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THESIS

**MODERNIZATION OF THE TURKISH NAVY:
AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS AND SIGNIFICANCE**

by

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September 2020

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AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS AND SIGNIFICANCE**

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ABSTRACT

The Turkish navy has experienced a modernization in the twenty-first century. However, there is a lack of academic literature on the Turkish navy, an issue that hinders security and strategy analysts during a time of heightened tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. This thesis examines the political factors and foreign policy decisions that caused a modernization in the country's navy. Additionally, it addresses the capabilities and roles of the Turkish navy in the future due to its modernization efforts. In doing so, this thesis describes the history of the defense industry in Turkey, highlighting the shift from foreign procurement to domestic production. It explores the factors and significance surrounding the navy's shift from primarily being a littoral force to having both littoral and blue water aspirations. Finally, this research concludes that a security dilemma and prestige propelled the Turkish navy toward modernization. While Turkey may not be as influential as other major states, if it continues its track of fleet modernization, its navy will be a key source of influence for the country.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	anti-access/anti-denial
AIP	air independent propulsion
AKP	Justice and Development Party
AMASCOS	airborne maritime situation control system
ASELSAN	Military Electronic Industries
BLACKSEAFOR	Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group
CAFRAD	multi-functional phased array radar
CTF-151	Combined Task Group 151
DECA	Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement
DIDA	Defense Industry Development and Support Administration
DIMDEG	sea combat control ship
EEZ	exclusive economic zone
EMGF	East Mediterranean Gas Forum
ESSM	Evolved Sea Sparrow missile
EU	European Union
GNA	Government of National Accord
LHD	amphibious assault ship (multipurpose)
LNA	Libyan National Army
MILDEN	national submarine
MILGEM	national ship
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SSB	Presidency of Defense Industries
SSDF	Defense Industry Support Fund
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VLS	vertical launching system

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, Turkey has gone to great lengths to upgrade and improve its navy, especially in terms of domestic production, research, and development. In Turkey's Vision for 2023, the country set the goals of becoming one of the world's top ten largest economies as well as being self-reliant in the defense sector. While reports have not spent much time on the role the navy plays in this vision, the advancements and modernizations in the naval force have become crowning achievements in making the vision a reality. Until recently, there has not been much reporting on the Turkish naval advancements, creating a surprise effect in the international community. This thesis will explore the changes that caused Turkey to shift its defense industry policy with a specific focus on its naval force.

A. IMPORTANCE

This question is significant because it expands upon research surrounding defense industries. While there is much research on the development of defense industry policies and how it affects the growth of military services, research on Turkey is limited. There are multiple works on Turkey's defense sector and army, but very little, if not any, work on its development of the navy. This is a significant academic gap.

Turkey is a country that is trying to become a major player in the international community. One reason why Turkey strives to be a major player is because of its position at a geographic crossroad. Not only does the Anatolian landmass straddle Europe and Asia, Turkey maintains significant maritime borders as well. Turkey borders the Black Sea to the north, the Mediterranean to the south, and the Aegean to the west. Additionally, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits (one of the world's important international waterways, which is vital for the connection of the Black Sea to the Mediterranean) are contained within Turkish borders.

With the maritime borders in mind, it would make sense for Turkey to maintain a robust navy. While there is no mistake that Turkey maintains the largest navy in the

region,¹ small amounts of literature are available on the topic. The lack of literature on the Turkish navy represents more than an academic gap. It also is a detriment to security and policy analysts given the heightened tensions in the Middle East and Mediterranean. This thesis will explore the political and strategic factors driving the Turkish navy toward modernization. Additionally, it will examine the future capabilities of the navy. This is an effort to fill the academic and strategic gaps surrounding the emerging force of the Turkish navy.

B. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

While there is no significant literature on the Turkish navy available, one can use themes of the available research to help answer the question. These themes suggest that a security dilemma can be a possible explanation why a state modernizes its navy. This of course seems like a logical explanation. If a state with significant maritime borders has issues with national security it most likely would want to maintain a robust navy. This calls for expansion and modernization of the navy to match the threat. Turkey's security dilemma is also bolstered by its recent shift in policy, specifically its shift away from NATO, a topic which will be discussed later. A focus on security independence forces a state to either reimagine or develop its security apparatuses.

Additionally, prestige could also be a reason why states modernize their naval forces. As previously mentioned, Turkey is trying to become a major player in the international community. Turkey's influence, while not as powerful as others, is beginning to gain recognition. As Turkey continues to emerge, it will focus on having a premier navy. A pattern exists in the current era that major states have strong navies. A prestigious navy gives a state influence, especially if it can develop and maintain high value vessels, such as an aircraft carrier. This is even more important for countries with large maritime borders. If a maritime country wants its presence known, a show of naval power and prestige might accomplish this feat.

¹ D. Mitch, "Turkish Navy Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans through 2030," Naval Analyses, last modified September 16, 2017, <http://www.navalanalyses.com/2017/09/turkish-navy-modernization-and.html>

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

As previously stated, the literature surrounding the Turkish navy is limited. However, a collection of academic works exists on the production of defense industry policies in the world. Reviewing this literature provides the basis from which some of the themes of this thesis are drawn from. Four distinct themes or historical overviews are crucial to this thesis: the factors which shape a country's defense industry, an overview of Turkey's foreign policy, Turkey's civil-military relations, and the lack of attention on the Turkish navy.

