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BRENT OIL

68.64 \$/BL

GASOLINE

7.15 ₺/LT

USD/TRY

8.25

DIESEL

6.51 ₺/LT

EUR/TRY

10.04

FUEL OIL

5.67

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China's Influence On The Balkan Countries

Mihael Gubas 

News from Montenegro these days is attracting the public's attention throughout the Balkans and in Europe, both because of the potential debt "slavery" to China and because of environmental damage throughout and across protected natural areas. From construction in national parks, which does not seem to diminish, through the pollution of rivers in nature parks, and thus the strictly protected Tara River, on whose route the Chinese have been building a highway for so long that it is questionable whether they want to build it at all. Until the latest news about the discharge of industrial wastewater into the Zeta River, which was only recently protected (December 2019) precisely with the aim of preventing its further pollution, but also reports of environmental fears about the consequences of wells for gas and oil exploitation.

But let's go in order. Montenegro asked the European Commission for help in repaying its debt to China, which was used to build 44 kilometers of the promised 170 highways for an \$820 million loan. The European Commission then refused to repay Montenegro's debt to China, saying it can't be held responsible for debts to third countries, but is ready

to help with building the rest of the highway. The Chinese investment in the Balkans - they are usually reduced to the international connection of neighbors by highways, while the local countries need highways that connect the interior, as all estimates of the cost-effectiveness of highway construction in the Balkans even poorer citizens by traffic alone will not make the maintenance of these roads financially efficient.

China never had it as a goal to improve local infrastructure but to decrease the journey of its goods from China to Europe as much as humanly possible. In addition to excessive loans, which small countries generally cannot repay, China then also imposed its own labor force, cheap and obedient, on the countries to which it has lent. Despite great warnings from independent analysts, several Balkan countries have handed over a number of their infrastructure projects to China. But, it was done with the blessing of both the EU and local political elites. China has invested heavily in Juncker's former plan to recover the EU from the 2007-2009 crisis, and some countries have already suffered in the inability to repay the generous Chinese loans. Some of them are Greece (Piraeus), Sri Lanka, Ecuador, etc.... and now Montenegro.



The situation with natural resources, on which this country is economically dependent, also testifies to how badly Montenegro is managed, more than desperate strategic decisions. The best example is the concession for oil and gas exploitation, sold in 2016 to foreign investors for 30 years. On that occasion, no care was taken for the protection of the sea in the event of an oil or gas spill, which would set back Montenegrin tourism, on which the country is economically too dependent. However, they may not even have to worry about pollution in a short time, as the media writes that China could "take over most of the Montenegrin coast" if the country cannot repay its debts for the highway. Montenegro's environmental problems do not end there, as Chinese construction of the highway damages the Tara River and its canyon, which are heavily protected (UNESCO).

Even without Chinese help, Montenegro is doing a lot on its own to pollute the environment. BIRN has published a report on the pollution of the Zeta River with industrial waste. From the concrete plant, through the sewer to the slaughterhouse, the river, known for its emerald color in which it used to be possible to bathe, is today so polluted that the fish caught

in it and stink with a familiar waste smell. However, as is usually the case, polluters claim that all is in accordance with the law, inspectors in the field determine that polluters are telling the truth, and then environmentalists photograph improvised pipes that discharge waste into the river without any purifiers. Montenegro, it seems, does not lack laws that would disable or protect something. It is no wonder since they copy a lot of it from Croatian laws, which are often blindly translated from German ones. However, Montenegro, just like Croatia itself, lacks strict control and implementation of these laws. Otherwise, the situation will get worse, and it is to be expected that no one will budge until either great public pressure occurs or an ecological catastrophe that would leave Podgorica and the wider area with no drinking water.

The traditionally corrupt political elite is not currently in power, and it remains to be seen whether the recent political change at the state top will be enough to enforce the laws. However, judging by the practice in neighboring countries, we should not have high expectations.

The Green Question: Moral or Practical?

Onurcan Mısırlı 

Environmental concerns and green energy have always been issues regarded with built-in moral and humanitarian aspects. In Western media, which simultaneously shapes and gets shaped by mass social media movements, it is clearly common to regard 'going green' as a moral and humanitarian necessity. Some news outlets even pointed to oil firms for lobbying against climate change policies and labeled them as evil in the past. However, it is clear that the situation is two-sided and many groups that advocate going green also are involved in lobbying and funding operations, which transforms the question from being a moral one to a practical one.

In her famous United Nations speech, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg accused companies and governments of stealing the dreams and the childhood of a 16-year-old girl and leading humanity to mass extinction, following her famous words 'How dare you?' While she might have a point, humanity has also seen in the past how pointing to others for being 'inhumane' may lead to catastrophes, and the fact that the person who did the job of pointing was 16 years old added to the moral dimension of the question by giving her the upper hand. The trend continued: News

outlets continually pointed to oil firms that are being involved in lobbying activities, paying and being paid for their propaganda against green energy and climate change. One example of such news was of The Guardian, in which Chevron, BP, and ExxonMobil were said to be the biggest companies involved in "direct lobbying to push against a climate policy to tackle global warming, and have hindered governments globally in their efforts to implement policies."

