

EXPERTS RESPOND

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70-YEARS OF TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS

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70-YEARS OF TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS

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On February 18, 2022, Turkey marks 70 years since its accession to NATO. Within this timeframe, Turkey has been one of the most significant members of the strategic alliance. Indeed, this partnership has been beneficial for both sides. While NATO has contributed to Turkey's security, Turkey, on the other hand, has been one of the leading contributing partners within the alliance. Within this framework, Turkey has the second biggest army, after the U.S., within the alliance and at the same time is among the top 10 states that contribute the most to the NATO budget.

By keeping in mind the importance of the Turkey-NATO partnership, in this special report, we have brought our readers different views on this partnership from several experts. We asked them to evaluate the existing relationship and at the same time assess Turkey's future role in the strategic alliance. Lastly, each of the experts also provided several policy recommendations for both parties.

TURKEY CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY IN NATO



April 4, 1949
Founding of NATO

It has **30 members**

Headquartered in Brussels

MILITARY FORCES

NATO has very few permanent forces of its own. Once members agree, by consensus, to engage in an operation, they contribute forces on a voluntary basis.

NATO has an integrated military command structure, allowing the Alliance to implement political decisions that have military implications. .



February 18, 1952

Turkey officially became
a member of NATO



Turkey, which has been a NATO member for 70 years, has
NATO's second-largest army.

- NATO is a political and military alliance
- NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.
- NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes; however, if diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations.
- These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty - Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations
- NATO is committed to the principle that an attack against one or several of its members is considered as an attack against all. This is the principle of collective defence, which is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

** So far, Article 5 has been invoked once - in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.*



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

Turkey, which joined NATO due to the perceived threat from the Soviet Union, continues to attach great importance to being a NATO member. This is mainly due to the growing uncertainty in Turkey's neighborhood as well as the international system as a whole. Unlike certain Western European states like France and Germany, which currently do not pursue a NATO-centric foreign- and security policy (in a way that would meet the United States' expectations) due to a lack of serious threat perception, Turkey continues to face serious threats from multiple sources. Chief among those threats is the multitude of failed states in the Middle East and the growing number and influence of non-state actors that resort to violence. Secondly, there have been several attempts underway in recent years to surround Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean. Finally, there is a serious threat coming from Russia, which has increased its presence and power in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean –in other words, Turkey's north and south.

However, Turkey experienced crises of confidence with several NATO allies, starting with the United States, over the past decade. The other member states' negative perception of Turkey, too, seriously undermined the political consultation mechanisms between those parties. Turkey's attempts to act more independently and attain greater autonomy, coupled with attempts by the United States and other prominent NATO members to keep Turkey aligned with their political lines and their negative views on Turkey's domestic politics, make it unlikely for the parties to overcome that lack of trust in the near future. Turkey's growing ability to counter threats against its national unity and political sovereignty unilaterally and the growing diversity of its foreign relations, as embodied by its decision to buy the S-400 air defense system from Russia, goes hand in hand with attempts to find alternative solutions

to its security problems with NATO allies. The tensions will further escalate unless and until the current state of affairs between the relevant parties undergoes change.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

The report that the organization adopted last year in Brussels – “NATO 2030: United for a New Era” – included certain positive and negative elements from Turkey’s perspective. It is possible to argue that Turkey is prepared to endorse some main points regarding the planning of NATO’s future: working more closely with the European Union, deepening political consultations among member states, ensuring the commitment to the rules-based international order, and identifying and addressing emerging threats.

Indeed, almost all threats, which were mentioned in the “NATO 2030” report, represent serious threats for Turkey as well. At the same time, Turkey is compelled to work closely with fellow member states on non-conventional threats, such as terrorism, cyber attacks and climate change, in addition to threats emanating from Russia and China. Having passed a major legislation on climate change and ratified the Paris Agreement last year, Turkey could receive support from other NATO states in terms of research, data sharing and analysis, and observation – specifically, with an eye on the impact of climate change on security.

Moreover, when it comes to cooperation within NATO, Turkey shall be a consumer as well as a producer and provider. The country, whose recent steps in the defense industry have gained the world’s respect, could make important contributions to its allies for the development of groundbreaking technology.

NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR)

KFOR was launched in 1999, as a peace-support operation and derives its mandate from the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and international agreements. Turkey currently takes part in KFOR with 309 military personnel, making it one of the countries with the largest number of personnel in the mission.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

The ‘balance of security’ between the United States, whose hegemony has been eroding, and the European states continues to shift toward Europe. In other words, Europe needed the United States more (than the United States needed Europe) during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War period, however, the United States needs Europe more. For example, European support is vital to Washington’s rivalry with China.

A closer look at the Turkey-NATO relationship reveals the following points:

- First of all, Turkey needs to develop a closer relationship with European NATO allies, especially Germany, provided that it experiences deep distrust and many problems with the United States. Unlike the United States, which supports anti-Turkish states (like Greece) and non-state actors (like PKK/YPG), European states like Germany, whose relationship with Turkey is more symmetrical and characterized by mutual dependence, could find it easier to relate to Turkey’s concerns and prove more willing to share its burden. The further development of the Turkey-Europe relationship would also be important for the European states, whose economic and political power in the international system has been diminishing.
- As such, Turkey could eliminate the perception that it is a problematic NATO ally. After all, the way certain NATO allies perceive Turkey does not serve the interests of the relevant parties. Without delay, the remaining NATO members must stop using alienating rhetoric against Turkey.
- Thirdly, reviving its relationship with the European Union would serve the interests of Turkey as well as NATO. That is because the close relationship between Turkey, which remains a part of the Western world politically, and the European Union tends to have a positive influence on its relationship with NATO.
- The fourth point is that the stability of those countries in NATO’s vicinity means the stability of NATO itself. Therefore, Turkey’s influence has been growing in the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and the

Middle East – regions that are geographically close to the NATO alliance. As such, Turkey's contributions will be of vital importance to security projects that NATO shall develop regarding those places in the future.

- Last but not least, keeping in mind that the rise of ultranationalism and racism in the West has significantly radicalized mainstream politics, the Western states need to attach greater importance to international norms and those platforms, which embody those principles, in order to dig themselves out of that particular hole.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

Turkey joining NATO under the Democratic Party in 1952 defined its orientation toward the trans-Atlantic security system. During the Cold War years, Turkey needed Western backing for two major reasons: One was the visible and perceived threat of the SSRC and the other one was that it needed speedy development and modernization of its economy. The Soviet threat during that time triggered Turkey's alliance with the West, and this alliance contributed to both the safety and security of Turkey and Europe.

Accessing relevant defense technology and being part of the European security and defense structure aided Turkey in developing its defense technology and military capabilities with the advanced systems, though Turkey was not able to develop its defense technology for a long time. Despite difficulties and disagreements on certain issues (i.e., the Cyprus issue) Turkey has provided solid support and stability to NATO's southern and eastern flanks for decades, and it still does.

