

# THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES DURING TRANSFORMATION AND MODERNIZATION: STRATEGIES AND TRENDS

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## ABSTRACT

**T**his article examines the general trends in the modernization strategy of Turkey's defense sector after the end of the Cold War, which, in addition to everything else, envisages the need for extensive renewal of the army. It pays particular attention to the role of Turkey's military and industrial complex in modernizing the

country's armed forces, the main trends of which are identified on the basis of an analysis of official figures and indices. Modernization of the army and development of the military-industrial complex are largely aimed at meeting Turkey's geopolitical ambitions to become a more influential force in the region.

**KEYWORDS:** *Turkey, NATO, armed forces, war industry, modernization, strategy, security.*

## *Introduction*

After the end of the Cold War, Turkey's defense policy tried to adapt to the new regional and geopolitical reality and raise the country's combat-readiness in the event of any new challenges. During this time, Turkey's defense policy was based on a steady buildup of its armed forces and a striving to achieve military superiority in the region.

During the 1990s, Turkey examined its foreign policy problems from the viewpoint of military security. According to Turkish researcher Haluk Gerger, militarization of national interests and foreign policy, which is in many cases a direct result of securitization, has given the military, in addition to everything else, a certain right to have the "final word." The constant threats from some of its neighbors have justified the need for a powerful military force as the main condition of Turkey's efficient foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Turkey's foreign policy at this time was directly related to its military potential.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from: A. Balcı, *1990 sonrası Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Bazı Notlar: Avrupa Birliği ve Kıbrıs Örneği*, Türkiye'nin Değişen Dış Politikası, ed. by C. Yenigül, E. Efeğil, Nobel yayın, Ankara, 2010, S. 92.

In 1999, Head of the Turkish Department of the Defense Industry Yalcın Burçak, who took active part in drawing up extensive military modernization programs, said that “the weapons (acquired by Turkey.—*L.O.*) are an obvious necessity. Military spending has been significantly cut back in Europe ... but this does not suit Turkey. When the Warsaw Pact was eliminated, certainty gave way to uncertainty.”<sup>2</sup> Turkish researcher Nasuh Uslu was very accurate in saying, “Turkey’s ruling circles have been giving more attention to defense and protection after the Cold War than they did during it.”<sup>3</sup>

Turkey’s security and defense system was established and developed after it joined NATO, which was actively promoted by the U.S. It should be noted that accession to NATO played an instrumental role in increasing the country’s defense potential.

After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq, Iran’s international isolation and the West’s sanctions against Syria gave Turkey the opportunity to acquire the status of a regional power and increase its military and political influence.

Turkey is placing top priority in its regional foreign political strategy on rearming and modernizing the army; after the Justice and Development Party took the reins, these processes acquired a larger scope. In addition to modernizing the armed forces, Turkey has been carrying out an extremely active foreign policy aimed at extending its influence in the region.

## **The Turkish Army after the Cold War: The Need for Modernization**

The 1991 Persian Gulf War put the combat-readiness of the Turkish army and its ability to carry out military operations to the test (Turkey participated in this war on NATO’s side). Running ahead, it should be noted that the war in the Persian Gulf showed how unprepared the Turkish army was for carrying out military operations that met contemporary standards.<sup>4</sup>

Even before the beginning of this war, the Turkish Armed Forces General Staff took a very cautious stance; the military elite, which was very negative about conducting military operations outside the country, including carrying out large-scale operations on the border with Iraq, insisted that so-called active neutrality must be preserved.