1. Factors of Defense Industry Development

Many countries strive to establish an indigenous defense industry. This is not an uncommon practice. In fact, John Mearsheimer argues that it is solely on the individual state to maximize its own defense.² While individual states are responsible for the establishment of their own defense industries, most share a common reason for doing so, national security. National security is one of the vital concerns for a state, as a state needs to be constantly aware of possible threats.³ Due to this concern, it is only logical for a state to develop its defense industry when it believes its security is threatened.⁴

Kenneth Boutin argues that a base model for defense industrialization exists. This model is derived from developed industrial states which then can be applied, with adjustments, as a different model for developing industrial states. It is important for this thesis to examine both models because Turkey statistically hovers along the borderline of a developed and a developing state in multiple categories.⁵ Boutin's argument claims that

² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Conflicts*, Updated Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 33.

³ Ayşe i. A. Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry* (Ankara, Turkey: SETA Publications, 2019), 24.

⁴ J.D. Kenneth Boutin, "Emerging Defense Industries: Prospects and Implications," in *The Modern Defense Industry: Political, Economic, and Technological Issues*, ed. Richard A. Bitzinger (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2009), 229.

⁵ "Top 25 Developed and Developing Countries," Investopedia, November 21, 2019, <https://www.investopedia.com/updates/top-developing-countries/>.

the classical model of defense industrialization follows a linear trajectory of progressive developments of organic arms production and research. Additionally, the classical model assumes that political leaders are invested in achieving indigenous arms research and capability.⁶ While similar to the classical model, the defense industrialization of developing states is different because it does not contain a linear approach. Achieving domestic development of arms and defense-related research is important to developing states because it frees them from external sources and influence, leading to an increase in national security. However, unlike already developed states, developing states may not have enough capital to invest in the defense sector, creating a piecemeal and opportunistic approach to defense industrialization.⁷ Additionally, developing states may suffer from being too optimistic in regard to timelines and results. While developed states can suffer from this phenomenon as well, Boutin argues that it is more likely in developing states.⁸ Developers may overestimate their own capabilities. Political leaders may be too obsessed in gaining national prestige that they take the developers word at face value with little oversight. Either way, these actions may lead to being too optimistic resulting in a failed industrialization.

2. Overview of Turkey's Foreign Policy

While a historical overview of the shift of Turkey's foreign policy is broad, one can break it down into multiple subsections which provide critical themes. These subsections are crucial for understanding the shift in policy. These include the themes of a transition from nonaggressive to active posture in policy, the shift toward independence and less reliance on NATO, and a shift toward policy with Islamic overtones.

a. Nonaggressive to Active Posture

Turkey has always been apprised of regional activity due to its unique geographic position and its history of being at the center of the Ottoman Empire. However, Mustafa

⁶ Boutin, "Emerging Defense Industries: Prospects and Implications," 228.

⁷ Boutin, 230–231.

⁸ Boutin, 231–232.

Kemal Atatürk led the newly formed republic by the policy of peace at home, peace abroad.⁹ Thus, the infant years of the Turkish Republic did not adopt an overly aggressive foreign policy and instead focused on domestic reforms and internal politics.¹⁰ Ankara even withstood pressure from both Germany and the Allied powers and remained neutral throughout the course of World War II. Turkey only declared war on Germany a few months before the Fall of Berlin, a political move initiated in order to gain a seat at the postwar conferences.¹¹ Such a policy signaled a shift from neutrality to alignment with the West during the Cold War, joining NATO in 1950.¹²

However, another shift occurred. The establishment of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the party of President Erdoğan, emphasized a shift from non-aggressive foreign policy to that of strategic depth.¹³ The concept of Turkey's strategic depth has been credited to Ahmet Davutoğlu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Prime Minister of Turkey. Davutoğlu argued that Turkey should abandon its stance as a pro-Western power and focus on being a prominent figure in regional issues, especially in the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus.¹⁴ This would become a central aspect in the AKP's "zero problems with neighbors" foreign policy principle, a principle of regional cooperation and partnership under Turkey's guidance and influence.¹⁵ While the AKP achieved success with its new outlook, the Arab Spring rattled Turkish foreign policy leading to another shift. This time Ankara took a more interventionalist approach to the

⁹ Aaron Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the Pursuit of Regional Order* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge Journals, 2014), 3.

¹⁰ Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry*, 54.

¹¹ Kemal Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 30.

¹² Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance*, 32.

¹³ Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy*, 6.

¹⁴ Behlül Özkan, "Turkey, Davutoğlu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism," *Survival* 56, no.4 (2014): 119, 121, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.941570>.

¹⁵ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Zero Problems in a New Era: Realpolitik is No Answer to the Challenges Posed by the Arab Spring," *Foreign Policy*, March 21, 2013, 2.

region, supporting democratic governance, especially political parties with undertones of religious conservatism akin to those of the AKP.¹⁶

b. *Shift toward Independence from NATO*

One of the other themes that is presented in reviewing Turkish foreign policy is that of a shift away from NATO. In 1950, Turkey became a member of the alliance. This was a major step in trying to align with the West and the emerging world order of the Cold War Era, as Turkey also sought membership in the two Bretton Woods institutions-the World Bank and the IMF.¹⁷ Turkey's alignment with the West was founded on sharing a common threat, the Soviet Union. As early as March 1945, the Soviet Union made territorial claims to northeast Turkey and demanded privileged shipping rights through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles,¹⁸ thus garnering a U.S. response to defend Turkey.¹⁹ In the early years of Turkey's membership in NATO, its foreign policy reflected a commitment to the alliance. Even though sympathetic to Palestine, Turkey disengaged from the issue in order to gain favor with the West.²⁰ Turkey favored anti-communist regimes in the Middle East and supported the Baghdad Pact.²¹ Additionally, Turkey's foreign policy was against the nationalization of the Suez Canal and sided with France in voting against Algerian self-determination.²²

However, in recent years Turkish foreign policy has become critical of its NATO allies. While Turkey is still linked to the West through economics and the dependence on NATO troops for security, its alliance has become strained. Examining what caused the strain helps to understand the shift. The beginning cracks of the alliance started to form

¹⁶ Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy*, 93–94.