Turkey continues to support several NATO peace missions around the globe, contributing to the stabilizing role of the alliance, as well as hosting programs in Istanbul as part of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. Through the Partnership for Peace Training Center, Turkey offers training to both civilian and military personnel of partner countries.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

Engaging with the ever-increasing challenges of the post-Cold War era and the rapid strike of computer technologies and information systems, members states must have felt the urge to prepare the alliance

for the next decade. Triggered by this need and to strengthen its political dimension, NATO launched its 2030 Agenda in June 2020. The 2030 Agenda was based on three major pillars: to keep the alliance

strong militarily, to achieve more unity politically, and to develop a global approach to issues and challenges the alliance faces or may face. Among 10 experts called to reflect on these issues, who were called the Reflection Group, Ambassador Tacan İldem, a Turkish diplomat, also served.

The Reflection Group prepared a report called “NATO 2030: United for a New Era.” The report includes 138 recommendations organized around 14 main findings.

Turkey feels that certain members do not fulfill enough of their duties for the organization and even take actions that might weaken the notion of solidarity among the member states. One leader’s statement regarding NATO as a “brain dead” institution and another member’s military supply citing Turkey constantly as a threat endangers the realization of full-fledge solidarity.

Operation ALTHEA

The launch of Operation ALTHEA followed the decision by NATO to conclude its SFOR-operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina where Turkey played an important role. Operation ALTHEA was initiated by the EU relying on NATO assets and capabilities. Turkey is the second country that contributes the most in terms of the personnel number participating in the mission. Currently, a total of 242 Turkish personnel is stationed in Sarajevo.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

After the collapse of the SSRC, NATO enjoyed an unprecedented expansion toward the East and Northern Europe. This expansion in return triggered Russian anger toward the West and NATO’s military presence around its borders. Russia now is trying to return to its former zone of influence. Although Russia lost its previous prestige in Iraq, Libya, and partly Syria, it is now showing huge force in the Ukraine theater. The unending civil war in Syria, in which Russia is involved militarily and politically to keep Assad in power, cost human lives and led to a huge number of displaced people, most of which ended up in Turkey. NATO members keep ignoring the enormous difficulties Turkey has faced in the wake of the Syrian crisis.

Turkey has two major hot spots with another NATO member, Greece: the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean. NATO needs to not only understand Turkey's security concerns in these two issues but should also extend its cooperative channels toward its southern ally.

Turkey is an island of stability despite several power vacuums and crises in its surroundings. Turkey's geopolitical importance dictates the fact that the security of Europe starts with Turkey's borders – so do the stability and prosperity of Europe.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

On the 70th anniversary of its admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Turkey remains one of the alliance’s most reliable and prominent members. NATO was established in the early days of the Cold War. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, many experts claimed that the organization was “no longer needed.” By contrast, Turkey maintained that deterrence –which was the single greatest obstacle before an armed conflict between superpowers in the bipolar world for four decades— would remain relevant in the post-Cold War period. Indeed, the country made significant contributions to updating NATO’s job description and its geographical scope from the 1990s onwards. In the 1990s, too, Turkey played a leading role when NATO carried out “non-article five actions” in the Balkans. In 1999, following the operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, Turkey supported the overhaul of NATO’s strategic concept as well. Having traditionally favored Partnership for Peace programs and the admission of additional members to NATO, Turkey has actively supported the alliance’s transformation and operation architecture.

Turkey currently hosts the Allied Land Command, the Rapid Deployable Corps, the Detection and Tacking Radar Base for Missile Defence, the Center of Excellence for Combatting Terrorism, the Joint Training Center for Partnership for Peace, and the Multinational Maritime Security Center of Excellence. As of 2021, the country has taken over the command of the 6400-strong Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.

Taking stock of 70 years of NATO membership, it is clear that Turkey has not been fully rewarded for its contributions to the alliance. Especially within the context of Turkey’s fight against terrorist groups like PKK, PYD and FETÖ, the direct or indirect support that some of

its NATO allies have given to those organization has significantly hurt NATO's reputation in the eyes of the Turkish people.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN NATO THE 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

The 2030 goals suggest that Turkey will become an even more prominent ally for NATO over the next years. First and foremost, speaking of deeper political consultation and cooperation, it is clear that Turkey, which is located at the intersection of the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean, will provide valuable input into NATO's new risk and threat assessments. Furthermore, one cannot disregard Turkey's current and potential contributions to strengthening the deterrence and improving the resilience of the organization. NATO can be expected to benefit from Turkey's experience in combatting cyber and hybrid threats as well. Specifically, it is possible to argue that Turkey, a leader in unmanned technologies, could play some role in further developing NATO's capabilities.

Ankara remains aware that NATO can make major contributions to environmental protection and climate change –notwithstanding its status as a military organization. Turkey, which adopted a sensitive approach toward the environment and climate change as embodied by the 'zero waste' and 'zero emission' initiatives, shall make positive contributions to NATO's 2030 goals.

NATO is expected to demonstrate its willingness to establish a global security network spanning from Latin America and to the Pacific within the next decade. Turkey supports those efforts by the alliance as well.

Turkey led the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force within the scope of the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2021. Furthermore, Turkey will take the Naval Component Command within the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2023 and 2028 thanks to the Turkish High Readiness Maritime Task Force.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

Each NATO strategy since 1999 has talked about new threats and ways to address them. As the alliance concentrates on emerging threats, it is crucial not to neglect Article 51 of the UN Charter, which represents NATO's *raison d'être*. The possibility of a direct armed attack remains the most serious threat facing the allies today. As such, it is necessary to boost deterrence – NATO's chief quality. Indeed, it is crucial for NATO members to allocate additional resources to defense in order to preserve the organization's deterrence.

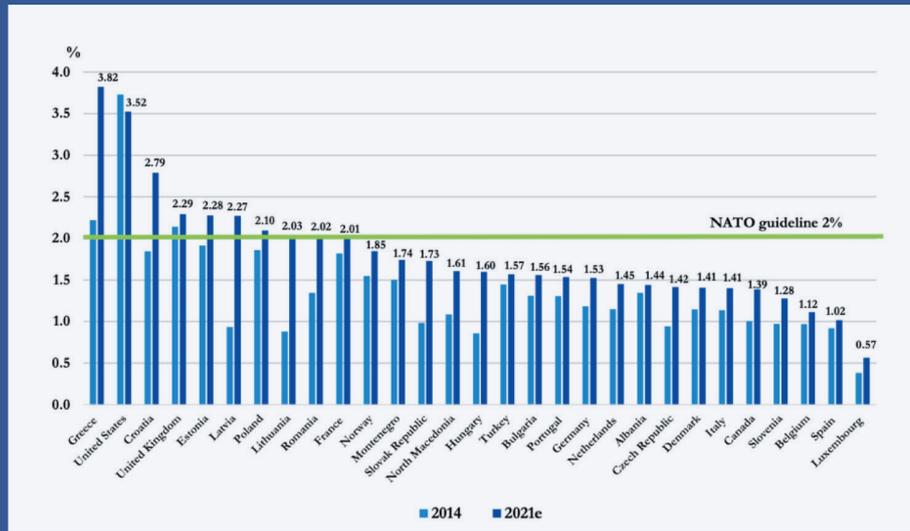
On the other hand, the allies need to coordinate their actions more closely when it comes to combatting terrorism. We must keep in mind that Turkey's southern border also happens to be NATO's own borders. In this sense, PKK, which NATO itself describes as a terrorist entity, and its various derivatives cannot be permitted to operate in NATO states. The entire alliance must take a firm stand against all organizations engaging in acts of terror against any single country.