The differences in opinions on military issues made the situation so intense that Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Necip Torumtay was forced into early retirement. Nevertheless, according to a decision by the country’s president, Turgut Özal, the Turkish side took active part in the war.<sup>5</sup>

Turkey’s experience in carrying out military operations during the Persian Gulf war, as well as the first widespread movement of troops after conquering the northern part of Cyprus in 1974 were unsuccessful. In addition, Turkey’s experience in carrying out active low-intensity military operations against the Kurdish militants in the southeast of the country and in the north of Iraq (in the

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted from: U. Cizre-Sakallioğlu, “The Military and Politics: A Turkish Dilemma,” in: *Armed Forces in the Middle East: Politics and Strategy*, ed. by B.M. Rubin, T.A. Keaney, Frank Cass Publishers, 2002, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> N. Uslu, *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period*, Nova Publishers, New York, 2004, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> I.O. Lesser, *Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West after the Cold War*, Prepared for the United States Air Force and the United States Army, RAND, 1992, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> See: B. Yeşilada, *Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Middle East, Political and Socioeconomic Transformation of Turkey*, ed. by A. Eralp, M. Tünay, B. Yeşilada, Praeger Publisher, Westport, 1993, p. 182.

1990s) showed that despite the great superiority in size and military hardware, there were serious problems<sup>6</sup>.

The military circles clearly understood that the country's armed forces were already weak and outmoded and could not cope with the challenges of the 21st century.<sup>7</sup> As a high-ranking Turkish military expert E. Tatli justifiably noted, "before the 1990s, the Turkish army was a large, but poorly armed force."<sup>8</sup> Despite its large size and sufficient level of technology intensiveness, Turkey lags significantly behind many European countries in terms of how well its armed forces are equipped with contemporary weapons.

The experience of the Persian Gulf War and fight against the Kurdish insurgents made it possible for Turkey's military leadership to determine the weak sides of its army. It pointed in particular to the absence or insufficient number of scout-attack helicopters, radar stations for detecting air-borne facilities at low heights, and comprehensive measures for providing air defense, transport aircraft, space surveillance systems, control systems, and high and information technology.<sup>9</sup>

In 1992, the size of the ground forces was cut by almost one third and they were transferred from a squadron to contingent structure. What is more, steps were taken to increase the territory in which the Turkish air forces are used, as well as the opportunities for carrying out military operations beyond the country<sup>10</sup>; the transformations were based on American experience. It should be noted that in the 1990s the size of the ground forces, as well as the form and structure of the Turkish armed forces as a whole, hardly changed; only new arms were purchased and the existing military hardware was modernized. The air force and navy were mainly reconstructed by means of equipment modernization.<sup>11</sup>

In this respect, the Turkish military department was faced with the acute question of implementing an arms modernization program calculated for 1991-2000; its cost amounted to \$20 billion.<sup>12</sup>

In 1992-1996, Turkey was the leader among the NATO countries in terms of arms import volume; in the Middle East it only yielded to Saudi Arabia in terms of this index.<sup>13</sup>

In 1994, Turkey's military budget was the largest after the U.S., Great Britain, and Greece in terms of GDP volume, while it ranked 6th in the world in terms of arms import volume.<sup>14</sup>

There were several reasons for this kind of increase in the military budget. One of them was associated with the soft terms under which Turkey was to pay off its long-term loans issued by certain countries for purchasing arms. Another lay in the use of discounts from countries selling arms in order to raise the sales volumes and encourage industrial development.

Deliveries of new batches of arms to Turkey (particularly from Germany) were also executed in keeping with the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See: S. Minasian, "Armed Forces of the Turkish Republic. Turkey: Security and Defense Problems," Institute of Political Research, *Analytical Notes*, Iss. 1, Erevan, 2007, pp. 57-58 (in Armenian).

<sup>7</sup> See: E. Hen-Tov, "The Political Economy of Turkish Military Modernization," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 2004, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> E. Tatli, "Turkey Turns Cold to European Defense: Implications for Western Security," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Policy Watch*, No. 1376, 2 June, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> See: S. Minasian, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> See: I.O. Lesser, op. cit, pp. 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> See: S. Yılmaz, "Dünya Ordularındaki Değişim ve Türk Ordusunun Profesyonelleşmesi," S. 6, available at [[http://orkam.aydin.edu.tr/ORDUNUNPROFESYONELLESMESI\(3a4b\).pdf](http://orkam.aydin.edu.tr/ORDUNUNPROFESYONELLESMESI(3a4b).pdf)].

