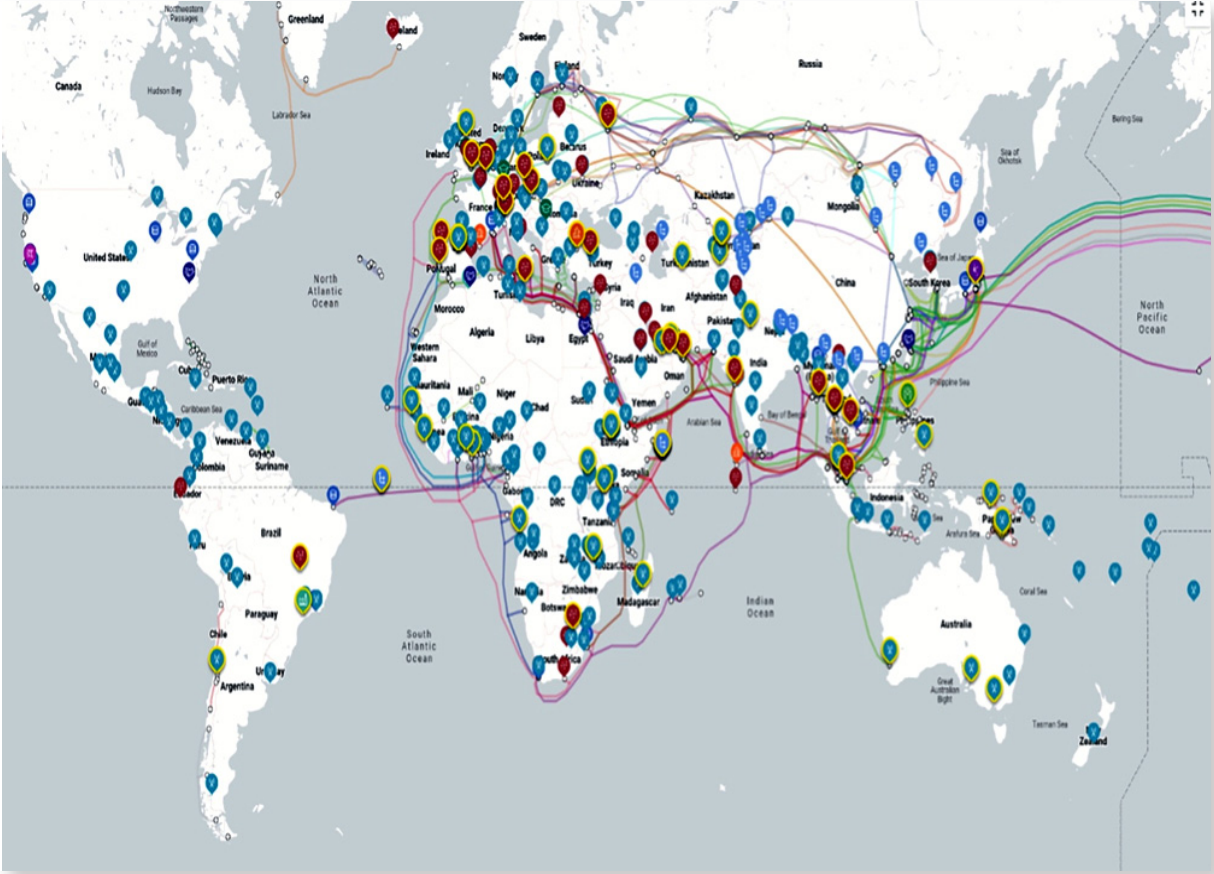
Yolu"nun oluşturulması ele alınmıştır. Başlangıçta, Dijital İpek Yolu bilgi ve siber uzay açısından ele alınarak zaman içerisinde kapsamı netleştirilmiştir. 2017 yılına gelindiğinde Birinci Kuşak ve Yol Forumu'nda Xi, ilk kez Dijital İpek Yolu'ndan bahsetmiştir. 2017'de Dördüncü "Dünya İnternet Konferansı"nda; Türkiye, Laos, Suudi Arabistan, Sırbistan, Tayland ve Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri tarafından Dijital İpek Yolu'nun geliştirilmesi için "KYG Dijital Ekonomi Uluslararası İş Birliği Girişimi" imzalanmıştır.<sup>5</sup> Girişim, 2019 yılında İkinci Kuşak ve Yol Forumu'nda Xi tarafından ilk kez ayrı bir girişim olarak tanıtılmıştır.<sup>6</sup> Böylece, Çin'in dijital hedefleri ilan edilmiş ve Dijital İpek Yolu ve İnovasyon İpek Yolu'nun oluşturulması gündeme getirilmiştir.<sup>7</sup> Bu sayede iletişim hizmetlerinin entegrasyonu ve bilgi paylaşımının sağlanması hedeflenmiştir.<sup>8</sup>

