

Another “5+1” Summit

(Translated)

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Recently, “5+1” format summits—reflecting cooperation with Central Asian states—have become increasingly widespread. This trend is driven by significant global events, geopolitical shifts, bloody conflicts, economic wars, sanctions, and the closure of vital trade routes—all factors that heighten the strategic importance of Central Asia. In other words, the region has gained prominence as both a market for goods exports and a source of resources, particularly rare minerals. Consequently, “5+1” summits have been elevated to the level of heads of state. Such summits pave the way for simultaneous cooperation with all countries in the region, rather than engaging with each state individually.

Against this backdrop, South Korea has also elevated its cooperation with Central Asian states to a new level. On September 16, a summit was held in Seoul bringing together the President of South Korea and the leaders of the five Central Asian nations: Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. This event added a new link to the chain of “5+1” summits and concluded with a series of bilateral meetings spanning three days. During the proceedings, more than 70 agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed across sectors such as energy, mining, infrastructure, technology, and investment.

Fundamentally, this cooperation is not a new development. The Korea-Central Asia Cooperation Forum was established in 2007; initially held at the level of deputy foreign ministers, it was later elevated to the ministerial level. However, a summit meeting at the level of heads of state has never taken place.

Several factors drive South Korea to elevate cooperation to this level. Foremost among them are resources; as the country possesses limited domestic resources, it relies on imports. Global geopolitical shifts and conflicts impact the supply chains for these resources, creating various risks and threats. Consequently, this resource-poor nation seeks to diversify its sources of oil, uranium, and other strategically important minerals.

Another area of concern is China’s stance in this sector. China’s advantage extends beyond mere mineral extraction to include the processing of rare minerals and the manufacturing of high-tech products derived from them. Currently, China holds approximately 38–44% of the world’s discovered rare mineral reserves—amounting to nearly 44 million tons—and accounts for about 60–70% of annual global production. Its position is even stronger in the realm of raw material processing and refining, where it controls up to 90% of the global market for rare mineral processing.

This situation renders other nations, including South Korea, dependent on Chinese technology—leverage that China can utilize to exert influence in ways that serve its own interests.

A real-world example of this can be observed: for instance, Japan—a rival to China—faced a similar situation; in 2026, China imposed restrictions on it regarding

rare earth minerals. Japan's stance on the Taiwan issue, particularly its efforts to bolster its defense sector, was among the factors that prompted China to impose these restrictions.

Consequently, Seoul has begun prioritizing the search for alternative sources to avoid succumbing to Chinese pressure regarding rare earth minerals—especially given the ongoing economic war between China and the United States. The risks are further heightened by South Korea's stance within the U.S. sphere of influence.

Furthermore, Russia's influence in Central Asia has been waning since the onset of the war in Ukraine, as the country currently directs the bulk of its attention, resources, and time toward the conflict. The war and associated sanctions have weakened its economy, leading to a contraction of its influence in the region.

In response, Western nations and their allies are working to prevent China—or any other state—from monopolizing the emerging power vacuum, while also seeking to further curtail Russian influence. Summits held in the “5+1” format are part of the strategy to achieve these objectives.

Therefore, it is inaccurate to view summits of this nature solely through an economic lens; they are driven by geopolitical objectives that ultimately link back to the West.

Given the weakening of Russia—historically the dominant power in the region—Central Asian states are keen to leverage such summits to pursue a multi-directional foreign policy. They hope to secure technology and investments, as well as implement infrastructure projects, in exchange for their resources. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, in particular, are working to move away from sole reliance on Russia or China and are fostering cooperation with other nations as well. Consequently, Central Asian states show great interest in all the “5+1” summits.

However, under the prevailing capitalist order, it is impossible to pursue a truly independent, self-reliant policy. Escaping the grip of one colonialist often leads only to falling into the clutches of another. In other words, you open your market to the products of the power exerting influence over you, effectively handing over your mineral wealth with your own hands.

Colonialists exploit these summits to expand their influence, sometimes imposing it directly through warfare. Thus, wars and conflicts erupt across the globe driven by the greedy policies of colonizers, with ordinary people paying the price.

Therefore, achieving true liberation and development requires the unification of Muslim lands. If individual states remain disunited—clinging to narrow nationalism and prioritizing only their own interests—they will remain prey to colonizers. Nationalism is, in fact, one of the worst paths to unification; indeed, it is an idea that actively hinders it. True, complete unity can only be realized based on a sound, comprehensive ideology: the great ideology of Islam.