

Downed jet splits anti-terror alliance

By Cui Heng

Turkey shooting down a Russian warplane on a mission near Turkish-Syrian border has further roiled the most turbulent region in the world. The downing of the fighter jet, with the pilots killed in the air by fire from Syrian rebels, has suddenly and completely exploded the long-simmering tensions between Turkey and Russia over how to fight Islamic State (IS). Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned the shooting as a "stab in the back," while Ankara said two Russian planes trespassed on Turkey's airspace and ignored repeated warnings, so one of them was fired at. The incident will surely pose a pressing challenge to international cooperation on anti-terrorism.

Two months ago when Erdogan visited Russia, the two leaders announced the goal of \$100 billion in bilateral trade by 2023. In 2014, trade between the two exceeded \$31 billion. During Erdogan's visit, Moscow and Ankara were moving toward a free trade agreement, which was particularly important to Russia as it is still under Western sanctions.

However, Turkey's ambiguous attitude towards IS doesn't please Russia. Putin's reference to Turkey as "accomplices of terrorists," to some extent, is not an exaggeration. In order to realize its dream of becoming a leader in the Islamic world, it has close connections with Al Qaeda, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and other international terrorist groups, even including the Islamic State. Russia has offered

evidence to prove Turkey purchased crude oil produced by IS-controlled oil fields that fund the terrorist organization.

The Russian elite is infuriated by Turkey's military actions, Moscow, generally speaking, has exercised restraint on countermeasures, besides oral warnings and condemnations, military cooperation with Turkey have been ended, and the bilateral economic collaboration will likely be called off. When Russia's sense of itself as a major power, which it has cultivated for years, is infringed, its leaders' outrage is triggered as it is a public desire to strike back.

Given that Turkey is a NATO member, Moscow has to take the entire military organization, especially the US, under careful consideration. Turkey is protected by collective defense.

Although Washington also has complaints over Turkey's ties with IS and Al Qaeda, it is not hesitate to stand by Turkey, along with other Western major powers, when Ankara faces an angry Russia. The gesture is essential for Washington to move forward its EU strategy and maintain the solidarity of NATO.

Whether Russia and Turkey choose to de-escalate the current tensions or pursue further antagonism, international cooperation against the IS is getting more difficult. Taking advantage of Russia's visa exemptions for Turkish passport holders, Chechen militants and the IS, through Turkey, are posing threats to Russia's national security. If the international anti-terrorism alliance can be established, as many hope, Russia had expected Turkey to

impose heavier restrictions on terrorists.

Turkey's ties with Russia are likely to severely fray after the shooting down of a Russian plane.

Although policymakers from Russia and Turkey know they need each other in counterterrorism, they have to consider nationalist sentiments over the incident. Russia may probably be forced to pick Syria, Libya and Iraq as its allies, while Turkey has to rely on the US and other Western powers. In this case, under the shadow of Russian-Western rivalry, two separate international anti-terrorism alliances are taking shape.

The author is a PhD candidate at the Center for Russian Studies, East China Normal University. opinion@globaltimes.com.cn

Emerging green consensus puts China on path to a cleaner future

By John Russell

World leaders will meet in Paris at the end of this month for UN climate change talks. Anticipation is building to see if they can reach a meaningful commitment to tackle global warming.

China's position has shifted considerably since the last UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in 2009. Previously, China considered climate change an issue to be addressed primarily by mature developed economies. Over recent years, rising environmental concerns and the quest for economic transformation to a sustainable growth model have

citizens are more aware than ever of the health risks of pollution.

Parallel to this environmental awakening, the government has recognized that China's current economic model is obsolescent. It requires a shift of bias from heavy manufacturing and exports toward services and consumption.

As a result, in the past three years, a political "green consensus" has been forged between government, business and emerging domestic civil society on the path China must take to ensure sustainable growth. This

consensus was underscored again at the fifth plenum of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee in October, when party leaders reaffirmed com-

restructuring will increase if action is unduly delayed.

In the medium- to long-term, the expansion of services, consumption and high-end manufacturing will more than offset the temporary dislocations of a move to a low-carbon economic model. There are already signs of a decoupling between growth and carbon emissions in China, with total carbon emissions declining by 2 percent in 2014. Meanwhile, the clean tech sector is rapidly becoming a driver for the national economy, creating 30 million jobs as of 2015. This figure is expected to double by 2030.

There are three main components of China's efforts to address air quality and climate change: energy, basic materials industries, and environmental protection policies. Controlling energy-related emissions is vital. Fossil fuels, particularly coal, are responsible for a large proportion of carbon and particulate matter emissions. China's energy intensity per unit of GDP is almost twice the global average.

Thankfully, efficiency improvements and structural trends mean that growth is becoming progressively less energy intensive. China will continue to shift to a cleaner energy mix and encourage investment in renewable energy, including nuclear, solar, hydroelectric and wind power.

Basic material industries such as steel and cement are another major source of emissions. The central government has vowed to redress chronic overcapacity in these sectors through a combination of measures mandating technological upgrades and investments, improving environmental standards and forcing outright closures.

The final key to success is effective implementation of environmental policies to change behavior at the grassroots level. Previously, the government relied

on top-down targets and command-and-control regulations that often resulted in ineffective enforcement at local levels. Giving more weight to environmental outcomes in officials' evaluations will incentivize implementation at all levels of government. Changes are also proposed to the reporting lines for local environmental protection bureaus that should make them less beholden to local interests and encourage them to take a more active role in safeguarding the environment.

In the 13th Five-Year Plan, China will also expand the use of market-based instruments to reduce pollution. China will introduce a national carbon market in 2017 and is currently drafting an environmental tax. The government will continue to strengthen this environmental protection toolkit as the years progress.

The 13th Five-Year Plan offers a chance to open a new chapter in China's development. By successfully transitioning to a low-carbon growth path, China can continue to deliver rising incomes for its people while ensuring a clean, safe environment for generations to come. In doing so, the country can also catalyze international action on climate change. The first step will be working with international partners to reach a clear and ambitious agreement at the upcoming Paris talks.

In keeping with domestic developments and economic transformation, China should have the capacity to gradually ratchet up its climate change commitments in the coming decades.

The author is managing director of North Head, a Beijing-based public affairs and strategic communications consultancy. opinion@globaltimes.com.cn



Illustration: Liu Rui/GT

mitments to shift to a cleaner energy mix, move away from heavy-polluting basic material industries and strengthen environmental protection.

Early adoption of low-carbon policies coupled with transition arrangements will enable China to improve local air quality, accelerate economic restructuring and spur Chinese firms to boost innovation and become global leaders in low-carbon industries. With GDP growth of 6 to 7 percent and ample fiscal resources, there is a window of opportunity for economic transformation in the coming decade. The costs of

coalesced as drivers of a dramatic shift in China's position on climate change. China is now well-positioned to play a leading role in international climate change efforts in Paris and beyond.

Recent public concern over smog that enveloped northeast China highlights how air pollution has become a "hot button" issue. With smartphone apps providing real-time PM2.5 data and constant discussion of China's environmental problems on social media,