Dijital İpek Yolu'nu ortaya çıkaran nedenleri, iç etmenler ve dış etmenler olarak gruplandırmak mümkündür. İç etmenlerde, Çin'in ekonomik büyümesinin devamlılığını sağlama amacıyla uyumlu olarak Çin'in bu devamlılığı "inovasyona dayalı büyüme" sayesinde elde etme kararı rol oynamıştır. "Dördüncü Sanayi Devrimi" olarak da anılan "Endüstri 4.0" trendi Çin'in yol haritasını belirlemesinde rol oynamıştır. Bu bağlamda devlet eliyle Çinli özel şirketler ve kamu iktisadi teşebbüsleri inovasyon odaklı yatırımlara yönlendirilmiştir. Öte yandan, Çin şirketlerinin fikri mülkiyet haklarındaki başarısı yeni yatırımların önünü açan bir diğer faktördür. Dış etmenlerde ise başta Küresel Güney ülkeleri olmak üzere dünyadaki dijital altyapı eksikliği rol oynamıştır.

Dijital İpek Yolu'nun net bir tanımı bulunmamaktadır. Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamında başlayan dijital altyapı yatırımlarının bazıları zaman içinde farklı ülkelerin katılımıyla beraber genişlemiştir. Bu durum Dijital İpek Yolu'nun dâhil olduğu KYG'nin yapısıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. KYG gibi Dijital İpek Yolu da parçalı bir yapıdadır ve zaman içinde genişlemekte, içeriği belirginleşmektedir. 2022 yılı verilerine göre Çin, Dijital İpek Yolu için 17 iş birliği anlaşması ve 30 e-ticaret muhtırası, 18 ülke ile "Dijital Ekonomide Yatırım İş Birliğinin Güçlendirilmesine Dair Mutabakat Zaptı" imzalamıştır.<sup>9</sup>

Pekin yönetimi, inovasyona dayalı büyüme ile ilgili olarak iki önemli strateji belirlemiştir. Bunlar, Endüstri 4.0'dan esinlenen "Made in China 2025" stratejisi ve yine aynı hedefler doğrultusunda 2018 yılında kabul edilen "Çin Standartları 2035" (China Standards 2035) hedefleridir.<sup>10</sup> Dijital İpek Yolu, bu iki strateji ile doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Dijital İpek Yolu, Çin Standartları'nın uluslararası ölçekte yaygınlaştırılmasının temel aracıdır.





Dijital İpek Yolu yatırımlarının temel alanlarının neler olduğu net olarak tanımlanmamıştır. Ancak temel yatırım alanlarını; 5G sistemleri, e-ticaret, e-yönetim, fiber optik ağ teknolojisi, WeChat Wallet, Dianping ve Alipay gibi mobil ödeme sistemleri, OPay ve Palmpay gibi mobil para cüzdanları türü e-ticaret sistemleri, fintech sistemleri, uydu teknolojisi, güvenlik bilgi sistemleri, akıllı şehir teknolojileri (smart city), denizaltı ve kara yolu fiber optik kablo bağlantıları, Nesnelerin İnterneti (IoT), yapay zekâ, veri araştırma merkezleri, telekomünikasyon hizmetleri, teknoloji transferi olarak sıralamak mümkündür. 5G sistemlerinde başta ABD olmak üzere diğer uluslararası rakiplerine karşı Çin şirketleri, küresel lider durumundadır. Keza mobil ödeme sistemleri, fintech, navigasyon ve akıllı şehirler alanlarında da önemli başarılar göstermektedirler.