As a 73-year-old organization, NATO has been the longest surviving military pact in recent history. One of the most important tasks that NATO's 30 democratic members, whose total population nears 950 million, will have to perform is to explain to their citizens why NATO must continue its operations. In this regard, it is necessary to diversify and strengthen NATO's public diplomacy efforts. The people of NATO states must be told in concrete terms that the organization's motto – "all for one, one for all" – is more than mere rhetoric.

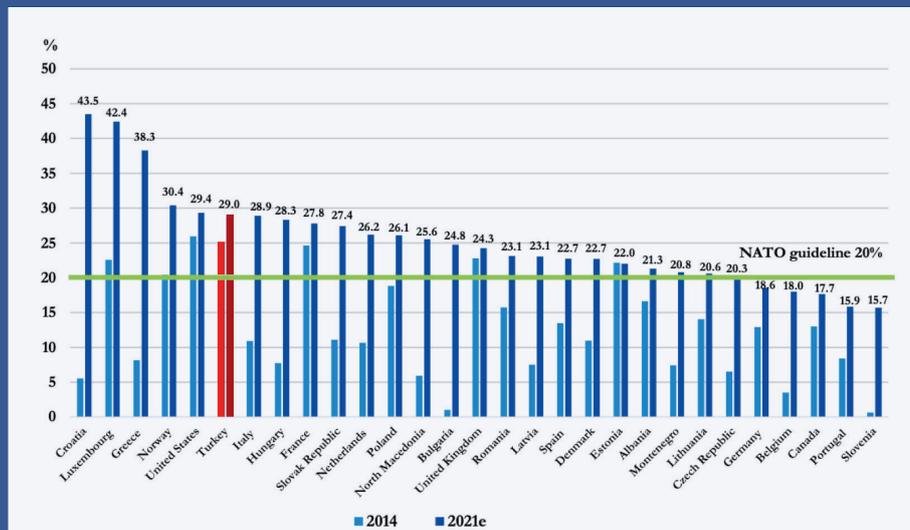
TURKEY'S POSITION WITHIN NATO

- Turkey is among the top ten Allies that contribute the most to the NATO budget.
- The ratio of Turkey's defense expenditures to our gross domestic product was 1.57% as of 2021 (NATO threshold is 2%).
- According to 2021 data, 29.0% of Turkey's defense expenditures are allocated to basic arms and equipment procurement and research and development (NATO threshold is 20%).
- In the main categories of defense expenditures, personnel expenditures are 52.5%, operation and maintenance and other expenditures are 16.5%, infrastructure is 2.0%, main equipment including related R&D is 29.05%.

GRAPH 1: DEFENCE EXPENDITURE AS A SHARE OF GDP (%)
(BASED ON 2015 PRICES AND EXCHANGE RATES)



GRAPH 1: EQUIPMENT EXPENDITURE AS A SHARE OF DEFENCE EXPENDITURE (%)
(BASED ON 2015 PRICES AND EXCHANGE RATES)





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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

It is an indisputable fact that NATO’s “positive security assurances” made significant contributions to Turkey’s national security since the country joined the alliance in 1952. It would not be wrong to note that the most powerful deterrent against the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons that the Soviet Union had during the Cold War was the United States nuclear arsenal –part of which was stationed in Turkey— and the “nuclear umbrella” that emerged on that basis.

On the other hand, Western European allies stressed, in unofficial settings, that they would not stand with Ankara in case problems arose between Turkey and its southern neighbors, namely Syria and Iraq, since their priority was the threat emanating from the Warsaw Pact. Hence, they did not believe the Middle East would fall within the scope of their area of responsibility. In other words, for them the Middle East was “out-of-area”. That was due to their concern that NATO would have to get involved in Turkey’s bilateral disputes with Syria or Iraq and, bearing in mind that the Soviet Union was forming unofficial alliances with them, a confrontation between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbors, would end up having to confront the Warsaw Pact.

Consequently, Turkey deployed most of its military toward its borders with the Soviet Union and Bulgaria –which meant that the diminished Turkish military presence near its borders with Syria and Iraq could not sufficiently deter Turkey’s southern neighbors from supporting the PKK. However, a series of developments took place in the 1990s –which included the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Treaty on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), and the development of stronger military and strategic relations with Israel— served Turkey’s interests and led to the use of coercive diplomacy against Syria, which compelled that

country to head of the PKK, namely Aptullah Öcalan from its territory in October 1998.

One must take into consideration, however, that there have been very serious problems between Turkey and NATO over the last 70 years that led to experiencing serious crises of trust as well. Those developments included the so-called “Johnson’s letter” of June 1964, the U.S. arms embargo in 1975-1978 in the aftermath of Turkey’s Peace Operation in Cyprus, the “hood” incident that took place in Sulaymaniyah on 4 July 2003, the allies’ baseless accusations against Turkey over the “Missile Shield” during the Lisbon summit of November 2010, their failure to express solidarity with Ankara during the July 15, 2016 coup attempt by FETÖ, Turkey’s exclusion from the F-35 fighter jet program despite being a founding member, and the imposition of CAATSA sanctions by the United States Senate. The list, unfortunately, is not exhausted.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

The NATO 2030 Agenda identifies a series of goals as part of the following proposals to ensure that the alliance remains a powerful and effective organization in the future: Deeper political consultation and coordination, strengthened deterrence and defense, improved resilience, preserving NATO’s technological edge, upholding the rules-based international order, boosting training and capacity building, combating and adapting to climate change, developing the next Strategic Concept, and investing in NATO.

All of these objectives are largely in line with Turkey’s national security strategy and foreign policy priorities, and essentially cover all the key areas, where Turkey has made high-quality contributions over the past decades. As such, from the Turkey’s perspective, the NATO 2030 Agenda contains many elements that could directly contribute to its bilateral and multilateral relations with its allies.

Moreover, expressing Turkey’s active support for the NATO 2030 Agenda could create significant opportunities to overcome tensions that it experiences with certain allies, including the United States and France. As such, it could be possible to appreciate and make up for the potential damage –which the unfair and harsh criticism that Turkey

received from Washington and Paris, among others, over its decision to buy the S-400 air defense system from Russia, due to its inability to build its aerial defense architecture in cooperation with allied nations and its national security concerns— to the Alliance’s defense capacity, solidarity and deterrence.

