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EDITOR'S NOTE

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN

Historically speaking, technology has been one of the main determinants in international politics due to its impact on economic development and warfare. However, lately, its preponderancy is becoming more inclusive considering that technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) Internet of Things (IoT), big data, blockchain, 3D printing, etc. are evolving faster than ever. From the Ukraine-Russia war and the energy crisis to the global economic and social crisis to the deepening great powers rivalry, all point to the importance of emerging technologies. Specifically, technology has become a key asset in the framework of international relations, and the so-called technopolitics –the entanglement of technology with politics– is impacting global affairs at the international and national levels.

Primarily, emerging technologies have a transformative impact on the actors of the international order. While the existing Western-led international system had at its core the Westphalian principles, with states as the main actors, it is expected that in the close future this will be challenged by the tech giants who are now driving the technological revolution. Considering the state's dependency on tech giants for the development of emerging technologies and the impact of these technologies on economic development and national security, it is understandable that the power of tech giants will increase. So, when faced with an international crisis, states and international/regional institutions will not be the only actors sitting at the table.

Furthermore, the structure and hierarchy of the international system will be shaped by the evolution of technology. Seen both from the economic and military perspectives, the early adoption of these emerging technologies will provide a strategic advantage for the early users, which undoubtedly is directly reflected in the power of states and their position within the existing order. While some states become more successful than others in the production, development, and adoption of these technologies, the hierarchy between states will change as well, leading to a new global order.

The ongoing great power competition –especially between the U.S. and China– can be understood within this framework as it would not be wrong to assert that technological competition is the main ground of rivalry. Both states consider technological development as the main asset to achieve their national goal, for the U.S. it is to maintain its leadership in the existing system; while China aims to leapfrog the U.S. and become a superpower.

As technology shapes and changes the relations among states, so will other aspects of politics be affected, such as diplomacy and warfare. While the creation and advancement of the Metaverse are considered to revolutionize diplomacy, the application of artificial intelligence in the military is indeed revolutionizing warfare.

As mentioned previously the proper and quick adoption of these emerging technologies in the political agenda is directly related to the reflection of a state's power in the international system. In this context, lagging in this technological revolution would be detrimental to a state. Türkiye is one of the few states that is not only aware of the benefits of the early adoption of the new technologies but has also taken important steps in this regard.

Becoming official in 2019, Türkiye has announced its policies called "National Technology Initiative" and "Digital Türkiye." Both policies are impacting every sector of life in Türkiye –i.e., industry, health, education, defense, etc.– and aim to transform the state's technological future by using its local capacities to produce high-tech products. As a result, Türkiye will gain more economic and technological independence which will place Türkiye among the most technologically developed states in the future. To illustrate this point, Türkiye's defense industry has been revolutionized within the concept of the National Technology Initiative. Henceforth, today Türkiye has become one of the leading global actors in terms of the production and use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

The impact of the emerging technologies in every aspect of human life is unequivocal, however, this special issue of *Insight Turkey* will focus mainly on how technopolitics is shaping the states' policies, with a special focus on Tür-

kiye. Within this context, this issue includes 8 research papers and 5 commentaries, all of which offer a novel perspective on the subjects they address.

Our commentary section features two on-topic and three off-topic pieces. In his inquisitive commentary, Richard A. Bitzinger seeks to illustrate how the technologies incorporated into the upcoming 4th industrial revolution, and AI in particular, promise to represent a radical paradigm shift in the form and conduct of combat in the future. Bitzinger's analysis makes it clear that these technologies will probably also have a significant influence on international rivalries between large powers, aspirational regional actors, or governments who view technology as a vital force multiplier. This analysis, we believe, will shed light on how new and emerging critical technologies are challenging the traditional warfighting paradigm, as well as how militaries can access and leverage these innovations.

In our second on-topic commentary Bruno Maçães challenges readers to consider climate change and its impact on global politics bravely and originally. According to Maçães, we cannot refer to climate change as a byproduct of the Anthropocene, the world that humans have created. Because of our limited potential to influence natural processes and consequent inability to control the unintended effects of our activities and decisions, climate change is still fundamentally a natural phenomenon that humans have only just begun to cause. Intriguingly, Maçães contends that joining the Anthropocene for the first time, as opposed to leaving it, is the solution to the climate problem.

Our research articles cover a wide range of topics that are all important to the relationship between technological advancements and global politics. In the first paper of the line, Erman Akıllı launches a stimulating conversation about the future success of the Metaverse, which depends, according to the author, on the creation of universes that are founded on global organizations or regional integrations rather than monopolization. Instead of offering quick fixes, Akıllı poses some tough questions. For instance, he raises our attention to unanswered questions regarding state sovereignty in general and the issue of how a state can exercise its sovereign authority in the Metaverse. The author also emphasizes the vast prospects that the metaverse offers for nations to engage in cultural diplomacy.