### Dijital İpek Yolu'nun Sunduğu Kazanımlar

Dijital İpek Yolu, ilk olarak 2010'lu yıllardan itibaren Çin politikasının temel hedeflerinde yer alan teknoloji yoğun sektörler odaklı, inovasyona dayalı büyüme sayesinde ekonomik büyümenin devamına katkı

sunmaktadır. Ayrıca başta Huawei olmak üzere Çin şirketlerinin ve Çin mallarının eski algısının yerine daha güçlü bir imaj yaratarak ve telekomünikasyon gibi alanlarda varlık göstererek "Made in 2025" stratejisine katkı sunmaktadır. Öte yandan, KYG yatırımlarında olduğu gibi belirli standartlar üzerinden hayata geçirilen Dijital İpek Yolu yatırımları da "Çin Standartları 2035" stratejisine katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Dijital İpek Yolu'nda China Telecom, China Unicom gibi devlet destekli kuruluşlar ve Huawei, China Mobile gibi özel şirketler öne çıkmaktadır. Çin'in büyüyen dijital ekonomisi, Dijital İpek Yolu sayesinde Afrika başta olmak üzere, Güneydoğu Asya, Latin Amerika gibi ülkelerde

**PEACE; Asya, Afrika ve Avrupa kıtalarında dijital altyapı oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir. Ve yakın dönemde Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri ve Singapur da dâhil edilerek kapsamı genişletilmiştir.**





yeni ve geniş dijital pazarlara ulaşmaktadır. Böylece arz fazlası sorununu aşarken ekonomik kazanımlar elde etmektedir. 2022 verilerine göre, Çin'in dijital ekonomisi Gayrisafi Yurt İçi Hasılanın yaklaşık yarısını oluşturmaktadır.<sup>11</sup> Bu durumun Afrika'da Çin'in yumuşak gücünü arttıran bir unsur olduğunu belirtmek mümkündür.

Çin'in yeni dijital pazarlara ulaşması yalnızca Çin açısından bir kazanım değildir. Özellikle Afrika ülkelerinde görüldüğü gibi ev sahibi ülkelere de dijital olanakları sunarak küresel dijital eşitsizliği veya dijital uçurumu azaltmaktadır. Çin, Dijital İpek Yolu sayesinde başta 5G teknolojisi ve fiber optik kablo ağları olmak üzere dijital altyapılar inşa etmektedir.<sup>12</sup> Böylece Küresel Güney ülkelerinin dijital ekonomilerini geliştirmeye katkı sunmaktadır. Son Asya-Pasifik Ekonomik İş Birliği (APEC) zirvesinde Bangladeş Geçici Yönetim başkanı Yunus'un, zirvede Bangladeş'in dijital eşitsizliğini dile getirerek ülkeye yeni yatırımları teşvik etmeye çalışması bu duruma bir örnek olarak gösterilebilir.

Dijital İpek Yolu en çok Afrika ülkelerindeki yatırımları ile dikkat çekmektedir. Ancak burada önemli

bir detay 5G'nin öncü şirketi Huawei'in Afrika telekomünikasyon pazarına 1998'de girmiş olmasıdır. Bu bağlamda, Çin'in Afrika'daki dijital varlığı Dijital İpek Yolu'nun ilanından önceye dayanmaktadır. 2023 verilerine göre Huawei, Afrika'da 25 veri merkezi projesi yürütmektedir. 4G hizmetlerinin yaklaşık %70'ini sunan Huawei kıtada ilk kez 5G altyapısını oluşturmuştur.<sup>13</sup>