<sup>12</sup> See: N. Uslu, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> See: G. Günlük-Şenesen, "Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin Modernizasyon Programının Bir Değerlendirmesi," in: F. Sönmezoglu, *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, DER yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, S. 586.

<sup>14</sup> See: K. Kirisci, "Post Cold-War Turkish Security and the Middle East," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1997, available at [<http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue2/jv1n2a6.html>].

<sup>15</sup> See: G. Günlük-Şenesen, op. cit., S. 586.

Before the CFE Treaty was signed, Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Necip Torumtay said that with or without the treaty (which envisaged a cutback in the number of tanks, artillery, and aviation), the country would take every step anyway to protect its security and national integrity. He also noted that reducing outmoded weapons in no way meant that Turkey would reject modernization programs.<sup>16</sup>

The CFE Treaty signed in 1990 proved extremely beneficial to Turkey. On the one hand, in keeping with the adopted restrictions, the European Partner States to the Treaty donated their surplus weapons to Turkey. On the other hand, the restrictions did not affect the southeastern districts of Turkey, which made it possible to concentrate a large amount of weapons there.<sup>17</sup>

In April 1996, the Turkish military announced they were drawing up a 30-year large-scale modernization plan of the country's armed forces; it was to total \$150 billion.<sup>18</sup> The goal of the plan was complete modernization of the air force and navy by purchasing hundreds of airplanes and helicopters, as well as dozens of new warships. But Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's government did not rush to ratify this plan. It was not until a few months later that Foreign Minister Tansu Çiller signed an order to launch its first phase, in which an important place was primarily given to the manufacture of military and transport helicopters.<sup>19</sup>

The above-mentioned sum of \$150 billion was distributed among the ground forces (60 billion), navy (25 billion), and air force (65 billion). Most of these investments were to be used to provide the needs of the army inside the country; in so doing, special emphasis was placed on development of the military-industrial complex.<sup>20</sup>

This amount is very realistic: every year \$3-5 billion are allotted from the military budget, which over the span of 30 years would amount to between \$105 and \$150 billion. Here it should be emphasized that in addition to budget means, extra-budgetary resources can also be attracted, which are mainly used for military-industrial projects.

An important role was allotted in the modernization strategy to the country's military-industrial complex. During the consultations held in 1996, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel studied in detail the further plans aimed at its development. This led to the Defense Ministry drawing up a separate document relating to further steps regarding this issue.<sup>21</sup>

Whereas around 45 military projects were implemented in 1996, their number reached 110 (for a total of \$15 billion) in 2006.<sup>22</sup> In 2011, 280 military-industrial projects were implemented totaling \$27 billion.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See: "Turkey to Pursue Military Modernization despite Reduced Threat," *Defense Daily*, 31 July, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> See: *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar*, ed. by B. Oran, Cilt 2 (1980-2001), İletişim yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, S. 207; "Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe," available at [<http://www.osce.org/library/14087>].

<sup>18</sup> According to the data of the Turkish newspaper *Zaman*, Ahmet Necip Boynuegri, who worked for long years as an engineer at the Turkish Department of the Defense Industry in the second half of the 1990s, filed a claim in Turkish court for a case to be examined on arming the army, accusing Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu, Second Chief of General Staff Çevik Bir, and others, of arbitrary interference in armament issues and projects. The envelope presented in court contained a statement saying that, in order to ensure the \$150-billion plan did not fail, General Çevik Bir, demonstrating arbitrariness, interfered in the implementation of several military projects (see: A. Dönmez, "28 Şubat'ın askerî ihaleleri Anayasa Mahkemesi'nd," *Zaman*, 11 October, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> See: W.J. Durch, *Constructing Regional Security: The Role of Arms Transfers, Arms Control, and Reassurance*, The Century Foundation Inc., PALGRAVE, 2000, p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> See: "Makina İmalat Sanayii Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu," Sekizinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı, Ankara, 2000, available at [[http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/imalatsa/makina/I\\_oik552.pdf](http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/imalatsa/makina/I_oik552.pdf)]; E. İpekesen, "Yeni savunma sanayi profile," available at [[http://www.tempodergisi.com.tr/kose/erdal\\_ipekesen/05665/](http://www.tempodergisi.com.tr/kose/erdal_ipekesen/05665/)].