¹⁷ Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance*, 29.

¹⁸ Kirisci, 29.

¹⁹ Kirisci, 29.

²⁰ Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy*, 16.

²¹ Feroz Ahmad, "The Historical Background of Turkey's Foreign Policy," in *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, ed. Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004), 16.

²² Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance*, 34.

due to the manner of the removal of U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey. This was a U.S. response to the Cuban missile crisis, but Turkey saw it as a lack of security interest in the country.²³ The cracks continued to grow throughout the later part of the Cold War as Turkey's democracy was threatened every decade by military coups. Additionally, Turkey did not approve of the United States' handling of Iraq throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. The UN sanctions against Iraq cost Turkey almost \$100 billion in trade.²⁴ Furthermore, Turkey did not approve of the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 and U.S. support for the Kurds in the region.²⁵ Considering these major events in the light of Turkey's partnership with the West, one can begin to understand the reason behind Turkey's strained relations with NATO partners.

c. Islamic Overtones

Another theme discussed when reviewing Turkish foreign policy is that of Islamic overtones. While Islamic principles were a part of the Ottoman state, secularization was the way forward for the last part of Ottoman rule and the early Turkish republic. However, that did not stop Turkish politicians from using religious sentiments for political gains.²⁶ Many Turkish politicians tried to form Islamic political parties but were deemed unconstitutional since they were too anti-secular.²⁷ One such party was the Welfare Party, which provided the basis for the AKP. However, the AKP took a more liberal democratic approach to rule, labeling itself as a conservative democrat party.²⁸

While the AKP did run on moderate platforms to attract the most voters during the 2002 elections, Islamic overtones slowly crept into the party. This was due to two factors: the gaining of holdover Islamic party supporters, people whose parties had been

²³ Kirisci, 37.

²⁴ Kirisci, 69.

²⁵ Kirisci, 71.

²⁶ Kirisci, 83–84.

²⁷ Kirisci, 85.

²⁸ Kirisci, 86–87.

dissolved, and the loyalty of the Islamic bourgeoisie, who gained power under Erdogan.²⁹ As Islamic support for the AKP grew, Turkey's foreign policy had started to shift from a secular approach to an Islamic one. In post-invasion Iraq, Turkey looked to strengthen ties with the Iraqi Islamic Party, a party born out of the Muslim Brotherhood movement.³⁰ Additionally, Ankara supported Hamas in 2006 further shifting its policy to supporting Islamic parties.³¹ These decisions also led to the support of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 2012.³² Thus, the AKP's Islamic overtones have shifted Turkey's foreign policy.

3. Civil-Military Relations

Another theme established in the literature is that of civil-military relations. Democratic values contain the concept that people in authority are freely-elected representatives who exercise authority over the military.³³ However, that has not always been the case in Turkey. The traditional view of Turkish civ-mil relations is that of weak elected officials who are closely monitored by strong, popular military commanders. These commanders are ready to intervene in the political bureaucracy if deemed necessary for the betterment of Turkey.³⁴ This strong sense of military guardianship dates back to the beginning of the Turkish Republic.

Aptly named after Ataturk, the Turkish military has perpetuated the concept of Kemalism throughout the republic's history. Kemalism was the ideology of Ataturk's political party which sought to eliminate the inherited social, ethnic, and religious divides of the Ottoman Empire and replace them with a common secular model based on Western

²⁹ Simon A. Waldman and Emre Caliskan, *The New Turkey and its Discontents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 63, 66.

³⁰ Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy*, 9.

³¹ Stein, 17.

³² Stein, 9.

³³ James Burk, "Theories of Democratic Civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 29, no.1 (2002), 8.

³⁴ Ersel Aydnal, "Civil-Military Relations Transformed," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no.1 (2012), 100.

cultures.³⁵ The military established itself as the protector of secular modernization. According to military officials, civilian leaders create destructive divisions which can be detrimental to the country. Members of the armed forces are not prone to destructive divisions because of the robust indoctrination of Kemalist ideals in military schooling.³⁶ Thus, if Turkey was in disarray it was the fault of the politicians, not the military or political system.³⁷

In recent decades there has been a shift in Turkish civil-military relations. While not quite a role reversal, the civilian institutions have become strong enough to subordinate the Turkish military under their control, leading to a democratization of civil-military relations. The explanation for this shift lies with the simultaneous rise of the AKP and the country's candidacy declaration for full membership in the European Union. While there is scholarly debate on which event caused the initial wave of change³⁸ one cannot deny that the turn of the twenty-first century issued in a wave of democratization in Turkish civil-military relations. One of the criteria of the 1999 EU candidacy was a reform to Turkey's balance of power between the government and military.³⁹ One of the platforms the AKP ran on during the 2002 general election was for full European membership, lending help to their political victory.⁴⁰

The irony of the AKP's victory in 2002 was that a political party with conservative, religious roots did not face intervention from the military, the self-proclaimed defenders of secularism. This is because of the AKP's platform of EU membership, which was a

³⁵ Rahman Dag, "The Role of Contesting Ideologies: Civil-Military Relations in Turkey," *Journal of Global Analysis* 6, no.2 (2016), 161.

³⁶ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 81.