Afghanistan Resolute Support Mission

In response to the 9/11 attacks, in October 2001 the U.S. launched the Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Within this framework, NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established, and Turkey was the only NATO power that has twice run ISAF. In 2014, President Obama ended the Operation Enduring Freedom, and as such ISAF ended as well. In 2015 the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) started its operation. Turkey commissioned 500 soldiers to serve in Afghanistan within the scope of RSM.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

During the Cold War years, NATO adopted the principle of collective defense and developed its military strategy and doctrine based on the assumption that it could face an attack from the Warsaw Pact, which was controlled by the Soviet Union. Once the East-West conflict ended, the North Atlantic Alliance identified the threat that regional conflicts with global implications as well as acts of international terrorism posed against the safety and stability of its members as its “raison d’être” from the 1990s onwards. To combat those threats global-

ly, it developed partnerships and cooperation mechanisms with many non-allied nations all over the world to evolve into a collective security organization. As such, one of the Alliance’s most important post-Cold War command centers has been the Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia.

As the idea that global cooperation was absolutely necessary to combat threats, whose global reach was beyond dispute, especially in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, became the dominant view, the fight against international terrorism became a top item on NATO’s agenda. Provided that the source of deepest concern regarding that threat was the possibility that weapons of mass destruc-

tion could be used in terror attacks, almost all allied nations, the United States being in the first place, took that threat very seriously and established various mechanisms to actively combat and prevent their proliferation over the last 20 plus years.

At a time when the threat of global terrorism, which could involve weapons of mass destruction, has not disappeared and, in fact, there are strong indications that terrorist groups have been trying to develop their capabilities, the Alliance remains involved in a confrontation, reminiscent of the Cold War, with Russia over the Ukraine crisis. That situation raises the question whether NATO will reinstate the more comprehensive idea of collective defense, which it developed over the last 20 to 30 years, with a collective defense approach in continental Europe.

To encourage Ukraine's integration into the Western world may be among the national security and foreign policy priorities of allied nations. However, during the development of policy to meet that target, it is crucial not to undermine the fight against global threats, which are closely related to the safety of all allies, and to ensure that the situation of a non-member does not lead to a military confrontation with Russia.

Due to its geographical location and extreme geopolitical and geostrategic proximity to the source of many threats, extending from irregular migration to climate change, which are often mentioned and placed under the category of "new security threats" in NATO communiqués, Turkey should remind its allies what the alliance's priorities are and express its concerns within the top decision-making mechanisms of the Alliance.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

The Turkey-NATO relationship can be seen as one of the alliance's most exceptional relationships. It is primarily exceptional because Turkey remains the easternmost NATO country. Indeed, its geographical location ensured the continued importance of Turkey's geopolitical position within NATO since the organization's establishment. At the same time, Turkey is at the heart of actors and issues that shape the threat perceptions of the alliance as well as individual member states at various levels. Whereas those actors and issues have changed since the alliance's formation, Turkey's relative geopolitical and geostrategic position remained important. That situation resulted in the allocation of a geopolitical mission to Turkey during the Cold War years, and, on a strategic level, directly shaped the country's defense, security and foreign policy perspectives and practices. In this regard, Turkey assumed a crucial role during the Cold War within the context of NATO's "containment" of the Soviet Union. Although questions had been raised about NATO itself and Turkey's roles within that alliance after the Cold War and the Soviet Union's disintegration, emerging threats entailed a transformation of NATO's strategic mission and transformed Turkey from a "flank" country to a "front" country –or, at least, the country came to be "perceived" as such. The post-Cold War developments in the region and around the globe caused NATO's strategic mission to undergo major transformations. Turkey adapted to that transformation, becoming one of the top contributors to the alliance's international missions. Starting with the Balkans and Afghanistan, Turkey has been among the top five countries to contribute to NATO's "out of area" missions. Another reason why Turkey's NATO membership matters is that the country remains the only member states with a predominantly Muslim population. Although that fact occasionally encourages

Operation Sea Guardian (OSG)

Following the operation order issued by the NATO Maritime Command the Operation Sea Guardian, which succeeded the Operation Active Endeavour (OAE), started officially on November 3, 2016. OSG operates in the Mediterranean; however, unlike OAE, it is not an Article 5 operation. Turkey is the country that contributes most to this NATO operation. Turkey contributes to OSG with a submarine, a frigate, a corvette, a Maritime Patrol Aircraft (4 sorties/month), air warning control flights (1-2 sorties/month) and Aksaz Naval Base. In addition, Turkey serves as Maritime Special Forces Component Command through the Mobile Training Teams of Maritime Security Center of Excellence.

Turkey to adopt a different approach to the alliance's missions (as in Afghanistan), it also came to be seen as an element that shapes NATO's regional and global image.

As a whole, one could argue that Turkey remains one of the alliance's most strategically important members due to the size of its military –which is only second to the United States. As a country that provides security to the alliance whilst benefiting from its security umbrella, Turkey remained committed to the alliance's main position during periods of critical transformation and international crises. At a time when the international system becomes more and more competitive, the Turkey-NATO relationship must be viewed as consolidating and increasing the alliance's competitive power. Despite experiencing occasional crises and problems with fellow NATO members, Turkey has never let those crises or issues to impact or undermine its standing within NATO. That approach effectively consolidated Turkey's position as part of the alliance.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

NATO 2030 represents a strategic roadmap intended to prepare the alliance and its members for a changing strategic environment. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has expedited the global system's transformation, rendering great power competition more visible and proving that the alliance's strategic transformation was absolutely necessary. Compared to fellow NATO allies, Turkey appears to be readier to support the implementation of the 2030 document. Primarily, the country remains one of the few member states that could ensure the compliance of its defense spending with the NATO standards, thus ensuring burden sharing within the alliance without problems. Secondly,

Turkey emerged as a country with the military strategy and capabilities necessary to respond to threats within its regional security complex. As a stabilizing actor with regard to other regional problems, starting with terrorism, Turkey's level of military readiness and situational awareness is higher than most member states. Those attributes would enable Turkey to adapt to the 2030 vision document faster and with greater ease. Meanwhile, Turkey assumed a new and unprecedented position within NATO thanks to its most recent steps in the area of defense. Having built its autonomous defense ecosystem, it appears to have reached a certain point, where it can contribute more to NATO and its member states. In this regard, Turkey is no longer merely a recipient, but it supplies defense technology to NATO members to live up to its responsibilities as part of that alliance. Especially with regard to the establishment of a common cyberdefense area, Turkey is among the most suitable and ready countries vis-à-vis the 2030 goals. It is also important to note that Turkey has built considerable capacity to respond to new threats—one of the most important components of the 2030 vision document. When it comes to readiness for- and addressing the challenges caused by hybrid threats, Turkey is among the best prepared nations of NATO's 30 member states. Specifically, the security sector reform, which the country implemented since 2016, not only transformed the organization structure of Turkey's armed forces but also allowed it to take an important step toward maintaining a technology-centered and more modular army. In light of those developments, Turkey appears to be ready to work toward the goals identified in the 2030 vision document.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

There are certain steps that must be taken to align the Turkey-NATO relationship with Turkey's national interest and NATO's mission. First, we must rely more on diplomacy to address conflicts of interest. The fact that certain NATO allies have different views on Turkey's counter-terror campaign effectively hurts Turkey's primary security interests. Therefore, there is need to minimize differences of opinion among NATO members with regard to Turkey's fight against terrorism in Syria and elsewhere. At the same time, recent tensions between Turkey and Greece, which represent NATO's most important flank, entail certain

risks for the alliance's future. As such, it is necessary for NATO members to abandon the policy of arming Greece against Turkey and treat both countries in a way that promotes stability in NATO's southern flank. Hence the need to place more emphasis on diplomacy within the NATO framework. The final point is that Turkey's quest for autonomy has become increasingly obvious. That pursuit, which manifested itself especially in the area of defense and security, transforms Turkey into a strategic heavyweight within NATO. One of the most important points here is that the search for autonomy in security and defense must be supported by the domain of foreign policy and diplomacy.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS??