<sup>21</sup> See: A. Kosikov, "Voenno-politicheskiy potentsial Turtsii," *Vostokovedny sbornik*, Iss. 2, Moscow, 2001, pp. 212-217.

<sup>22</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı Stratejik Plan 2007-2011," available at [<http://www.ssm.gov.tr>].

<sup>23</sup> See: *Sabah*, 26 March 2012.

In 1998, when talking about the problems of modernizing the army, Turkish Defense Minister İsmet Sezgin emphasized: “We are placing special emphasis on modernizing the armed forces. Our national goal is to become self-sufficient and purchase high-tech defense means.”<sup>24</sup>

As early as 1998, Land Forces Commander Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu noted in the context of Turkey’s defense strategy that the Turkish army must take on an entire range of risks so it is vitally important that it be rapidly dislocated in remote districts. He offered a comprehensive program for modernizing the army aimed at increasing the opportunities for implementing military operations beyond the country.<sup>25</sup>

Kivrikoğlu believed that implementation of this program would allow the Turkish army to acquire weapons that would confirm its advantage over the enemy in its deepest rear using high-precision military hardware (including long-range missiles) and ensuring shooting concealment.<sup>26</sup>

At the end of the 1990s, an essentially new strategy, the forward defense strategy, appeared in Turkey’s defense doctrine, according to which the country’s armed forces were to be ready to preempt threats before they cross onto Turkish territory.<sup>27</sup> In addition to universal principles of defense and security, the Turkish strategy also included the principle of preventive strike, which in general envisaged “forward defense” and “comprehensive measures for ensuring internal security in crisis situations.”<sup>28</sup> Practical application of this strategy is shown by the transboundary military operations of the Turkish armed forces against the Kurdish insurgents and their bases in North Iraq.

The Turkish armed forces took steps to comply with the contemporary demands of a safe environment in four main areas: training and modernization, restructuring, transformation of the security sphere, and military education.

In the 1990s, Turkey made it a prerogative to select professional servicemen. As of 1999, all the anti-aircraft, missile, and artillery sections were supplied with professional servicemen. The armored tank forces enjoyed a level of 40-50% of professionals, while in the special military contingent, it was 45-60%. On the whole, at the end of the 1990s, professional rank-and-file soldiers and sergeants comprised approximately 20-25% of the army.

What is more, in the next 5-6 years, there were plans to create three separate armored tank corps fully equipped with a professional staff. After the creation of these corps, the number of professionals was to reach around 10% of the total number of troops.<sup>29</sup>

According to Turkish sources, as of 2012, the Turkish armed forces had around 200,000 professional servicemen; 40,000 of them were officers, 96,000 junior officers, and 65,000 contract soldiers.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, intensive efforts to fully staff specific units of the armed forces with professional contract soldiers are still going on.

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted from: N. Uslu, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

<sup>25</sup> See: A. Aivazian, “Armenia’s Defense Doctrine,” in: *Strategy and Security Issues*, ed. by A. Aivazian, Airenatirution Series, Second Edition, Ararat Strategic Center, Yerevan, 2007, p. 156 (in Armenian). In 1997-1998, Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu served as Commander of the Land Forces; in 1998-2002, he served as Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

<sup>26</sup> See: Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> See: M.R. Hickok, “Hegemon Rising: The Gap between Turkish Strategy and Military Modernization,” US Army War College, Parameters, Summer 2000, available at [<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/parameters/Articles/00summer/hickok.htm>].

<sup>28</sup> A. Külebi, “Türkiye’nin Askeri Stratejisi, Gücü ve Geleceği,” *Türkiye Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (TUSAM)*, 2 August, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> See: M. Melkonian, “Osnovnye voprosy obespechenia voennoi bezopasnosti Armenii,” *Ai zinvor*, No. 7, 20-27 February, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> See: “Askerlikte Zorunlu profesyonellik,” *Aksiyon*, 26 November, 2012.