³⁷ Aydin, "Civil-Military Relations Transformed," 100; Metin Heper, "Civil-Military Relations," in *The Routledge Handbook of Turkish Politics*, ed. Alpaslan Ozerdem and Matthew Whiting (New York: Routledge, 2019), 116.

³⁸ Zeki Sarigil, "Europeanization as Institutional Change: The Case of the Turkish Military," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no.1 (2007).

³⁹ Hakan Sahin, "Turkey's Play with its Military," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 29, no.4 (2018), 34.

⁴⁰ Metin Gurcan, *Opening the Black Box: The Turkish Military Before and After July 2016* (Warwick, UK: Helion & Company, 2018), 26.

portrayal of modernization and secularism. Such a move inadvertently caused the military leadership to relinquish some of its power.⁴¹ Under Erdogan, the AKP further democratized civil-military relations by reforming the General Staff, reducing the function of the National Security Council, and restructuring the military schools.⁴² Additionally, the AKP sought to limit the power of the military, not just in civ-mil affairs. In 2013, Article 35 of the military's Internal Service Law was revised to state the function of the military was to protect Turkey from only foreign threats, removing the protection from internal threats.⁴³

While most scholars agree that the AKP and the EU candidacy were important factors in the democratization of Turkish civil-military relations, Metin Gurcan offers possible other reasons. Gurcan agrees that the EU candidacy helped reform civ-mil relations, but Turkey's EU reforms slowed by 2005. Gurcan argues that the AKP's popularity and influence also contributed to the shift in civ-mil relations. He claims that a political party's popularity helps establish a strong government, which in turn balances the political-military power.⁴⁴ Additionally, Gurcan argues that a new elite class has formed with conservative ideologies supportive of the AKP. This new class has overtaken the former elites whose allegiance was with the military, thus reducing the power of the military.⁴⁵

4. Lack of Literature on the Turkish Navy

While there is a significant amount of literature on Turkey's defense industrialization and its shift in foreign policy under the AKP, the amount of literature on the Turkish navy is lacking. Sources exist describing basic, unclassified information and capabilities of the different platforms of the Turkish navy. These sources range from

⁴¹ Heper, "Civil-Military Relations," 123.

⁴² Sahin, "Turkey's Play with its Military," 47.

⁴³ Sahin, 35.

⁴⁴ Gurcan, *Opening the Black Box*, 38–39.

⁴⁵ Gurcan, 43.

newspaper articles to comprehensive naval collections such as *Jane's Fighting Ships*. However, what is lacking is a strong collective source of academic material and research on the subject. As previously stated, this thesis will directly address the academic gap and try to fill it, incorporating the themes of the literature.

In doing so, this thesis will expand upon how Turkey's shift in foreign policy and civil-military relations has influenced the modernization of its navy. As seen during the AKP era, the defense budget has increased with a focus on domestic industry.⁴⁶ Turkey's foreign policy shift has created interventionalist and militaristic undertones which have directly led to large scale naval exercises in all of the bordering seas.⁴⁷ Additionally, to maintain the domestic production of the navy, large investments have been made toward the state naval shipyards, with the aim to transfer the bulk of production to the private sector.⁴⁸

D. OVERVIEW

This thesis will examine the political factors which caused Turkey to modernize its defense industry policy, paying particular attention to the advancements and expansion of Turkey's naval force. Additionally, this thesis will address the role of the Turkish Navy in the future due to its modernization efforts. Chapter II will focus on the political factors which influenced modernization in the navy. Specifically, this chapter will examine the role of Turkish foreign policy. The chapter will also outline the history of the defense industry in Turkey, highlighting the shift from foreign procurement to domestic production. Chapter III will look specifically at the evolution of Turkish naval strategy. It will explore the factors which caused the navy to shift from primarily being a littoral force to having both littoral and blue water aspirations. Chapter IV will then proceed to address the future capabilities and the roles of the Turkish navy in light of the country's modernization efforts.

⁴⁶ Deborah Sanders, *Maritime Power in the Black Sea* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 49.

⁴⁷ "'Mavi Vatan': Perspective of Turkish Sea Power," United World, December 4, 2019, <https://uwidata.com/6553-mavi-vatan-perspectives-of-turkish-sea-power/>

⁴⁸ Sanders, *Maritime Power in the Black Sea*, 50.

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II. EVOLUTION OF DEFENSE PROCUREMENT

Turkish evolution of defense procurement has shifted from foreign procurement to domestic production, a change which is exhibited in the Turkish fleet. Such a shift has been caused by the significant events in Turkey's foreign policy.

A. HISTORY OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

A change in foreign policy can signal modernization of multiple sectors within a country. Turkey is no different. The changing policy has signaled modernization in the defense sector, especially within the navy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, two components that have caused policy changes are the AKP's platform and the shift toward independence from NATO. While these have contributed, there was a significant event in the 1970s which was the catalyst for an immediate push for modernization and a change in foreign policy.

1. 1975 Arms Embargo

A main tenet of national interest in Turkey has been the issue of Cyprus. The island is home to a majority of Greek Cypriots, but Turkish Cypriots constitute the largest minority. The 1950s witnessed an intensification of support for the Turkish minority of the island by the Turkish government, especially because the Greek and Turkish communities of Cyprus engaged in armed conflict. Turkey's interest intensified to the point that President Johnson wrote a letter to Prime Minister Inonu forcibly warning that military intervention would be unacceptable, especially if American and NATO weapons were used.⁴⁹ Even with this warning, Turkish support reached a boiling point in 1974 when Turkey invaded and occupied Cyprus to intervene on behalf of the Turkish minority.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Lyndon B. Johnson and Ismet Inonu, "President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu: Correspondence between President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu, June 1964, as Released by the White House, January 15, 1966," *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1966): 386–387.