Even though the extent to which oil companies are involved in lobbying is most probably true, this situation alone does nothing to establish a morally wrong stance as argued by environmentalists, for they too are clearly involved in lobbying even with energy companies. According to an S&P Global Market Intelligence review of lobbying records, at least 23 energy firms and key industry trade associations cited the Green New Deal or resolutions calling for its adoption in first-quarter federal lobbying reports. Five of the 50 largest U.S. power companies by market capitalization (such as Ameren Corp., Exelon Corp., FirstEnergy Corp., Pinnacle West Capital Corp., and Vistra Energy Corp.) are on that list, according to S&P data.



All of them combined, they make up millions of dollars worth of public relations and advertising industries, similar to the work of oil lobbyists.

It is clear that being involved in lobbying activities don't make good or evil itself, for we wouldn't be able to clarify who is good and who is bad simply by looking at the money a group spends or receives. It may also be not that wise to deem a group inhumane simply because it lobbies for the consumption of a resource, but one must rather examine the motives between the ideas. Environmentalists, most of the time rightfully, emphasize that climate change is a real threat that has the horrifying potential of disrupting the balance of our planet and leading to a catastrophic future. Carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions clearly have to be reduced even simply for the sake of a healthier public. However, the implementation of this reduction must be so carefully made that it should give no harm because it actually carries another horrifying potential of doing so. It is an established fact that energy consumption also leads to healthier societies while financing the energy transformation means allocating a vast amount of money that can be used elsewhere for the society's needs.

Bariş Sanlı, in his article titled 'New Green Imperialism,' examines the burden put on developing countries by the energy transition process. While developing countries don't have enough resources to finance this process, environmentalists continue their lobbying efforts for taxes, punishments, and outright bans for countries that fail to pursue energy transition. A transition under these conditions may do more good than harm to the ordinary citizens of relatively poor countries by putting an extra tax burden, and it should at least be properly calculated with every part's opinions. Thus it is not necessarily a question of morality, but rather of practicality.

One should be aware of our globe's problems and strive to find meaningful solutions. However, claiming one side of the argument to be humane and the other side evil does nothing to reach those solutions, and has the potential of damaging humanity altogether. While Greta Thunberg may be completely right about how the globe is at grave risk of extinction, it is not a great idea to deem Vladimir Putin completely wrong when he emphasizes the costs of energy transition and the possible burden on poor countries.

Germany Gets More Ambitious Climate Goals

Selin Kumbaracı 

On April 29, the German Constitutional Court published its decision demanding changes to Germany's climate law, ruling it partly unconstitutional due to the way in which it places too much of the burden to implement “painful reduction” with regard to emissions on future generations.

In the words of the Court, “the provisions of the Federal Climate Change Act (...) governing national climate targets and the annual emission amounts allowed until 2030 are incompatible with fundamental rights insofar as they lack sufficient specifications for further emission reductions from 2031 onwards.” However, the Court also pointed out that the other complaints brought forward, such as the one which argued that the government had breached its obligations to protect the complainants against the dangers of climate change, had been rejected.

The ruling has been welcomed by climate activists, such as Luisa Neubauer, who has celebrated how “the German constitutional court has decided that climate justice is a fundamental right.”

The ruling is based on how for Germany to meet the targets set out in the Paris Agreement with regards to keeping the increase in global average temperatures below 2°C—and ideally 1.5°C—the emission reductions that would still be needed after 2030 would have to be met with great urgency. As the Court has expressed, “These future obligations to reduce emissions have an impact on practically every type of freedom because virtually all aspects of human life still

involve the emission of greenhouse gases and are thus potentially threatened by drastic restrictions after 2030.”

In reaction to this ruling by the Court, Berlin looks as if it is ready to adopt some changes with its announcement of new targets. While the original version of the Federal Climate Change Act stipulated binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, specifically, a reduction of a minimum of 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, this has been raised to 65%.

Another change implemented in response to this ruling has been Germany's climate neutrality goals being moved forward from 2050 to 2045, in addition to even more specific goals being put into place, such as the goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 88% by 2040.

One matter that has not been touched upon appears to relate to sectoral details. The Act also puts forward reduction pathways, in terms of sectoral annual emission amounts, that apply during this period. It specifically set yearly “carbon budgets” for the agriculture, building, energy, industry, and transport sectors.