## The Role of Turkey's Military-Industrial Complex in Armed Forces Modernization

In November 2002, the Justice and Development Party won the parliamentary elections; a government was formed that focused its main attention on reforms of the country's security system and modernization of the defense sector, whereby special emphasis was placed on the domestic military-industrial complex.

In November 2005, information seeped into the Turkish press about how the Executive Committee of the Turkish Defense Industry had made a decision to reinforce the infrastructure of its rear and intended to invest \$50 billion in this sphere over the next ten years. According to the Turkish media, in 2005, projects were included in the country's military programs that envisaged purchasing new generation war planes, tactical attack helicopters ATAK (50 units),<sup>31</sup> utility helicopters (50 units), drones, a new type of police patrol, underwater, defense, combat, and surveillance police launches (intended for ensuring the safety of coastal zones), search and rescue boats, introducing surface vessels and submarine control systems, and modernizing Leopard 1 tanks, Sar35 warships, and AWACS airplanes.<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that part of this program has already been implemented.

Turkey is working on large projects in the hopes of creating a developed and integrated air force and air defense system equipped with the latest military technology and armaments. Special emphasis in this system is being placed on new technological means: drones, surveillance satellites, monitoring and air warning systems, and so on. Despite the fact that Turkey still does not have full command of the latest technology, the country is taking steps to design and manufacture it. Since the Turkish military industry has still been unable to establish the production of antimissile defenses and long-range air defense facilities, Ankara announced an international tender for their delivery.

In 2007, the Strategic Plan of the Department of the Defense Industry for 2007-2011 approved by the Turkish Ministry of Defense came into force, the main priorities of which were directed toward modernizing the army and developing the military industry. In so doing, special emphasis was placed on developing a local production base.

The Turkish armed forces modernization and military industry development policy consists of three main components:

1. *Local production*, where priority goes to project writers from Turkish companies and expanding the production base.
2. *A consortium or joint venture*, which, keeping in mind efficiency, envisages cooperation with other countries or companies.
3. *Joint production or simply purchase*, which presumes purchasing ready products or joint production in which Turkish companies take part and invest resources.<sup>33</sup>

According to the strategic plan of military-industrial development for 2007-2011, approximately 50% of the military hardware and armaments of the country's armed forces was to have been supplied by Turkey's local military industry before 2010.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> As early as 2013 deliveries of military helicopters of Turkish-Italian joint manufacture T129 ATAK will begin.

<sup>32</sup> See: *Akşam*, 21 November, 2005.

<sup>33</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı Stratejik Plan 2007-2011," S. 35, available at [<http://www.sp.gov.tr/documents/planlar/SSMSP0711.pdf>].

<sup>34</sup> See: *Ibid.*, S. 16.

In 2008, the local military industry was able to provide approximately 44.2% of the Turkish armed forces armament requirements; in 2009, this index amounted to 45.7%; while in 2010, it exceeded the forecasts and reached 52.1%.<sup>35</sup> In 2011, this index amounted to 54%.<sup>36</sup> It should also be noted that ASELSAN (a Turkish military-industrial company) climbed seven places and ranked 86th on the list of the world's 100 largest defense and industrial companies<sup>37</sup>; in 2009, its total profit amounted to \$643.1 million.<sup>38</sup> This fact graphically demonstrates the significant achievements in the Turkish military industry, and of certain companies in particular.

*The export of Turkish military production is extremely important.* In 2007, the total annual export volume of Turkish military-industrial production amounted to almost \$420 million, while in 2008, it exceeded \$570 million.<sup>39</sup> In 2009, the export volume amounted to \$670 million and in 2010 to \$634 million,<sup>40</sup> while in 2011 it was equal to \$817 million.<sup>41</sup> At the end of 2012, export of the production of the Turkish military industry and civil aviation industry amounted to more than \$1 billion 262 million, which was almost 40% higher than the 2011 index.<sup>42</sup>