Turkey moved closer to the Western bloc due to the Soviet Union's 1939 demand for a regime change on the straits, its refusal to renew the 1925 Friendship and Non-Aggression Pact in 1945, and its failure to recognize Turkey's territorial integrity by demanding Kars and Ardahan in violation of the Moscow Agreement of 1921. By joining the NATO alliance 70 years ago, the country came to enjoy a security guarantee and became more and more powerful. Over the years, NATO invested in military facilities on Turkish soil and contributed to the modernization of Turkey's army. At the same time, Article 5—which requires member states to act in solidarity and together in case of an attack, and is considered the most important article for member states—represented a major security guarantee for Turkey.

Whereas Turkey's contribution to NATO was associated with its geographical location and sizeable army during the Cold War, the country expanded that framework by assuming overseas responsibilities and developing its capabilities after the Cold War. The changing definition of security—which used to be a military issue and focused on NATO's military power, defense capabilities and role as a deterrent—and the post-Cold War realization that military power was not enough to address emerging threats resulted in the development of a broader definition of security and, by extension, expanded the organization's geographical scope. In this regard, Turkey's contribution to NATO included its involvement in many NATO operations, which continues to date, thereby proving that it could exercise hard power as well as soft power. Especially since the 1990s, Turkey has been a prominent and influential player in large swaths of territory, including the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East, and it has been contributing to one of NATO's three key missions: to

manage and prevent crises. As being an important actor that can play a mediator role in conflicts in the Balkans proved Turkey can be security provider for Europe by preventing crisis before it erupts. Türkiye as an actor preventing irregular immigration flow to Europe proved it can be security provider by preventing and managing the crisis on this issue as well. More importantly, Turkey's fight against terrorism provides security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

One of the main reasons why NATO has survived for 70 years as a successful organization is its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. As such, the alliance's 2030 agenda relates to key issues such as updating the 2010 strategic concept, commitment to deterrence against- and dialogue with Russia, allocating additional time and resources to address security issues caused by China, striving to address the negative impacts of new technologies and to assume a leadership role in the area of technology, the clear inclusion of counter-terrorism in the list of core missions, human security, improving society's resilience against pandemics, natural disasters, disinformation and hybrid threats, preserving effective nuclear deterrence, reaffirming the organization's support for arms control, maintaining political harmony and unity, strengthening transatlantic consultations, reviving trust and understanding between NATO and the European Union at the highest level, preserving the organization's ability to make decisions and implement them in due time, and reinforcing the political dimensions in a way that puts it on par with military progress.

It is important to note that NATO's 2030 agenda emerged at a time when those new threats made themselves felt more and more, and the organization experienced the various difficulties of addressing them. At the same time, it came out as the need for solidarity and unity among the allies was needed much more. The updates and steps, which that report shall entail, stand to strengthen NATO and its member states, whilst making the allies more resilient and improving their capacity to overcome such challenges. In the context of that changing security environment, it is possible to argue that Turkey, too, could make valuable contributions in many areas, which the NATO 2030 report has

clearly identified to ensure that the alliance gets ready for the future. Likewise, NATO's potential contributions to Turkish efforts to address those emerging threats, its future support for efforts to build trust for the purpose of resolving disagreements among member states, and the existence of Article 5 as a collective defense clause have all become more important in this rapidly changing security environment.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

NATO will remain an organization that contributes to its members by identifying ways to address and make up for its shortcomings and taking steps to strengthen the alliance, promote solidarity among the allies, and protecting its people and values. Surely enough, the support that it will receive from the allies shall contribute to NATO's continued success.

Another important issue, which the NATO 2030 report addressed, was the negative impact of problems among member states on the organization's decision-making process and the need to take fresh steps to address that problem.

In this regard, the report stressed that the European Union's pursuit of "strategic autonomy" in many areas must continue in sync with NATO and within the framework of cooperation between NATO and the European Union. It states that Europe's commitment to improving its defense capacity would be a welcome development if it would strengthen NATO simultaneously, contribute to the fairness of transatlantic burden sharing, and promote the inclusion of NATO allies without EU membership, such as Turkey, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Certain EU members have in recent years developed bilateral and/or multilateral defense initiatives outside the NATO and EU frameworks to strengthen their cooperation with other states in the area of

NATO Training Mission Iraq and NATO Mission Iraq

Upon the request of the Iraq authorities, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed at the 2004 Istanbul Summit to assist Iraq with the training of its security forces by establishing a "Training Mission" on July 30, 2004. The mission lasted for 7 years and Turkey played an important role by providing personnel to support the mission. Currently, Turkey is an important contributor to the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) which started its operations in 2018.

defense. It is possible to argue that the driving force behind that inclination has been the unhappiness that disagreements among member states has brought to the allies. This new state of affairs, which some NATO states, like Greece, have generated with their search for bilateral alliances, not only makes Greece less likely to settle with Turkey, but also has the potential of deepening the problems and current crisis of confidence between the two NATO allies. Provided that those new defense alliance agreements, which are incompatible with NATO's principle of maintaining an equal distance with all member states, threaten to deepen existing disagreements within NATO, their contribution to the organization must be questioned separately. Such bilateral defense pacts could create problems among certain NATO states as well as undermine the safety of NATO's southern flank. All in all, it is necessary to guarantee that NATO members' bilateral defense pacts signed out of NATO do not lead them to assume a position against NATO or any of its members.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

NATO is a rare but very committed alliance for maintaining stability in the North Atlantic security zone. The primary function of NATO is deterrence through its crises management capacity, coordination of the member states' defense policies, political cohesion in security, quick combat readiness, and response to threats of all sorts if required. NATO's defined defense posture and its prerequisites require all member states to be united and committed to the shared goals of the alliance, as delineated in the Atlantic Charter. Given these pillars of the alliance, the member states are expected to design their defense and security policies to augment and complement NATO's resilience. In this sense, Turkey has not hesitated to participate in NATO tasks and fulfill its responsibilities in NATO missions with all available defense assets.

The vast capacity and capability of Turkey expanded the efficiency and effectiveness of NATO missions not only in military terms but also through its soft power in the eyes of the host nations. The image of Turkey in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, or Libya raised the trust in the foreign military presence that made the NATO missions more sustainable and resilient. Hence, Turkey's essential role goes beyond the military engagements to a contribution to the soft power of NATO.