⁵⁰ Kerem Oktem, *Turkey Since 1989: Angry Nation* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2011), 51–52.

The invasion of Cyprus disrupted the cohesion of NATO, as Greece pulled out of the military arm of the alliance as a result of Turkish actions.⁵¹ The United States, worried about the cohesion of NATO and angered that Turkey disregarded previous warnings, decided that actions would have to be taken against Turkey. Instead of immediately condemning Turkey's actions, the United States finally chose to impose an arms embargo. The embargo went into effect in February 1975, freezing deliveries for over \$200 million in arms and security grants, including \$78 million-worth of equipment already paid for.⁵²

The arms embargo against Turkey was the catalyst for modernization and a change in foreign policy. Turkey's relationship with the United States and NATO had already developed cracks due to the removal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey during the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁵³ President Johnson's letter and the arms embargo cracked the relationship even more. While Turkey continued to remain a NATO partner, the embargo proved that Turkey needed to modernize its defense sector and become less reliant on NATO for military arms.⁵⁴ The events of the early 1970s effectively jumpstarted Turkey's modern defense industry, a topic which will be discussed later in this chapter. Additionally, the arms embargo commenced the shift toward independence from NATO.

2. Commitment to NATO

Turkey's foreign policy after 1975 started to shift away from total reliance on the security blanket of NATO. Foreign policy was not as big of a concern as opposed to domestic issues during the early years of the Turkish Republic. The country's first major shift in foreign policy was the decision to join NATO. Joining NATO was a calculated decision which proved to the international community that Turkey was willing to move away from isolationism. After World War II, Turkey sought the security umbrella of

⁵¹ Nasuh Uslu, *The Turkish-American Relationship Between 1947 and 2003: The History of a Distinctive Alliance* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003), 210.

⁵² Uslu, *The Turkish-American Relationship Between 1947 and 2003*, 211.

⁵³ Omer Karasapan, "Turkey's Armaments Industries," *MERIP Middle East Report*, Jan-Feb 1987, 27.

⁵⁴ Karasapan, "Turkey's Arment Industries," 27.

NATO. Two applications were filed and twice were denied. Not until Turkey committed troops to the Korean War (a sign of commitment to the alliance) was the country's application approved.⁵⁵

Turkey's commitment to NATO was strong in the beginning years of the alliance. Additionally, Turkey also favored a strong pro-American relationship. However, the Johnson letter and the arms embargo shifted such thinking. The Turkish reaction to the Johnson letter was filled with disdain toward the United States and called for rethinking the country's pro-American stance. A mere decade later, the arms embargo was enacted against Turkey. Given the outrage surrounding the Johnson letter, one would expect the same reaction following the embargo. However, the reaction was muted in comparison, instead laying the foundation for rethinking Turkish foreign policy.⁵⁶ Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit suggested that Turkey would leave NATO if the embargo was not lifted. However, Ecevit never fully believed leaving was an option, but he wanted to rethink Turkey's role in the alliance.⁵⁷ He believed that Turkey carried too heavy of a burden within NATO, contributing a greater proportion of budget and manpower than any other member.⁵⁸ Ecevit also believed Turkey's dependence on NATO, especially the United States, for military equipment impeded Turkish development.⁵⁹ These beliefs formed the inspiration for Ecevit's idea for a new national security concept. This concept would seek to reestablish Turkey as a regional power in the Middle East and the Balkans, while also maintaining relations and commitments to NATO and European allies. Additionally, the concept would also focus on a domestic development of a defense industry.⁶⁰ Ecevit outlined this new national security concept in a public address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies on 15 May 1978:

⁵⁵ Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry*, 50.

⁵⁶ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 117.

⁵⁷ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 118.

⁵⁸ Bulent Ecevit, "Turkey's Security Policies," *Survival* 20, no.5 (1978): 203.

⁵⁹ Ecevit, "Turkey's Security Policies," 203–204.

⁶⁰ Ecevit, 205.

Turkey is also a member of the community of Europe, but our starting point is the Balkan area, the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, we should give greater emphasis to these historical and geographic realities...Another factor that we have to keep in mind in evolving a new national security concept and, based on that, a new defense policy is that our defense system and structure should not be a burden but should rather be a spur to our economy. We should therefore try to develop such industries for our defense as would be compatible with the means of our economy and which would increase its productivity.⁶¹

Prime Minister Ecevit's national security concept initiated an era of back and forth agreements with NATO and the United States. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Turkey became the only Western ally in the Northern Tier opposed to Soviet advancement into the Middle East.⁶² In order to strengthen the relationship with Turkey, the United States decided to lift the arms embargo in 1980. Additionally, the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) strengthened the relationship by allowing American bases to still operate in Turkey while also giving more autonomy to the Turkish government. Under DECA, the United States was able to keep 12 of its military bases in the country, while Turkey was given exclusive use of 13 military installations previously used by NATO allies.⁶³ The signing of DECA also led to an increase of American military aid toward Turkey, peaking at \$715 million in 1984.⁶⁴ DECA was also significant in jumpstarting Turkey's defense industry. The agreement allowed for an exchange of production technology and information between the two countries, resulting in factory production of F-16 aircraft in Turkey.⁶⁵

The final years of the Cold War saw a rapprochement between Turkey and NATO. However, many scholars believed with the fall of the Soviet Union, Turkey's contributions

⁶¹ Ecevit, 205.

