



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 17, 2023

Turkey Likely to Choose China to Build Major Nuclear Plant

Beijing and Moscow are further cementing their ties with an important regional power, Turkey, by means of a string of significant energy deals.

According to Turkish Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar, Turkey is currently in talks with China to hammer out a deal for the construction of a new nuclear power plant, which would be the third nuclear plant in the country.

As [Breitbart News](#) reported, Bayraktar said Friday that the talks with Beijing could be completed “in a few months’ time.” Ankara sees nuclear power as key to cutting down on the \$80 billion the country spends each year on imported energy.

Thus far, Turkey’s nuclear plants are not operational. The first one was made by the Russian state firm Rosatom for \$20 billion. It is situated at Akkuyu on the Mediterranean coast and is expected to begin operations in 2025.

The construction of the Akkuyu plant was seen as such a major achievement that Russian President Vladimir Putin flew in to personally attend the inauguration ceremony in April, at which he described the plant as “the largest nuclear construction project in the world.”

“This is a flagship project. It brings both mutual economic benefits and, of course, helps to strengthen the multi-faceted partnership between our two states,” the Russian president added.

The second plant in Turkey is to be built in the Black Sea province of Sinop and is expected to have similar generating capacity — and a similar price — to Akkuyu. Rosatom wants the project, but there are other bidders competing, including South Korea’s Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO).

The third plant, however, is likely to be built by China. Bayraktar said Thursday that Ankara has “been in talks with a Chinese company for a very long time, so we will be able to fill the gaps and strike a deal soon with China for the nuclear power program.” He added that “Turkey’s priority in this regard is more technology transfer and localization.”

Moreover, Bayraktar said, a delegation from China has visited a potential site in Kirklareli, near the Greek and Bulgarian borders.

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, a nonprofit founded by Albert Einstein and Manhattan Project scientists to address issues related to science and global security, [warned](#) back in February that Russia could attain inordinate influence over Turkish politics by helping the country obtain nuclear power.

The publication wrote:



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While the build-own-operate approach has helped Turkey overcome some challenges—by halting a decades-long series of failed attempts and offering some guarantee that its nuclear energy program serves peaceful purposes—it has also created new ones. In defining its strategy, Turkey used energy security as a justification for its nuclear power program, which, it claimed, would help decrease its dependence on natural gas imports from Russia and Iran. But the model used to develop the Akkuyu nuclear power plant makes Turkey heavily dependent on Russian technology. With Moscow having a record of using its energy assets for coercion, the future of the nuclear cooperation between Turkey and Russia may be the real issue.

From an energy security perspective, the nuclear deal does not solve Turkey's dependence on Russia's natural gas, but rather adds a second dependence on nuclear technology. Turkey will now no longer depend on Gazprom but also on Rosatom—two Russian state-controlled companies—for nearly every step of its nuclear power program—from the construction and operation of the plant to the management of the entire nuclear fuel cycle.

The same can be said of Turkey's relationship with China, which will become closer should the two countries proceed in working together on the third plant.

In fact, China has a long record of using projects of various sorts as a way of gaining influence over other countries — typically poor ones that are only too happy to receive money and infrastructure.

One of the ways Beijing accomplishes this objective is by means of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), under which China funds infrastructure projects in other countries on credit, getting the recipient nations indebted to it.

China has already spent over \$1 trillion to build infrastructure around the world as part of BRI, which Chinese President Xi Jinping launched with the aim of it being something of a modern Silk Road, allowing Beijing to become the center of world commerce and thereby supplant the United States.

As [The New American](#) previously reported, a number of projects financed by BRI are beset with flaws such as bad cabling, defective fire extinguishing systems, cracked walls, moldy ceilings, and overall sloppy construction. Projects that are reportedly in bad shape include the \$2.7 billion Coca Codo Sinclair hydroelectric plant in Ecuador, the Chinese-built Isimba Hydro Power Plant in Uganda, social housing projects in Angola, and various others.

The saying goes that “there's no such thing as a free lunch.” China may be presenting itself as the global savior of those disgruntled by U.S. hegemony, but its ulterior aim in extending a helping hand is anything but altruistic. It's all about world power.



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