Standing Naval Force (SNF)

As a naval component of Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) subordinate to NATO Response Force (NRF), Standing Naval Force (SNF) offers a high-quality maritime capability to the operations within Article 5 and other crisis response operations. Turkey makes a significant contribution to the Standing Naval Task Force by contributing with frigates and mine hunting vessels.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

NATO's Agenda 2030 is a designation to strengthen the alliance within a multilayered security environment and a multidisciplinary alliance structure. In this context, the alliance perceives the competitive political environment with an apparent reference to specific countries other than transnational and asymmetric risks or threats. Then there must be a precise specification of these threats and how they have been expanding and challenging the alliance. Then Turkey's posture and contribution to the alliance can best be assessed. In this sense, the geopolitical positioning of Turkey to the potential conflict-laden regions, or where the competition will take place, is an unmistakable feature of Turkey's role in NATO. There was a perception that the geopolitical importance of Turkey had faded in the post-Cold War era, though; the escalation in Ukraine and the Middle East reminded of the intertwined conflictual environment that NATO could be involved in. Hence geopolitics and beyond in the contemporary security environment require Turkey's commitment to the Agenda 2030 parallel to the other member states.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

Turkey's security concerns pushed it to take unilateral steps to counter the threats in the vicinity of its borders and area of interest. Hence, Turkey felt "alone" in facing the threats amid the allied countries not favoring Turkish concerns. For instance, the presence of and toleration of the PKK and FETÖ in Europe and the U.S. is a question mark of NATO's spirit of collective security. Furthermore, enormous support for the offshoot of the PKK terrorist organization in Syria, the PYD/YPG, contradicts the solidarity of the allied states. NATO consists of more than a conventional and regular resilience; it also faces asymmetric and hybrid threats that affect the alliance from within. Turkey expects a solid stance against any risk or threat, as was witnessed after 9/11. NATO

countries should not have their NATO hats only on in the NATO HQ but committed to the solidarity, despite their own platforms, and act united against any threat.



Kadir Üstün

SETA D.C. Coordinator

ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

Turkey has been a stalwart NATO ally since it joined the alliance shortly after its establishment. Turkey's contribution to the alliance and participation in its missions have been robust and exemplary in many ways. In the context of the Cold War, Turkey experienced the immediate threat of conflict between the Soviet Union and the U.S. as the country constituting the southern flank of the alliance. Even during times of serious crises with other alliance members, Turkey never wavered from its NATO commitments. Moreover, in international missions like the one in Afghanistan, Turkey often assumed

leadership roles as a testament to its strong military capacity. As the country with the second-largest military in the alliance, Turkey's critical geopolitical position played a significant role in NATO's strategic planning. Multiple critical NATO assets have been stationed on Turkish soil, which functioned as a deterrent against any attacks on the alliance members. In many ways, Turkey has provided security and stability for the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean, and Europe. Turkey's stronger involvement in the Middle East affairs as a country seeking stability and peace has also been a great asset for the NATO alliance. Turkey has also supported the NATO enlargement process, including its advocacy for the inclusion of Georgia and

Ukraine in the alliance. All in all, Turkey's place in the NATO architecture has been indispensable, providing it with security guarantees

Under Operation Active Endeavour, which was replaced by Operation Sea Guardian in 2016, NATO ships patrolled the Mediterranean and monitored shipping to help deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorist activity. With the same goals, Turkey carries operations in the Black Sea, under the Operation Black Sea Harmony, and shares the necessary intelligence with the related NATO authorities.

while ensuring that the southern flank of the alliance is defended by a capable and dependable country.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

In its Brussels Summit Communique, NATO announced that it would bolster its political dimension to better coordinate between allies beyond its traditional military cooperation. There has long been a debate about the purpose and general strategic direction of the NATO alliance. In the wake of today's unprecedented geopolitical challenges as well as global challenges such as pandemics, cyber threats, and space, it has become even more critical for the alliance to broaden the conversation beyond the military arena. Turkey has particularly been advocating for the enlargement of NATO's agenda, especially on the coordination of counterterrorism and humanitarian issues. Given the long-running disagreements between Turkey and other alliance members on terrorism, broadening NATO's political dialogue initiatives is relevant for Turkey. As a defensive alliance, NATO has been focused on the security of allies on the military front, but today's complex challenges require comprehensive political dialogue among member states. When the common enemy is clear, unity among NATO members can be secured relatively easily but that has not been the case when it came to security issues emanating from the migration crisis and regional terrorism. As such, Turkey supports the broadening of the NATO 2030 agenda, which promises to tackle more complex issues such as cybersecurity and promotes better political dialogue among alliance members.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

Security challenges are no longer simply geopolitical threats coming from nation-states such as Russia and China. These threats do exist, but they are often accompanied and complicated by unique and broader global problems such as pandemics, cybersecurity issues, and migration, among others. For NATO to be effective amid rap-

idly evolving regional and global challenges, the alliance needs to be much more adaptable and responsive to the specific problems faced by various allies. The most recent crisis in Ukraine due to the Russian military buildup and the threat of invasion is a stark example of how quickly the alliance can find itself in the middle of a geopolitical conflict. This requires preparation and political coordination mechanisms to be continuously active and responsive to emerging threats. Turkey has borne the brunt of security threats from regional conflicts and humanitarian challenges. Turkey has consistently brought this to NATO's agenda while giving its full support to the alliance missions around the world. Turkey has also been a vocal advocate of Georgia and Ukraine's membership in NATO. Turkey also does its share when it comes to burden-sharing among members. Turkey should continue retaining its positions on all these fronts while providing specific proposals to the NATO 2030 strategic vision to ensure that it addresses Turkish national security concerns. Better coordination and harmony among NATO allies would serve regional and global security.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

Turkey-NATO relations date back to 1952 when Ankara joined the alliance. Starting at the end of the Cold War, Turkey has acted as a security provider for the alliance rather than a security consumer. In this regard, especially since 1995, it has participated in almost all of the NATO peace-keeping operations. Apart from the debates about Turkey's S-400 procurement from Russia among certain member states, Ankara's relations with NATO can generally be described as relatively positive. The latest remarks of NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg in which he praised Turkey's efforts of de-escalation during the recent Ukrainian crisis are a good example of this. Moreover, Turkey's support of Ukraine and its close relations also caught the attention of the U.S. administration in NATO. Due to the rise of the tensions in the Black Sea region where the Ukrainian crisis is playing out, Ankara has adopted a critical role because of its leverage – the Montreux Convention, etc. – increasing Turkey's role in the alliance more than ever. Moreover, in the current situation in which Europe's energy dependence on Russia continues, the various pipelines passing through Turkish territory carrying alternative gas to various NATO countries also makes Ankara's position more crucial than ever. This energy issue will strengthen the increasing importance of Turkey in the alliance in the years leading up to 2030.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

Given the U.S.' recent priority of the Indo-Pacific region under the Biden administration, it is in Europe's best interest to deter and de-

fend against the rise of new conflicts that fall under the threshold of Article 5, whether they threaten NATO, EU or some other structure. If the U.S. decided to only fulfill its responsibility under NATO as a collective defense mission but nothing else, then Europeans would

need the assistance and support of Turkey in crisis management operations more than before. Turkey, in this regard, is an indispensable member of NATO that is capable and experienced in many operations, either operationalized under NATO missions or individual ones like in Syria, etc. The recent Ukrainian crisis, fortunately, highlighted the unavoidable geopolitical importance of Turkey in terms of its means of deterring Russia – like the Montreux Convention, etc. – and also its access to both Kyiv and Moscow at the same time. Since a new Cold War is now a given reality, NATO, even before 2030, needs to reestablish and strengthen its collective defense means, not only in relation to military might but also urgently through attaining a unified stand in NATO. This necessitates first to overcome the present divide among the European allies and the U.S., on one hand, but also asserting Turkey in its ranks as an equal member. In the case of Ankara, currently, more positive signs coming from NATO ranks are being noticed

and this is expected to be furthered toward 2030 due to the un/expected geopolitical shifts likely to occur around Turkey.