The Court had given the government until December 31, 2022, to provide in much more detail how the emissions reduction targets would be adjusted in the period following 2030, but it looks set to be passed by the Merkel cabinet much sooner. This timing is quite significant given how the original Act was crafted through intricate compromises by the ruling coalition—composed of the Christian Democratic



Union (CDU), the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU), and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Furthermore, this need for changes comes just a couple of months before the federal elections, due to take place in September.

Indeed, these elections look like they will be critical ones given the way in which the German Greens are making serious strides towards taking the chancellery, with some polls putting them ahead of the CDU/CSU bloc.

This ruling by the Constitutional Court also drew attention to splits within the ruling coalition as well. One example of this was an argument that two Ministers had on Twitter, where the Economy Minister Peter Altmaier (who hails from the CDU) expressed that the decision was a “great, historic ruling, of crucial importance for the rights of young people and the younger generation as a whole.”

However, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz (from the SPD) snapped at his coalition partner, saying, “As far as I can remember, it was you and the CDU/CSU who prevented us from doing what the constitutional court has now advised us to do.”

The overall case and the Constitutional Court’s ruling have been considered by some as showing how successful the Greens’ strategy of slowly consolidating their strength over the years has been, with the case having been brought by a coalition of environmental groups that the Greens endorsed. In many other countries, such a ruling by a constitutional court would be criticized as a direct attempt to legislate by

the highest judicial body in the country. However, in Germany, it is enthusiastically received by even the members of the government who were involved in the Climate Change Act’s creation.

The above-mentioned argument between Altmaier and Scholz showcases just how mainstream Green ideas have become: the argument is one involving Ministers of the governing coalition who themselves were involved in constructing the Climate Change Act actually welcoming the ruling of the Constitutional Court declaring the Act partly unconstitutional and even exchanging blame amongst themselves for not doing enough.

It should be noted that the German case is not the first of its kind but is instead one in a series of such rulings that have found governments to not be doing enough in fighting climate change. Indeed, one can also see examples from the Netherlands, where the Supreme Court imposed higher emission reduction targets, as well as from France, where a local Paris administrative court ruled that the French government had failed to take sufficient action in lowering greenhouse gas emissions and combatting climate change with regards to the promises it made in the Paris Agreement. If the German ruling, and the resulting decisions are taken by the ruling coalition, is any indication of what is to come, such rulings by courts on climate change may perhaps become more common in the future.

Natural Gas Depots In Turkey

Atahan Tümer 

Natural gas storages are of great importance for the country's economy. States make agreements on specific amounts of natural gas. In these agreements, it is often not possible to accurately estimate the natural gas demand. There are many reasons for this. Indeed, many reasons come to mind even when we think of our own home economy. Even the fact that the weather will be relatively hot or cold that year can have a significant impact on a macro scale. At this point, we see how difficult it is to determine the amount of natural gas to be imported accurately. As a matter of fact, states still make agreements by making their calculations. Most of the time, the amounts reached by making this calculation are pretty close to the actual figure, although they are not precisely the same. One should not ignore the great effort of the experts of the business.

Turkey meets the large amount of natural gas needed in the domestic market by importing. It is a known fact that Turkey is a foreign-dependent country in natural gas. Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan are the leading countries that meet Turkey's natural gas demand. On the other hand, Algeria stands out

as one of the leading import countries besides these three countries, although the amount is small. Of course, it is impossible for a country that imports such large quantities of natural gas to estimate its demand with 100% accuracy. This situation brings to mind the following question: What happens to unused, imported excess natural gas? The answer is obvious. It is a tremendous waste.

There are several methods to prevent this waste. The most important of these is to build natural gas tanks. As a matter of fact, Turkey is trying to find a solution to the waste because it is a big importer. In recent years, some projects have been started to prevent waste. The most important of these is the Tuz Gölü Natural Gas Depot. Natural gas to be stored in caves built-in salt layers will significantly benefit the Turkish economy. When the facility's construction is completed, it will be the biggest natural gas warehouse in the world. With the construction of this facility, Turkey will be able to stabilize the natural gas demand problem further. For example, the gases in this facility can be used in crises. This facility will also be activated in cases such as malfunctions.



In addition, as we mentioned above, there will be a margin of flexibility in the estimation of the unpredictable demand in the agreements. As is known, the annual natural gas demand in Turkey varies over the years. The fact that Turkey cannot meet the demand for energy produced in hydropower plants due to droughts that it has experienced from time to time also affects this. It should not be forgotten that this facility will increase Turkey's bargaining power in natural gas import agreements. When the facility's construction is completed in 2023, the targeted storage amount is 5.4 billion cubic meters.

There are other natural gas facilities in Turkey. Again, the existence of these facilities provides a great advantage to Turkey. These facilities attract many investments. For example, the North Marmara Natural Gas Storage Facility is already an exhausted natural gas reserve. With this feature, it is the first of its kind. It is argued that 495 million dollars will be invested in this facility. Thanks to this investment, the capacity of this facility will increase to 4.6 billion cubic meters.