Afrika'da Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamında 13 ülkede gözetim sistemleri olarak da anılan akıllı şehir, güvenli şehir projeleri yürütülmektedir. Öte yandan 4G ve 5G hizmetleri, telekomünikasyon altyapıları, veri merkezleri yatırımları yapılırken OPay ve Palmpay gibi mobil para cüzdanları uygulamaları ve Boomplay ve Vskit gibi sosyal medya uygulamaları ciddi oranda kullanıcılar tarafından kullanılmaktadır. Transsion adlı şirket başta olmak üzere akıllı telefon pazar payının yaklaşık yarısı yine Çinli şirketler tarafından elde tutulmaktadır. Tüm bunlarda son yıllarda Afrika'da internet kullanıcılarının artması rol oynamıştır. Böylece dijital alanda dinamik ve yeni bir pazar ortaya çıkmıştır.<sup>14</sup> Çin'in en önemli dijital girişimlerinden birisi "Pakistan Doğu Afrika Ekspres Kablo" (Pakistan East Africa Cable Express, PEACE ) yatırımdır. PEACE; Asya, Afrika ve Avrupa kıtalarında

dijital altyapı oluşturmayı hedeflemektedir. Ve yakın dönemde Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri ve Singapur da dâhil edilerek kapsamı genişletilmiştir.<sup>15</sup>

Çin dış politikası açısından PEACE, “Çin Standartları 2035” stratejisi ile bağlantılı olarak özellikle Çin şirketlerinin öncü olduğu alanlarda belirli standartların uluslararası alanda yaygınlaşmasına öncü olmaktadır. Bu sayede Çin’in uluslararası normlara katkı sunarak normatif bir aktör olarak uluslararası sistemde statüsünü güçlendirmeye imkân tanımaktadır. Çin Komünist Partisi Merkez Komitesi ve Devlet Konseyi tarafından 2021 yılında “Ulusal Standardizasyon Geliştirme Ana Hattı” yayınlanmıştır. Böylece uluslararası standartları belirleme stratejisi açıklanmıştır. Ulusal Standardizasyon Geliştirme Ana Hattı; bilgi teknolojisi, yeşil yatırımlar ve hizmet sektörü gibi farklı alanlardan bahsetmekte, belirtilen amaçlar doğrultusunda uluslararası kuruluşlarda Çin’in daha fazla yer alması gerektiğini belirtmektedir. Bu kuruluşlardan biri olan 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) kuruluşunda; Huawei ve ZTE şirketlerinin çeşitli düzeydeki temsilcileri 3GPP’nin başkanı ve başkan yardımcısı olarak seçilmiştir. Ayrıca, Çin’in uluslararası standardizasyon oluşturma stratejisinde en başarılı aracın 5G yatırımları ile Huawei olduğu belirtilmektedir. Sebebi ise, şirketin en çok “standart-esaslı patent”e sahip şirket olmasıdır. Bu durum hiç kuşkusuz Çin’in inovasyon odaklı büyüme hedefinin bir sonucudur.<sup>16</sup>

### Dijital İpek Yolu’nun Riskleri

Çin tarafından başlatılan Dijital İpek Yolu, yeni bir jeopolitik ve jeo-ekonomik rekabet alanı oluşturmuş ve çeşitli sorunlara yol açmıştır. Öncelikle ABD-Çin ilişkilerinde Huawei, yarı iletkenler, çip krizi, fikri mülkiyet hakları başta olmak üzere ciddi gerginliklere ve çeşitli ticaret kısıtlamalarına neden olmuştur. Bu nedenle Dijital İpek Yolu’nun ABD-Çin rekabetinde yeni bir alan oluşturduğu söylenebilir. Ancak oluşturduğu rekabet yalnızca ABD-Çin ilişkileri ile sınırlı değildir. Dijital alanda varlık gösteren Birleşik Krallık, Fransa gibi ülkeler için de, Çin yatırımları güçlü bir rakiptir.