⁶² Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 118.

⁶³ Hale, 120.

⁶⁴ Hale, 120.

⁶⁵ Karasapan, "Turkey's Arment Industries," 27–31.

to the alliance were no longer necessary.⁶⁶ Turkey proved this assumption false, becoming a stronger ally within the alliance in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Two foreign policy decisions highlighted how Ecevit's concept had taken root and helped Turkey become a prominent player in the post-Soviet world. The first decision was one of recommitting Turkey to NATO. President Turgut Ozal wanted to give the United States all of Turkey's support during the 1990 Gulf War. While President Ozal's plan to commit troops to the war was met with opposition, he did allow the United States to fly military sorties out of Turkey. Additionally, Turkey participated in sanctions against Iraq by shutting down Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.⁶⁷ The second foreign policy decision was one focused on making Turkey a regional power. Turkey officially recognized the newly independent states of the former Soviet bloc. This decision was two-fold, it helped create a geographical buffer between Russia and Turkey and it positioned Turkey as a regional power, as many of the new states contained ethnic Turkic people.⁶⁸

3. Shift in Foreign Policy

Turkey continued its rapprochement with NATO and the United States throughout the 1990s. However, Turkish foreign policy again shifted during the turn of the twenty-first century. This shift was initiated by the rise of the AKP and heavily influenced by Ahmet Davutoglu. As discussed in the previous chapter, the AKP's foreign policy was centered on strategic depth. Davutoglu is credited with this policy which would become the cornerstone of the AKP's "zero problems with neighbors" mantra. The AKP's policy contained Islamic overtones and shifted Turkey's stance from a nonaggressive to active posture. Additionally, Turkey's strategic depth concept influenced the need for modernization of the navy and the defense sector as a whole.

⁶⁶ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy and an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 1.

⁶⁷ Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance*, 51–52; Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Age of Uncertainty*, 3.

⁶⁸ Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Line in a Troubled Alliance*, 49–50.

a. Strategic Depth

The driving factor behind Davutoglu's strategic depth policy was to shift Turkey's dependence on foreign governments into becoming a country which helped solve international problems. The policy maintains that Turkey should not be dependent on single actors, but instead become independent and a major player on the regional and global stage.⁶⁹ Davutoglu expressed these sentiments in an interview with reporter James Traub, "We don't want to be on the agenda of the international community as one item of crisis. We want to be in the international community to solve the crisis."⁷⁰ In order to accomplish the goals set forth in Davutoglu's policy, the defense sector and the military would have to modernize. As the 1975 embargo proved, becoming independent requires becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, Davutoglu was inspired by the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan, the American naval officer and famous naval strategist. The strategic depth concept built upon Mahan's observations that a country's geography and location play a critical role in the power that the country can project.⁷¹ Thus, Davutoglu argued that Turkey's location enables it to be a significant player in a multitude of regions. Using Mahan's theory of strategic maritime chokepoints, Davutoglu also argued that Turkey plays a central and decisive role in the region by controlling access between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles.⁷² While not directly, this argument calls on the Turkish navy to maintain its presence around the Turkish straits.

b. New Security Concept 2016

Understanding the goals of Davutoglu's and the AKP's foreign policy explains how it has influenced modernization of the defense sector and the navy. However, Turkey's

⁶⁹ Valerij Spak, "The Model of Turkish Foreign Policy: Opening New Horizons," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, no. 12 (2013-2014): 99–100.

⁷⁰ Ahmet Davutoglu quoted in New York Times article. James Traub, "Turkey's Rules," *The New York Times Magazine* January 20, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/magazine/23davutoglu-t.html>.

⁷¹ Ahmet Davutoglu, "The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World (Dis)Order," *Lithuanian Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 11, no. 4 (Dec 1997-Feb1998): 3.

⁷² Davutoglu, "The Clash of Interests," 9–10.

foreign policy has been ever changing in the last two decades. While the policies have changed, the call for modernization has been constant. In 2016, the Turkish government introduced a new concept which focuses on prevention and preemption. The security concept calls for improvement in operational capabilities.⁷³ Additionally, the new concept lays out plans for Turkey to seek more military bases abroad in other countries.⁷⁴ These two tenets of a new Turkish security policy require the military and the defense sector to modernize and improve operational capabilities.

B. HOW CHANGES HAVE INFLUENCED NAVAL POLICY

The 1975 arms embargo combined with Turkey's shift in national security has influenced naval policy. The area in which naval policy has been affected the most is in defense production. While the arms embargo was a catalyst in establishing a domestic defense industry, Turkey still relied heavily on defense procurement from the international community until the 1990s. The country which Turkey relied on the most for naval procurement was Germany.

1. Previous Naval Modernization Reliance on Foreign Procurement

In terms of naval industry, the Turkish-German relationship has been strong for a century, dating back to the First World War when Germany and the Ottoman Empire were allies. The prominent naval procurement of the early Turkish republic was the TCG *Yavuz*. *Yavuz* was a German-built dreadnaught battlecruiser which was first used by the German navy during World War I. However, halfway throughout the war, the ship was transferred to the Ottomans, finishing out the war under the Ottoman flag. After the war, Ataturk saw

⁷³ Stephen J. Flanagan, Magdalena Kirchner, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey at a Crossroads," in *Energy Turkey's Nationalist Course: Implications for the U.S.-Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S.*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2020), 39.