NATO Operation Unified Protector (OUP)

As the internal disturbances in Libya threatened international peace and security, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 1970 and 1973(2011). In accordance with these Resolutions, Turkey contributed to Operation Unified Protector- OUP launched in Libya between 29 March-31 October 2011 with four frigates, a submarine, a logistic support vessel, six F-16 fighters, two KC-135 tanker aircraft, Special Forces staff and helicopters deployed in vessels, Underwater Attack (SAT), Amphibious and Underwater Mission Teams.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

Today and tomorrow's diverse and complex security environment require that NATO operate on nearly three fronts – the eastern flank, southern flank, and against redirected misinformation that might be witnessed within NATO countries coming from outside in different hy-

brid forms. Surely, Turkey with its experience in war fighting capacity through its own means and geographical location is going to be at the center of NATO's newly redesigned strategy of deterring and defending alliance territory in 2030 within the new strategic concept. We are already seeing the new linkage between the southern and eastern flanks in NATO, especially after the Russian invasion of Crimea was unfortunately accomplished and Moscow's presence in Syria after 2015 was consolidated. Hence, Ankara should continue to underline this linkage in NATO and stress once again the importance of the indivisibility of security in the alliance. Therefore, indivisibility of security stands as the key issue that should be strengthened on the eastern and southern flanks since the matter of deterring Russia has gained more importance on the eve of the continuing Ukrainian crisis. Moreover, in the matter of the collective defense of NATO territory, Ankara should underline its ongoing military cooperation efforts with countries like Poland – and maybe with others willing in the future – to strengthen the capacity-building efforts of each country in NATO, including partner states like Ukraine. Lastly, Turkey should continue its efforts of de-escalating tension in its neighborhood via the use of diplomacy, whether be it in Ukraine or somewhere else in the future via its advantage of accessing Russia with its special links. All in all, Ankara should try to maintain a balancing role regarding the great power competition that is currently present in its neighborhood and also affecting NATO itself.



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ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, HOW DO YOU EVALUATE TURKEY-NATO RELATIONS?

NATO is one of the key security institutions that Ankara has determinedly invested in over 70 years despite the security environment changing drastically. NATO's transformation after the end of the Cold War aimed to respond to these changes properly. However, finding a perfect balance among the collective defense, the collective security, and the crisis-management missions has not been an easy job for NATO, especially during the times when the new great power competition among the U.S., Russia, and China became visible in the alliance's neighborhood as well as when the conflicts are hybridized. Besides, the U.S. policies based on a coalition of cooperation and tense debates between Brussels and Washington, D.C. during the era of the Trump administration about burden-sharing and the U.S. unilateralism added a tone of flexibility to NATO. Therefore, this new security environment made the NATO members think about possible self-help solutions and strengthened debates on strategic autonomy. Turkey was not an exemption in this regard. However, Turkey never denied that Ankara and Brussels have both benefited from Turkey's membership in the NATO alliance since Turkey is a capable partner and lends importance to the idea of indivisibility of trans-Atlantic security, which is the backbone of the NATO deterrence.

WHERE DOES TURKEY STAND IN THE NATO 2030 AGENDA? HOW DO YOU ASSESS THIS?

NATO's 2030 agenda is about guaranteeing the alliance's resilience in the face of new challenges, threats, and risks. These challenges ranged

from the strengthening of NATO's deterrence and interoperability to responding to climate change and hybrid threats feeding chaos, fear, and disinformation. Indeed, both 2030 initiatives and subsequent NATO communique after the Crimean crisis reflect how NATO members will be ready to contribute to this NATO vision. Turkey, already reinforcing its strategic posture in the neighborhood of the NATO area, will be a great asset for Brussels' 2030 vision.

The current security crisis on the edge of Europe can be accepted as both a challenge and an opportunity in this regard. It, on the one hand, made the divergencies among the NATO members about the nature and the emergency of the threat visible. Besides, since NATO's eastern flank is reinforced, this may deepen the gap between security guarantees given to the eastern and southern flanks of NATO. However, on the other hand, it creates an opportunity for the alliance members to bolster interoperability, coordination, and political solidarity among themselves via joint drills and patrols to which Turkey keeps contributing and proves its intention to be anchored in NATO architecture as a capable and reliable partner.

NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) has been deployed to one of its Forward Operating Bases (FOB) in Konya, Turkey to enhance the recognized Air and Maritime picture as part of the Alliance's tailored assurance measures to its southern Ally. Some of the flights under Assurance Measures Tailored to Turkey by NATO AWACS (E-3A) aircrafts and all the flights under Global Coalition Against DAESH have been conducted from FOB-Konya. Moreover, aerial refueling support is provided to NATO AWACS aircrafts flying over Romania under Assurance Measures.

WHAT ARE SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND NATO?

For a long time, Turkey has underlined the need of developing a southern vision in NATO. After the annexation of Crimea, NATO members' attention naturally was focused on ensuring security and stability in the eastern flank. However, continuing civil conflicts in Libya, Syria, and the Sahel as well as increasing armament and threat of terrorism and soft risks like refugee flows, etc. will make developing a southern strategy for NATO inevitable. Besides NATO will have no luxury to concentrate on just eastern flank threats since the Mediterranean is an area of Russian assertiveness and China is looking for partners and ways to establish a

stepping-stone in the region. Hence Turkey, with all its civil, military, and intelligence capabilities, will become one of the strategic assets in NATO's future southern strategy. Besides, crisis-management missions of NATO need reconstruction and dialogue capacities. Here Ankara can play a role in strengthening NATO's credibility. Indeed, developing a strategy to fight against terrorism can increase the interoperability of Turkey and other NATO members in the alliance. Turkey has suffered from terrorism and succeeded to develop forward defense capabilities as well as experience in this regard. Last, but not least, NATO's strategy for its rivals is based on duality. Brussels emphasized, on the one hand, deterrence and on the other hand opportunities and dialogue. This flexibility can be supported by Ankara since Turkey has its own cooperative ties with Moscow and Beijing.