Öncelikle, Çin’in uluslararası standardizasyonda öncü rol oynamak istemesi liberal rejimler ile otoriter rejimler arasındaki rekabet olarak yorumlanmaktadır. Literatürde Çin’in başta gözetim teknolojileri olarak anılan akıllı şehir projeleri ile dijital otoriterliği teşvik ettiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu nedenle Çin’in dijital normlarda öncü rol oynaması, uluslararası dijital normların otoriterleşmesinde bir risk olarak görülmektedir. Ancak bu görüşe karşı olan akademisyenler, bu teknolojilerin nasıl kullanıldığında Çin yerine yerel siyasi iradenin karar

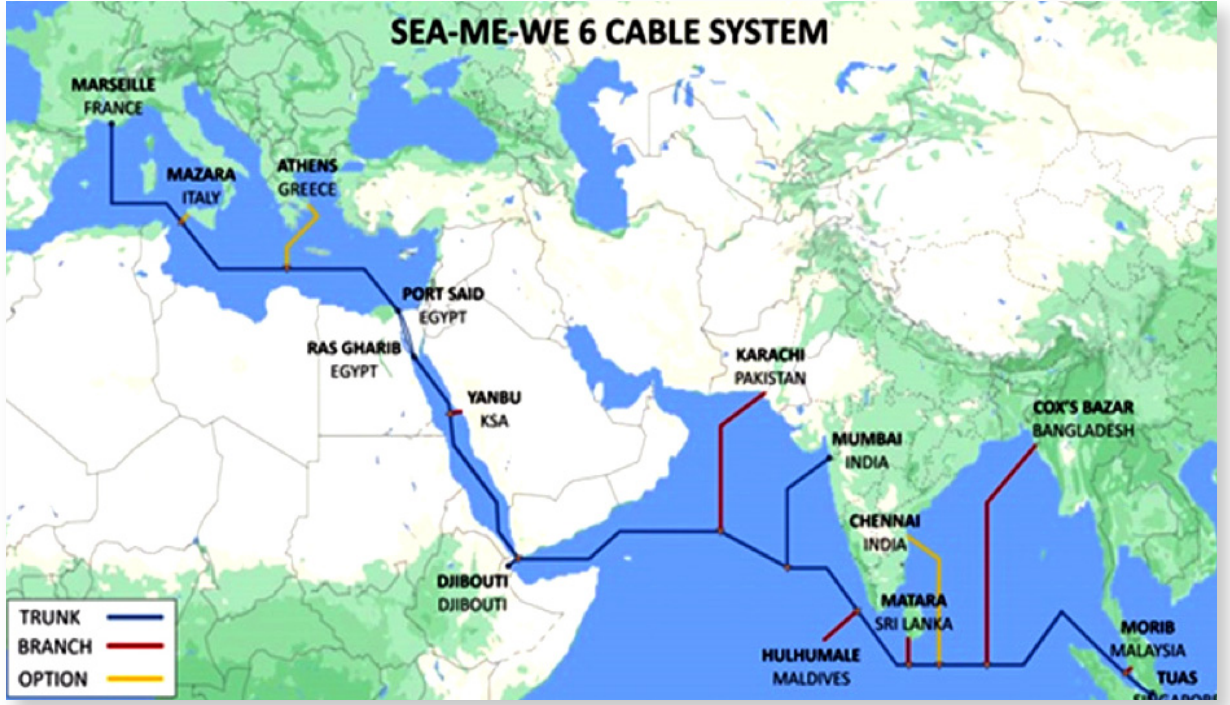
**Dijital İpek Yolu’nun ABD-Çin rekabetinde yeni bir alan oluşturduğu söylenebilir. Ancak oluşturduğu rekabet yalnızca ABD-Çin ilişkileri ile sınırlı değildir. Dijital alanda varlık gösteren Birleşik Krallık, Fransa gibi ülkeler için de, Çin yatırımları güçlü bir rakiptir.**

makamı olduğunu, sonuç olarak bu konuda Çin etkisinden ziyade ev sahibi ülkedeki rejim türünün rol oynadığını öne sürmektedirler.<sup>17</sup> ABD, Çin’in uluslararası normlardaki etkisini kırmak amacıyla 2020 yılında “Temiz Ağ” (Clean Network) girişimini ilan etmiştir. Çin ise Temiz Ağ girişiminin ilan edilmesinden bir ay gibi kısa bir süre sonra, “Küresel Veri Güvenliği Girişimi”ni ilan etmiştir.<sup>18</sup>