⁷⁴ Can Kasapoglu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture," in *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, no. 4 (2017): 1.

the *Yavuz* as a source of national strength for the Turkish republic and made it the flagship of the new Turkish navy, holding such a position until its decommissioning in 1950.⁷⁵

a. German Shipyards

One of the mainstays in the Turkish-German naval relationship has been the ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems company. This German company, whose predecessors and subsidiaries include Blohm+Voss and Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW), has been a key supplier of naval vessels for Turkey, as seen in Figure 1. Turkey's first procurement of vessels from ThyssenKrupp were two submarines. In 1928, Turkey received these 674 ton submarines from the Fijenoord Shipyard in Rotterdam, Netherlands. They were of German design from the Krupp Germaniawerft company, but were built in the Netherlands in order to not violate the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles.⁷⁶ When shipbuilding restrictions of the treaty were lifted, Turkey continued to purchase German submarines, four in total, before World War II. Of these four submarines, two were built in Turkish shipyards with German assistance. The remaining two were built domestically in Germany.⁷⁷

The onset of World War II paused the Turkish-German relationship. While Turkey remained neutral until the final days of the war, it did sign a non-aggression pact with the Allies in the summer of 1941. By the end of the year, Turkey was designated a protected nonbelligerent eligible to receive lend-lease aid from Great Britain, with a good majority of the aid presented as naval vessels.⁷⁸ This forced Turkey to nationalize the Krupp-owned portions of the Istanbul Shipyards, expelling German presence from Turkey.⁷⁹ The United States became the major supplier for the Turkish navy during the beginning part of the

⁷⁵ *Naval Encyclopedia*, s.v. "WW2 Turkish Navy," <http://www.naval-encyclopedia.com/ww2/turkish-navy>.

⁷⁶ "thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in Turkey," *Defence Turkey* 13, no.91 (2019): 188.

⁷⁷ "thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in Turkey," 188.

⁷⁸ *Naval Encyclopedia*, "WW2 Turkish Navy;" "Turks Seize German-Owned Shipyards," *Nashua Telegraph*, February 12, 1940.

⁷⁹ "Turks Seize German-Owned Shipyards."

Cold War, but the 1970s witnessed the rekindling of the Turkish-German relationship. More German submarines and frigates were ordered; however, production was split between shipyards in Germany and Turkey.⁸⁰ German corvette designs also provided the departure point for domestic Turkish naval vessels. During the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey ordered MEKO-200 corvettes and frigates from Blohm+Voss. This was a joint project with Turkish shipyards constructing over 50% of the order. However, during the early 2000s, Turkey decided it was time for full domestic production of naval vessels. On March 12, 2004 the Blohm+Voss partnership was cancelled, and Turkey established the MILGEM project,⁸¹ a project which will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁸⁰ “thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in Turkey,” 189.

⁸¹ John C.K. Daly, “Hot Issue: The Rise of Turkey: The Mediterranean’s New Regional Power,” The Jamestown Foundation, <https://jamestown.org/program/hot-issue-the-rise-of-turkey-the-mediterraneans-new-regional-naval-power/>.

Overview of TKMS-involvement in Turkey							
	Type	Σ	Class	Country of Construction	EDC	Commissioned	Type of participation
Current Projects							
	Sub	6	(Reis) (NTSP/1845)	Turkey (6)	(2009)/ 2011		Material Package
Past Projects							
	Sub	4	Gür (209/1400)	Turkey (4)	1998	2003 - 2008	Material Package
	Frg	4	Barbaros (Meko 200 TN II)	Germany (2), Turkey (2)	1990 (1+2), 1993 (3+4)	1995 - 2000	2 Built, 2 Material Packages
	Sub	4	Preveze (209/1400)	Turkey (4)	1987 (1+2), 1993 (3+4)	1994 - 1998	Material Package
	Frg	4	Yavuz (Meko 200 TN)	Germany (2), Turkey (2)	1982	1987 - 1989	2 Built, 2 Material Packages
	Sub	6	Ay (209/1200)	Germany (3), Turkey (3)	1971	1976 - 1990	3 Built, 3 Material Packages
	Sub	4	Ay (Type IA)	Germany (2), Turkey (2)	1936	1939-1944	2 Built (1 not given), 2 Material Packages
	Sub	2	UB-III	Netherlands (2)	1925	1925-1928	2 Built

Figure 1. Turkish-ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems Partnership⁸²

b. French and American Procurement

While the Turkish-German relationship provided Turkey with steady naval procurement, France and the United States also buoyed Turkey's navy. However, Turkey's procurement from these two countries differed vastly than its procurement from Germany. Most of the German naval vessels Turkey acquired were newly built, with a portion of the ships built in Turkish shipyards. Turkey's procurement from France and the United States focused more on older vessels which were provided out of the countries' supply surplus. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, France provided Turkey with a total of eleven naval vessels. By June of 2002, Turkey procured five Circe-class mine hunters, an ocean-going

⁸² Source: "thyssenkrupp Marine Systems in Turkey," 189.

tug, and six Aviso-class corvettes.⁸³ France also helped fortify Turkey's maritime aviation. In 2014, Thales, a French aerospace electronics company, completed the Turkish order for nine airborne maritime situation control systems (AMASCOS). Turkey chose AMASCOS as the main communication and control system for its Casa CN-235 aircraft, platforms used for maritime patrol and surveillance.⁸⁴