**Mehmet Çağatay
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UKRAINE CRISIS AND TURKEY'S UNDERRATED BUT INDISPENSABLE ROLE WITHIN NATO

Russia has most recently made frequent appearances within the context of the Turkey-NATO relationship, as the deepening bilateral relationship between Turkey and Russia became an important factor. Although Turkey remains among the most active and powerful NATO allies, especially in a military sense, and assumed active roles in places like Afghanistan, Libya and Karabakh (where the United States and many other member states proved to be timid or passive), the country has been generally underappreciated. Turkey's recently adopted policy toward the Turkic world and its ongoing efforts to deepen its cooperation with that part of the world, too, have been completely ignored by the Transatlantic alliance.

Despite balancing out the Russian military and influence in those theaters, Turkey has been frequently criticized by NATO and the West over its high-level dialogue with Russia. The Western powers (including the United States and European governments) alienate Turkey due to its defense cooperation with Russia, raising questions regarding the country's NATO membership and even subjecting it to sanctions. Naturally, the most recent escalation between NATO and Russia, too, played a defining role regarding the Turkey-NATO relationship and, in a broader sense, NATO's integrity.

The aforementioned escalation goes beyond the binding security guarantees that Russia has demanded from NATO. Primarily, the Russian military buildup at Ukraine's border in the spring of 2021 fueled concern in all NATO countries in Ukraine's vicinity, which viewed the unfolding situation as a security threat. Secondly, in October, NATO expelled eight Russian diplomats, who were serving at its Brussels headquarters, due to their involvement in intelligence operations. Russia re-

taliated against that measure by terminating the work of its permanent representation to NATO and ending the activities of NATO's military communication mission and information bureau in Moscow. In line with those developments, Russia began to further increase its military presence near the Ukrainian border. Those forces, which had been deployed to the area in the spring, were not withdrawn –which means that Moscow made an additional military buildup. During the same period, a refugee crisis occurred at the Belarus-Poland border. With the world concentrating on those developments, Russia nearly doubled the size of its military force at its border with Ukraine.

The security guarantees, which Russia demanded from NATO amid the Ukraine crisis, would have raised questions about the organization's very existence and effectively reshaped Europe's entire security

architecture and the post-Soviet order. In this regard, it is possible to describe Russia's most recent steps as the single greatest challenge that NATO has ever faced. Needless to say, that situation has the potential to fundamentally impact the security policy of Turkey, a NATO member in the Black Sea region. Prior to the latest crisis, Turkey faced criticism over its purchase of Russian defense equipment and its strategic partnership with Russia. However, the country's attempts to serve as a mediator and pursue a balanced policy during the crisis have not been appreciated either. If anything, the Western powers have deliberately highlighted the sale of Turkish weapons to Ukraine (as a threat to Russia, rather than a praise) in

an attempt to drive a wedge between Ankara and Moscow. Notwithstanding, they have disregarded the fact that Turkey supported Ukraine, in a way that the West could not, despite Russia. Unlike Turkey, which has been subjected to sanctions and alienation, NATO allies like Germany and France remained largely indifferent toward the Russian challenge in Ukraine due to their deep cooperation with- and dependence on Moscow.

By contrast, Turkey has been one of the most active NATO members in Ukraine, having played a similar role in Karabakh, Libya and Syria. In this context, it is possible to say that Ankara pursued a rather

Turkey hosts the Allied Land Command located in İzmir and the Detection and Tackling Radar Base located in Malatya/Kürecik within the scope of NATO Ballistic Missile Defense. By allocating airbases in strategically important areas for NATO use, it provides support in the fight against terrorism, thus protecting not only its own borders but also the southeastern borders of the Alliance.

delicate policy. Despite maintaining cordial relations with Russia, the country has not watched from the sidelines the Russian challenge to Russia nor Moscow's aggressive stance toward Ukraine. That approach is certainly in line with the general nature of the Turkish-Russian relationship, as the two countries remain committed to working together despite a series of geopolitical conflicts. Indeed, Ukraine has been no exception in that regard. While the Russian challenge highlighted cracks within NATO, it became clear that the European states, due to their high level of dependence, could not adopt a clear position despite the security threat against them. Notwithstanding, Turkey revealed yet again the double standards, which it faced over its relationship with Russia, whilst adopting a far more active position than NATO's European members and demonstrating that its relationship with Moscow did not stand in the way of its response.



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TURKEY'S INDISPENSABLE ROLE IN NATO'S DEFENSE AGAINST TERRORISM STRATEGY

While modern conflicts are shifting their shapes, terrorism is becoming a challenge that continues to evolve. The multidimensional and latitudinous threat environment demands coordinated and consolidated efforts for a collective defense. In the case of NATO, the alliance's contributions to countering terrorism (CT) are far-reaching both in terms of concepts and practices. The organization's active CT efforts predominantly aim to improve threat awareness by establishing a shared realization and appreciation of terrorist threats through a high degree of intelligence sharing and standing consultations. Furthermore, the alliance focuses on developing relevant capabilities to prepare and respond to terrorist threats. This requires the adoption of emerging or adapted technologies to mitigate the impact of terrorism or terrorist acts and to thwart and vanquish asymmetric threats. Finally, the alliance strives to enhance engagement with partner countries and other international actors by creating common values defined by the Euro-Atlantic community. As far as one knows or can see, the alliance's active CT efforts are pretty much geographically oriented, aiming to expand capable security structures, especially toward the European allies' surroundings. In such a security ecosystem, a well-functioning state should be able to deter threats emanating from terrorism via its own capacity and capabilities.

Since its accession to the alliance, Turkey has contributed to NATO's aforementioned efforts in multiple areas and serves both as an operational force on the ground by maintaining the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic community, and a catalyst for international dialogue on terrorism and counterterrorism by promoting regional and international cooperation. Turkey supports the Global Coalition

to defeat ISIS through the provision of the NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) operating from a forward-operating base in Konya. In fact, Turkey is the only NATO country to have fought ISIS on the ground. Turkey also provides advisory, training, and capacity-building missions to ensure partner states have adequate capabilities to prevent, protect against and respond to terrorist threats. Turkey, in previous NATO missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Mediterranean regions, has provided military personnel and force protection units,

Contributing permanently to NATO's Sea Guard Operation in the Mediterranean, Turkey carries out reconnaissance and inspection activities in the Aegean Sea in order to prevent irregular migration.

ensured situational awareness, conducted surveillance activities, and supported CT and capacity-building efforts. Even in Afghanistan, under the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) and the RSM (Resolute Support Mission) frameworks, Turkey took over the regional commandship of Kabul twice, trained the Afghan National Army and Police, initiated a sustainable assistance campaign, and redounded to the infrastructural reconstruction and socio-economic development of

the country. Even if Turkey has such a crucial role in NATO, unfortunately, the alliance does not share Turkey's concerns with respect to the Syrian conundrum. Despite no convergence on Turkey's CT efforts and military posture in Syria, a conciliatory attitude avoiding increasing the divergences between the country and the alliance is necessary. The long and the short of the matter, for the future of NATO, sustaining a constant and shared threat perception should play a vital role in a more far-reaching security strategy for the alliance.

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