ABD eski Başkanı Biden döneminde 2023 G-20 Zirvesinde Çin’in KYG projelerine alternatif olarak “Küresel Altyapı Ortaklığı İnisiyatifi” ve bu kapsamda fiber optik kablo ağlarını da kapsayan “Güneydoğu Asya-Orta Doğu-Batı Avrupa 6” (South East Asia-Middle East-West Europe 6, SEA-ME-WE 6, ) projesi ilan edilmiştir. Proje, Singapur ve Fransa arasında fiber optik kablo bağlantısını öngörmektedir ve KYG kapsamındaki PEACE projesine bir alternatif olmaktadır. Cibuti ve Mısır her iki projede de yer almaktadır. Bu açıdan, fiber optik kablo ağlarının Çin-ABD rekabetinin yeni bir parçası olduğunu ifade etmek mümkündür.<sup>19</sup>

Ancak söz konusu rekabeti, Çin-ABD rekabetinin parçası olmak istemeyen ve stratejik özerklik politikasını takip eden Endonezya özelinde inceleyen bir çalışmada ABD ve Çin yatırımları hakkında bazı saptamalar sunulmuştur. Buna göre, 5G yatırımlarında Çin üstün taraftır ve ABD’ne henüz dijital yatırımlara ihtiyacı devam eden Endonezya’da bulut hizmetleri ve yapay zekâ gibi alanlarda yatırım yapması önerilmektedir. Bu bağlamda maliyet, patent, çeşitlilik, verimlilik gibi açılardan teknolojik üstünlüğü sağlayan tarafın Çin-ABD teknoloji rekabetinde üstünlük elde edeceği ve yatırımlarını bu alana yönelteceğini söylemek mümkündür.<sup>20</sup>

KYG’nin ilan edildiği 2013 yılında Girişim’in katılımcısı olan Türkiye, Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamında da Çin ile çeşitli anlaşmalarla iş birliği geliştirmiştir. Türkiye’nin Dijital İpek Yolu’nun ilan edildiği 2017 yılında “KYG Dijital Ekonomi Uluslararası İş Birliği Girişimi”ni imzalaması, KYG gibi Dijital İpek Yolu yatırımlarına da ilgi gösterdiğini yansıtmaktadır. Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamında Türkiye’de ağırlıklı olarak



telekomünikasyon alanında yatırımlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ayrıca akıllı şehirler yatırımları yapılmıştır. Dijital İpek Yolu'nda öne çıkan şirket olan Huawei, 5G yatırımı için Türk Telekom ile ortaklık kurmuştur.

Pakistan'daki KYG yatırımlarını inceleyen Small, Çin'in dijital alandaki projelerinin Pakistan'daki diğer altyapı projelerine oranla daha güçlü bir etki sunduğunu belirtmektedir. Pakistan'ın fiber ağı, Çin yatırımlarından önce Hindistanlı şirketlerin yer aldığı bir konsorsiyum tarafından geliştirilirken, veri güvenliği nedeniyle söz konusu konsorsiyumdan vazgeçildiği Pakistanlı yetkililerce belirtilmiştir. Bu durum, Pakistan için söz konusu riskleri gerçekte tamamen ortadan kaldırmamış olmakla beraber, dijital altyapı yatırımlarındaki rekabetin ve yeni aktörlerin, ev sahibi devletlere farklı seçenekler

sunarak stratejilerini çeşitlendirme imkânı verdiği görülmektedir.