By way of comparison, we will note that in 2006, the volume of military production export for Israel reached \$4.5 billion; the country ranked 5th in the world after the U.S., Russia, Great Britain, and France in terms of this index. Seventy-five percent of Israel's military production is exported; the country's armed forces account for the other 25%.<sup>43</sup> According to the preliminary estimates of the Israeli Defense Ministry, in 2012, the total cost of the armaments and military equipment exported by the country amounted to \$7 billion, which was 20% more than in 2011.<sup>44</sup>

As of 2006, Turkey ranked 11th in the world in terms of arms import and 21st in terms of their export.<sup>45</sup> According to the data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2001-2005, Turkey ranked 8th in terms of arms import and 28th in terms of their export.<sup>46</sup>

Turkey is spending more money on scientific research work in the military industry. According to the official data, the total cost of research and development (R&D) in the military industry amounted to \$666 million in 2010 and to \$672 million in 2011.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that the Turkish military industry lags behind in the production of modern types of weapons.

In 2012, a strategic plan of the Turkish military-industrial complex for 2012-2016 was approved, which specified the strategic goals and deadlines for carrying out key projects. For example, there are plans to complete production of a prototype of a second-generation Turkish tank, Altay, by the end of

<sup>35</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı 2010 Faaliyet Raporu," S. 71, available at [[http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/Faaliyet%20Raporlar/2010/files/ssm\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/Faaliyet%20Raporlar/2010/files/ssm_2011.pdf)]; "Türk Savunma Sanayii 2010 Yılı Performansı, Savunma Sanayii Gündemi," Sayı 15, 2/2011, S. 65, available at [[http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/SSM%20Dergisi/SSM\\_15.pdf](http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/SSM%20Dergisi/SSM_15.pdf)].

<sup>36</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı 2011 Faaliyet Raporu," S. 95, available at [<http://www.ssm.gov.tr/anasayfa/kurumsal/Faaliyet%20Raporlar/2011%20Yılı%20Faaliyet%20Raporu.pdf>].

<sup>37</sup> See: "Aselsan Climbs Six Places in Largest Defense Companies Ranking," 14 August, 2011, available at [<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-253734-aselsan-climbs-six-places-in-largest-defense-companies-ranking.html>].

<sup>38</sup> See: "Aselsan podnialas v reitinge '100 krupneishikh oboronno-promyshlennykh kompanii mira,'" 10 July, 2010, available at [<http://www.trt.net.tr/trtworlworld/ru/newsDetail.aspx?HaberKodu=48b60098-5ccc-483b-8883-5e57aa76a847>].

<sup>39</sup> See official website of the Turkish Department of the Defense Industry, available at [<http://www.ssm.gov.tr/TR/dokumantasyon/basimbulteni/Pages/20081121.aspx>]; "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı Startejik Plan 2007-2011," S. 16.

<sup>40</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı 2010 Faaliyet Raporu," S. 72.

<sup>41</sup> See: "Savunma Sanayii Müsteşarlığı 2011 Faaliyet Raporu," S. 96.

<sup>42</sup> See: "Savunma sanayinde ihracat atağı," *Hürriyet*, 20 January, 2013.

<sup>43</sup> See: "Israel's Defense Exports Reached \$4.4B in 2006," available at [<http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com>], 11 January, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> See: "Israel Arms Exports Increase in 2012," available at [<http://www.janes.com/products/janes/defence-security-report.aspx?id=1065975188>], 16 January, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> See: *Star*, 2 February, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> See: See: *SIPRI Yearbook 2006*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford University Press, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> See: "Savunmada 'Made in Turkey' damgası," *Sabah*, 7 May, 2012.

2015, while attack helicopter ATAK and the ANKA drone will be presented in 2013 and 2014, and the prototype of a MILGEM-S warship in 2016. The plan envisages raising total export of military-industrial production to \$2 billion in 2016. In so doing, the total income should amount to \$8 billion.<sup>48</sup>

Turkey has already managed to achieve a certain amount of success in the development of its own military industry. This makes it possible to draw up a cooperation program in the military sphere with several countries; the matter primarily concerns Azerbaijan, Georgia, Albania, Bosnia, and the Central Asian Turkish-speaking states that are in the center of Turkey's strategic interests. Turkey will be able to raise its reputation and increase its military-political influence on these countries by delivering arms and rendering a certain amount of support to them (Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia serve as a good case in point).

