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Geopolitical Orientations of the Balkans in the Light of the Ukraine-Russia War

Chountagi BEKIR*

The ongoing war in Ukraine, as well as the international and internal consequences that will ensue in the international arena, has prompted us to consider and describe the geopolitical orientations of Southeast Europe, particularly the Balkans. Given the intricate nature of this conflict, it is crucial to thoroughly analyze the attitude of each Balkan country and its establishment and support or militarization of their political-economic relationships with Russia on one hand and NATO, the United States, and the European Union and their constituent states on the other. Such analysis is not only critical for the purpose of assessment, but it also enables us to anticipate future trends and tendencies. Moreover, it allows us to envisage an actual strategy or the desired characteristics of the actions of the international community, represented primarily by the United States, NATO, and the European Union. Utilizing documentary analysis as a rigorous methodology for compiling existing political and official statements and positions on the international relations of the Balkan institutions and countries under examination, we have identified and delineated the positions of these countries on the current crisis. Such a comprehensive approach provides us with a holistic understanding of the complexities at play and offers insights into the various perspectives within the region. By delving into the intricacies of the geopolitical landscape, we

* Haydar Aliyev Center for Eurasian Studies, Ibn Haldun University.

can discern the potential ramifications of these countries' affiliations and alignments with different global actors.

Research endeavors to shed light on the immense significance of the Balkans in the realm of international relations. As the international community grapples with the complexities of the ongoing Ukrainian conflict, understanding the geopolitical orientations of Southeast Europe becomes imperative. Through our meticulous analysis, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of how the Balkan countries navigate their relationships with both Russia and the Western powers. By elucidating the political and economic dynamics at play, research endeavors to facilitate informed decision-making for the international community, enabling them to formulate effective strategies and responses. Ultimately, study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse surrounding the regional dynamics in Southeast Europe and their implications for global politics. By unraveling the intricate web of diplomatic entanglements, aim to foster greater comprehension of the geopolitical orientations of the Balkans.

Regardless of various integration processes and the affirmation of Euro-Atlantic values in Southeast Europe, the countries of the Balkan Peninsula to a greater or lesser extent maintain multidirectional and balanced trade with the West as well as with the East, primarily with Russia. No one is willing to give up one of their political or military objectives by choosing a side in favor of the either/or principle. This results in the fact that the countries of the Balkans practically represent a paradigm of a high level of Euro-Atlantic security. In light of the Ukraine-Russia war, the purpose of this paper is to reconsider geopolitical orientations in the Balkans by detecting political, economic, military, and energy ties between the countries in the region on one hand and Russia and the active international community on the other.

Keywords: Balkans, Ukraine-Russia War, NATO, EU