In line with this, the author describes efforts to build the Turkoverse, a metaverse based on the Turkic world, which would allow for unrestricted movement of people and goods inside the Turkic World while eliminating the physical gap between member states' capitals. In the upcoming article, Javadbay Khalilzade describes how UAVs, or combat drones have proliferated and how this has changed and shaped modern warfare. The article looks at Türkiye as a manufacturer and active user of UAVs in wars in Africa and the Middle

East. The case study in the article also looks at Azerbaijan, a third-tier small state that depends on drone exports but is ambitious enough to use drones to make its presence felt in the region and liberate its lands. The article makes the case that drones give militaries a tactical edge, improve combat precision, and broaden the arsenals available for fighting insurgencies; yet drone proliferation also makes states more prone to conflict and compromises regional peace and security.

In the following research article, Nezir Akyeşilmen investigates the documents, policies, strategies, measures, and organizational structures of Türkiye's national cybersecurity strategy. Is Türkiye's cybersecurity strategy properly designed to deal with the new security environment in the hyper-anarchic world of cyberspace? Following a thorough examination of Türkiye's cybersecurity strengths and weaknesses, Akyeşilmen responds prudently to this question: Türkiye's technical performance is relatively weaker than its legal performance, necessitating the development and implementation of a centralized cybersecurity strategy by a large and powerful institution.

Following Akyeşilmen's insightful criticism, Ali Burak Darıcılı evaluates the Turkish National Intelligence Organization's (*Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MİT) increasing operational capacity in the context of high-technology products. Darıcılı concludes that MİT's domestic technology capabilities have made a significant contribution to Türkiye's counter-terrorism activities, achievement of regional foreign policy goals, deployment of hard power in the field when necessary, and efforts to become a proactive actor in the region.

Then, Cenay Babaoğlu questions how the pandemic process has affected the increasing digitalization of public administrations with the rising use of technology in administrative functions as our focus shifts from security to public administration. The author recalls that, with support from both supply and demand, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a driving force in government digitalization. As the author explains, following this trend, and particularly with the transition to the Presidential Government System in 2018, the Presidency Digital Transformation Office, which was established as the coordinator of digital transformation, played an important role in Türkiye during the pandemic.

In what follows, Narmina Mamishova examines Türkiye's vaccine diplomacy and its role in the country's efforts to maintain and expand its stakes in the global power configuration. Highlighting how, since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, public health has emerged as a key issue of discourse among states, the authors show how Türkiye has managed to consolidate its strength in the international arena through both skillful balancing in terms of vaccine deals and well-packaged humanitarian efforts. The author argues that Türkiye

has been successful in achieving this through persevering in the pursuit of a proactive, comprehensive policy, in which the sole standard for a move's legitimacy would be its alignment with the nation's national interests.

As we shine a spotlight on the economy in the post-COVID-19 era, Bilal Bagis focuses on the ways a new instrument, central bank digital currency, is projected to improve contemporary payment systems, strengthen the effectiveness of the monetary policy, and assure financial stability in the new period. Following the 2008 Crisis and the 2020 Pandemic, as well as innovations such as the all-new cryptocurrencies and stable coins, many central banks have expressed an interest in introducing their own digital money, according to the paper. Anticipating that physical currencies will inevitably be digitalized, one way or the other, the author poses a valid question: "why not embrace the trend and the new technology, regulate and then make sure digital currencies satisfy all the functions of a regular conventional physical currency?"

In a similar spirit, in our final research paper, Mehmet Rıda Tür makes the prediction that AI will soon overtake humans as the primary decision-makers in the energy sector. For the author, making the energy system more flexible and establishing a smart supply system with domestic and renewable energy resources at its core is necessary to prevent any bottlenecks in satisfying the energy demand of all countries including Türkiye.

From our off-topic pieces, Mahmut Özer, the Minister of National Education of Türkiye, elaborates on the process of universalization from elementary to higher education in Türkiye, describing how it gave priority to areas with comparatively lower rates of schooling by making large investments and carrying out large initiatives. Özer explains how, because of recent changes the nation has undergone in the education sector, Türkiye's educational system has been able to overcome the difficulties it had inherited from the past and has strengthened its capacity to become even more effective and equitable for all pupils.

In the following off-topic commentary, Nurşin Ateşoğlu Güney focused on the most recent achievement of Türkiye in bringing the warring sides of Ukraine and Russia to an agreement on the transfer of grain from Ukraine's ports. Güney contends that this is a result of Ankara's long-standing sensible approach of maintaining communication with both capitals despite hostilities to maintain access to both. She concludes that the prospect of growing food scarcity conditions and subsequently the projected worldwide crisis appears to have been avoided for the time being thanks to Türkiye's effective mediating performance, which will also be conducive to alleviating the negative conditions caused by the likelihood of food shortages in locations like Egypt, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

The political and strategic repercussions of Russia's war against Ukraine are examined by Sabrina P. Ramet and Aleksander Zdravkovski in the final commentary. The authors claim that because of the war in Ukraine, Serbia may now see an opportunity to conclude some unfinished business. Serbia has recently been buying weapons from China and Russia for this purpose, and it has also tried to buy 12 fighter jets from France. The recent armaments buildup by Serbia is unlikely to be for defensive purposes, as the writers draw our attention to the fact that none of Serbia's neighbors or any other states for that matter pose a threat to Serbia.

All things considered, we endeavored to explore as many facets as possible of the interplay between new technology advancements and Turkish technopolitics in the Summer 2022 issue of *Insight Turkey*. We hope and believe that the insightful and stimulating debates raised on the issue will be helpful to our readers.