## Sonuç

Dijital İpek Yolu tıpkı KYG gibi, Çin'in ekonomik ve güvenlik başta olmak üzere iç politika hedeflerine ve uluslararası norm yaratma gibi dış politika hedeflerine yanıt veren dijital yatırımlar bütünüdür. Dijital İpek Yolu kapsamındaki yatırımların bazıları zaman içinde katılımcı ülkeler ve şirketler bakımından genişlemiştir. Pekin yönetimi tarafından Dijital İpek Yolu'nun kapsamı ve tanımı net olarak belirtilmemiştir. Ancak başlıca alanları, 5G sistemleri, veri araştırma merkezleri, e-ticaret, e-yönetim, denizaltı ve karayolu fiber optik ağ teknolojisi, mobil ödeme sistemleri ve mobil para cüzdanları gibi fintech sistemleri, uydu teknolojisi, güvenlik bilgi sistemleri, akıllı şehir teknolojileri (smart city), Nesnelerin İnterneti (IoT), yapay zekâ, telekomünikasyon hizmetlerinden oluşmaktadır.

Dijital İpek Yolu'nun sunduğu en önemli fırsat Afrika ülkeleri başta olmak üzere Küresel Güney ülkelerindeki dijital eşitsizliklere ve dijital uçurumlara dijital altyapı yatırımları ile çözüm sunmasıdır. Aynı zamanda bu sayede başta Afrika'da olmak üzere Çin şirketleri dijital yatırımlar ile mobil uygulamalardan 5G teknolojisine kadar çeşitli sektörlerde dijital pazarın önemli bir kısmına sahip olmuşlardır. Dijital İpek Yolu'nun en önemli riski ise, ABD-

**Dijital İpek Yolu'nun sunduğu en önemli fırsat Afrika ülkeleri başta olmak üzere Küresel Güney ülkelerindeki dijital eşitsizliklere ve dijital uçurumlara dijital altyapı yatırımları ile çözüm sunmasıdır. Aynı zamanda bu sayede başta Afrika'da olmak üzere Çin şirketleri dijital yatırımlar ile mobil uygulamalardan 5G teknolojisine kadar çeşitli sektörlerde dijital pazarın önemli bir kısmına sahip olmuşlardır.**



Çin rekabeti başta olmak üzere küresel jeopolitik rekabetleri hızlandırma riski taşımaktadır. ABD ve Çin arasında yaşanan Huawei kaynaklı gerilimler, çip krizi, yarı iletken maddeler hakkındaki sorunlar, ABD'nin uygulamak istediği ticari kısıtlamalar bu durumun temel örnekleridir. Öte yandan Dijital İpek Yolu'na yönelik en temel eleştiri ise özellikle yatırımların yapıldığı otoriter veya yarı otoriter rejimlere sahip ülkelerde, gözetim teknolojileri olarak anılan akıllı ve güvenli şehirler gibi teknolojilerin ev sahibi ülkelerde otoriterliği güçlendirebileceği hususudur. Bu eleştirilere karşı, otoriterliğin artmasında sunulan teknolojilerden ziyade, yönetimdeki rejimin niteliğinin rol oynayacağı görüşü ileri sürülmektedir.<sup>21</sup>

Türkiye, KYG'de olduğu gibi Dijital İpek Yolu projesinin de ilk katılımcılarından biri olarak Çin ile telekomünikasyon ve 5G gibi alanlarda iş birlikleri geliştirmiştir. Öte yandan Pakistan, Endonezya örneklerini inceleyen çalışmalarda görüldüğü üzere, Çin'in küresel dijital yatırımlarda var olan aktörlere ilave yeni bir aktör olarak ortaya çıkması bölgesel güçlere veya Küresel Güney ülkelerine yeni alternatifler sunarak dış politikalarını çeşitlendirme fırsatı tanımaktadır. Aynı zamanda Çin ve ABD başta olmak üzere diğer dijital yatırımcı aktörlerin bu rekabet sayesinde daha verimli teknolojiler üretmeleri de mümkün hale gelebilecektir.

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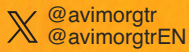
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