Development of the military industry corresponds to Turkey's geopolitical ambitions; it is striving for military superiority not only in the region, but also over several extra-regional countries. Turkey's cooperation with Azerbaijan is developing the most intensively and is a priority in terms of development of its military-industrial complex.

In contrast to Azerbaijan, Turkey is not taking serious steps aimed at restoring Georgia's military-industrial complex; it is developing cooperation with this country in military education and direct arms deliveries (mainly of Turkish manufacture).

Not enough attention is given to an analysis of the general dynamics of Turkey's contribution to the establishment and development of the Georgian armed forces. There can be no doubt that Turkey's assistance may not seem as significant as that of some other states. For example, it goes without saying that the scope of Turkish aid to the Georgian armed forces is less than the assistance provided by America and Ukraine (in certain spheres). Nevertheless, the data published on the Russian Ministry of Defense's website are rather eloquent evidence of the significant contribution the Turkish side has made to arming the Georgian armed forces.<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusion

At the end of the 20th-beginning of the 21st centuries, Turkey reformulated its defense policy by taking into account the new geopolitical reality and challenges; the strategy it came up with to carry out universal modernization of its armed forces is unprecedented in the country's history. Establishing the national military-industrial complex has made it possible to equip the Turkish army with powerful and contemporary arms. Following its geopolitical ambitions, Turkey is trying to become the most influential military power in the region. Special emphasis is placed on the military-industrial complex in modernization of the Turkish army, the development of which will ensure a decrease in dependence on external deliveries and allow the army's requirements to be met using the country's own resources.

Turkey's military-industrial complex has been successfully developed largely due to investments and a clear-sighted strategy; they give the country not only the possibility of providing some of its army's requirements, but also the opportunity to gain access to the international arms market. As already noted, these achievements are due to Turkey's foreign political ambitions.

All of the above brings us to a very important conclusion: the strategy of large-scale modernization and its results have played a vast role in Turkey's rearmament since the end of the 1990s.

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<sup>48</sup> See: *Sabah*, 26 March, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> According to the data posted in May 2008 on the website of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, Turkey was a major supplier of arms to Georgia between 1997 and 2007 (see: "Voennaia pomoshch Gruzii so storony inostrannykh gosudarstv," available at [[http://www.mil.ru/files/table\\_15\\_05.doc](http://www.mil.ru/files/table_15_05.doc)]).



The Turkish army remained weak even during the Cold War, when it was rendered enormous financial, material-technical, and military assistance from NATO and the U.S. It lagged significantly behind many NATO members in terms of rearmament, and the arms it had at its disposal at the time were rather outmoded.

The achievements in military modernization of the armed forces have lent the Turkish army an entirely new quality, allowing it to increasingly enforce its superiority over neighboring countries.

Modernization of the Turkish army is yielding favorable fruits in the air force as well. The Turkish military-political leadership is placing particular emphasis on improving aviation complexes.

It should be noted that the boldest plans concerning transformation of the Turkish armed forces appeared during the rule of the Justice and Development Party. A fundamental role in modernization of the armed forces was played by signing projects and treaties offered by the Justice and Development Party and with the direct participation of Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan (on the launching of domestically manufactured tanks, the production of medium-range ballistic missiles, the purchasing of fifth generation bombers, space surveillance systems, and so on).

We can now say that Turkey's military-industrial complex is a military supplier, which, in turn, is proving to be a trump card in realizing its military and political ambitions. Rendering military aid to certain countries is primarily in keeping with Turkey's geopolitical strivings (its relations with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Arab, and Turkish-speaking countries can serve as an example).

It goes without saying that Turkey's full-fledged militarization is turning its army into the most powerful in the region. Nevertheless, Turkey still lags significantly behind several of its NATO allies both in the armament sphere and in control issues. What is more, in the past 30-40 years, it has not participated in any large-scale military operations. Consequently, Turkey's importance for NATO mainly lies in its territory, geographical location, and population size.

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