Such assets will again help meet Turkey's energy needs and make an outstanding contribution to the economy.

Turkey will reach a storage capacity of 10-11 billion cubic meters, primarily in these two facilities. This is a vast and significant amount. These warehouses will prevent fluctuations and significantly increase Turkey's bargaining power in crises and agreements. Considering the natural gas reserve discoveries made in the past months, Turkey may experience significant relief in the energy economy, especially in natural gas imports. Stepping into new projects will also protect these gains and increase the ease the country has achieved in its economy. If the benefit to be gained from this economic relief is used properly, Turkey will be able to make new investments and save billions of dollars every year. This shows us how the investment made in natural gas storage pays for itself and its profitability.

The Protector of the Amazon Rainforests

Salih Efe Kahramaner 

Different scenarios widely debate the elimination of the world, undoubtedly, said that the possible ending of the world parallel in the destruction of the Amazon Rainforest called as "Lungs" of the whole world. Averagely speaking, Amazon rainforests receive a minimum of 1750-2000 mm rains annually. They have to distinguish biological diversity with exceptional plants, animals, and other lives assist in declining from air pollution by emitting existing carbon dioxide in the air and providing raw materials international sectors from pharmacy to the food supply. Amazon rainforests located in the Amazon Basin, including (Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, etc.) around 5,000,000 m² comprise 20% O₂, which is prominent for alive in the world. Besides this, Amazon rainforests carrying out utmost importance for impacting Global warming. The increasing amount of Green gas in the atmosphere derived from human activities is speeding up global warming. However, Being capacity to emit carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is balancing and determining global climate.

Unfortunately, although the short case effect of the Covid-19 on the Global Warming crisis, last decade was recorded as the hottest "Decade" around 1.25 celsius. In that situation, the protection of the Amazon rainforests represents an essential

turning point for combating Global Warming and stabilizing climate change. Nevertheless, unlike the preservation of those, the number of threads is increasing towards the elimination of the Amazon Rainforest progressively.

Amazon Basin is mostly preferred due to hosting a comprehensive range of biodiversity and obtaining compatible lands for international trade sectors. Notably, the amazon rainforest was devastated by construction and mining companies. To exploit rich underground resources, companies are establishing Energy powerhouses. Therefore, the ecological system cannot be functioning properly, and its adverse effect on climate inevitable. Besides the detrimental effect on the global climate, we do not underestimate that the damaging amazon forest also destroys local tribes living in Amazon for decades. The Waorani tribe, who lived in Ecuador's rainforests, were in danger of being dismissed from their home until the "Eco-friendly hero" Nemonte Nenquimo saved both her family and "the world."

Waorani tribe has existed in the Ecuador territories in Pastaza province; rain forests contain one of the most prosperous natural national parks in Yasuni in terms of biological diversity



and distinguish wildlife. Until the invading of the American people of Waorani lands in 1958, they were in a vacuum. Since that year, the Waorani people have been combating logging, mining activities, damming, and further challenges.

A short time ago, in 2019, the Ecuador government official put Waorani's rainforests around 40,000 m² up for sale for the drilling oil. However, the Ecuador Government's unauthorized and inadmissible decision towards Waorani's lands could not foresee profound reflection from the Waorani people led by Nemonte Nenquimo.

Nemonte becomes an activist and leader of the Waorani people to defend their rights and forests against government decisions. She passionately believed that Waorani's lands fulfill a prominent role in living Waorani people and prevent radical harms on climate like global warming, as mentioned above. For this matter, instantly, Nemonte initiated to launch of the campaign against Ecuadorean officials' judgments. Nemonte gained substantial attention from all over the world; around 400,000 individuals signed her campaign called "Our rainforest is not for sale." With the help of the worldwide supporters and Waorani people, Ms. Nemonte takes Ecuadorean decisions

on rainforests to law. She is responsible for prohibiting the utilization of oil and other energy resources and any possible risks in the long term.

Fortunately, The majority of the Ecuadorean officials decide in favor of the Waorani people. Concerning decision content taken by judges, any actions posing serious threats for local tribes and the ecological system cannot be practiced. Besides, the case guaranteed Waorani's land rights for any prudential decisions versus them. Undeniable, Ms. Nemonte's victory created reactions both domestically and cross-nationally. In 2020, Ms. Nemonte was rewarded by giving Goldman Environmental a prize due to her growth activism to preserve an average of 500,000 acres of land from oil drilling. Considering Ms. Nemonte's activism can be seen as a minor step on a local scale, but it's not. Frankly speaking, "Eco-friendly hero" Nemonte demonstrates to the world that "our" planet has to defend against detrimental interferences. People will no longer deal with global warming and climate change if people take responsibility for transferring the planet as preserved to future generations.



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