



China

Rakhym Annabayev

1 Afghanistan

USA's unilateral pullout of troops mid August, 2021, shocked the world. While the superpower's allies scrambled to follow the actions of the leader, China's retorts on the subject got more and more scathing as the pull-out deadline (August 31st) approached. "The disaster in Afghanistan was caused by the U.S. and its allies," said the state-run Global Times, whose editor tweeted a photo of calm scenes around the Chinese embassy in Kabul while the U.S. legation was overrun. "Death, bloodshed and a tremendous humanitarian tragedy are what the United States has truly left behind in Afghanistan," said state news wire Xinhua.

The US' blunder that led to the fall of the Afghan Governemnt in slightly over 2 weeks is the biggest in modern history. China, as a powerhouse in the region, aims to utilize this error in US foreign policy to boost its own influence in Central Asia. Ever the pragmatist, Beijing has always maintained links with the Taliban regardless of who was in power in Kabul. In 2000, before 9/11 stunned the world, China's ambassador to Pakistan met with then Taliban chief, Mullah Omar, in one of the hardliner's only meetings with foreign diplomats. In 2015, China hosted negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan officials in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi, with a Taliban delegation visiting Beijing four years later. Beginning of September, when a Taliban takeover was looking increasingly obvious, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi received a nine-strong Taliban delegation in China's northeastern port city of Tianjin, including group number two Abdul Ghani Baradar. There, Wang called the insurgents "a pivotal military and political force."

China's goal in the upcoming Security Council sessions is to increase its influence in the region, offering the Taliban government the entrance into its Belt and Road initiative. This move is seen as a win-win for an economically starved Taliban leadership, who need money and legitimization more than anything, under the watchful eye of the sole world superpower and its allies. China will try to use its influence over the 3 African members of the Security Council, as well as tap in to its contacts with the Russian Federation to pull off a political victory over its economic rival - the USA. It is important to note, that China could use its growing influence in Central Asia as leverage in the upcoming Taiwan discussion between the 2 countries. China will be playing a very pivotal role in these coming sessions, where its possible rise as the second world superpower could be decided!

2 Turkey - Greece relations:

China is a world superpower in most sense of the word! The only lackluster factor is its military capabilities, which it has been slowly growing with the help of its Russian allies. Following the US-Australian (AUKUS) nuclear submarine deal, China finds itself under more pressure now than ever before to innovate and grow its military capability. After the disastrously embarrassing skirmishes at the Sino-Indian border, China's military has lost a great deal of their reputation in the world stage. The Turkish- Greek offers China its much needed opportunity to weaken NATO and alleviate the ever-rising pressure in what it considers its national territorial waters!



Fig. 1: Chinese Flag

Following NATO's numerous internal problems over the last few years - USA demanding more military spending, abandoning its allies in Afghanistan, stabbing France in the back with the AUKUS deal, the Turkey- Greek conflict supersedes the rest and seems to be the likeliest reason for the potential desbandment of NATO. Although most political experts believe that the border skirmishes will never boil over into actual military mobilization, it nonetheless weakens NATO's foreign policy allowing China to make use of it for its own interests. China should use this moment of NATO weakness to further divide the allies, as well as increasing its own influence during the turmoil!