Turkey's naval procurement from the United States has experienced fluctuating forms of openness and restrictions. As stated earlier in this chapter, the American arms embargo of 1975 spearheaded Turkey's desire and need for a strong domestic defense industry. However, after the embargo was lifted, Turkey's navy again benefitted from an American relationship. The bulk of transfers of American vessels to Turkey occurred during the 1990s. During this time, Turkey received eight Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigates. In addition to providing naval vessels, the United States also provided naval weapons systems. In 2008, the United States sold eight vertical launching systems (VLS) to Turkey.⁸⁵ These systems provide naval vessels with a rapid release capability of firing missiles. Turkey purchased VLS to modernize the older Perry-class frigates. Similar to France, the United States also provided equipment for maritime aviation. Turkey finalized a deal in 2005 for 12 S-70B Seahawk helicopters. The deal also came with an option for five additional helicopters after the initial order was received. These helicopters were planned to deploy with the newly acquired naval vessels.⁸⁶

⁸³ "The Growth and Modernization of the TNFC: Current Programmes/Future Projects," *Naval Forces* (2001): 31; "New Life for Six Aviso Corvettes," defense aerospace, July 16, 2002, <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/10883/turkey-receives-sixth-upgraded-corvette-%28july-17%29.html>.

⁸⁴ "12 Years After the Contract Thales Finally Delivers Maritime Patrol Aircraft to Turkish Navy," Bosphorus Naval News, April 30, 2014, <https://turkishnavy.net/2014/04/30/12-years-after-the-contract-thales-finally-delivers-maritime-patrol-planes-to-turkish-navy/>; Pierre Tran, "France, Turkey and the Questions of Military Arms Sales," Defense.info, October 18, 2019, <https://defense.info/global-dynamics/2019/10/france-turkey-and-the-questions-of-military-arms-sales/>

⁸⁵ "Turkish Navy-Modernization," Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-navy-modernization.htm>

⁸⁶ "Ten-Year Modernization Plan of the Turkish Armed Forces," *Military Technology Turkey* 29, no.13 (2005): 85.

c. *Blue-Water Transformation Due to Reliance on Foreign Procurement*

Turkey's procurement from the international community was a significant step in its naval development and modernization. Even with German submarines, the Turkish navy was primarily capable of coastal defense until the 1980s. Naval procurements since then have enabled Turkey to develop a prominent blue water navy. The acquisition of frigates, submarines, and naval aviation allowed the Turkish navy to expand its mission set and operate multiple missions simultaneously. These missions include, "strategic deterrence, sea control, participation in allied or coalition operations...refugee control, humanitarian aid, search and rescue, environmental protection and operations against terrorism and organized crime."⁸⁷ While Turkey's rapid naval modernization was impressive, it lacked domestic production. This aspect of modernization did not go unnoticed. During the same time Turkey was farming international procurement, it was also developing a domestic defense industry. Defense industry officials learned valuable lessons from its partnership with German shipyards and its relationships with French and American defense companies. By using the final years of the twentieth century to obtain a blue water navy, Turkey was ready to take the next step in naval modernization, domestic production.

2. *Domestic Defense Production*

Before Turkey could participate in domestic naval production the country had to invest in infrastructure and resources. One of the major economic sectors which Turkey invested in to achieve domestic production and modernize the navy was the country's shipyards.

a. *Turkish Shipyard*

The Turkish navy prides itself on its storied tradition of shipbuilding from the Ottoman Empire,⁸⁸ but until recently, Turkish shipyards lacked the ability to produce

⁸⁷ Ali L. Karaosmanoglu and Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Defence Reform in Turkey," in *Post-Cold War Defense Reforms: Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, ed. Istvan Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (New York: Brassey's, 2003), 141.

⁸⁸ "The Naval Industrial Base in Turkey," *Naval Forces* (2001): 47.

modern ships and technology. As mentioned earlier, Turkish shipbuilding during the 1980s relied on German designs and guidance. As the calls for naval modernization increased, changes to the shipyards needed to be made to keep up with the demand. In 2000, the Turkish Naval Forces allocated monetary priority to investments in technology and domestic production.⁸⁹ Due to earthquake damage from the previous year, two Turkish shipyards needed repairs and were suffering financially. Keeping in line with the defense strategy at the time, these shipyards were transferred to the Turkish Naval Forces Command. This allowed the navy to repair the yards and increased the capacity for military shipbuilding.⁹⁰

As more money was invested into the shipyards, (US\$2.8 billion from 2000–2016)⁹¹ the capability for domestic production increased. This was also true for the commercial shipyards in Turkey as well. In total, Turkey maintains 79 shipyards, three of which are primarily used for the navy (Golcuk, Pendik, and Izmir). The rest are a combination of public sector and private yards.⁹² Since the turn of the century, the military and private shipyards have worked closely sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences. This has benefitted each type of shipyard. Combined, the shipyards have the capacity to produce 4.5 million deadweight tonnes of ships every year.⁹³ The naval yards now have the capability to produce warships, submarines, and marine engines.⁹⁴ The civilian

⁸⁹ Minister of National Defense, *Defense White Paper 2000*, (Ankara, Turkey: Ministry of National Defense, 2000), 49.

⁹⁰ Minister of National Defense, *Defense White Paper 2000*, 50.

⁹¹ Selwyn Parker, “Optimism Driving Resurgence in Turkish Shipbuilding,” Riviera, <https://www.rivieramm.com/opinion/opinion/optimism-driving-resurgence-in-turkish-shipbuilding-24842>.

⁹² “Turkey-Shipbuilding” Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-shipbuilding.htm>.

⁹³ Parker, “Optimism Driving Resurgence in Turkish Shipbuilding.”

⁹⁴ “Turkish Naval Shipbuilding Industry,” Marine Deal News, <https://www.marinedealnews.com/turkish-naval-shipbuilding-industry/>; Burak Ege Bekdil, “Turkish Shipyards Join Forces to Develop First Locally Made Ship Engine,” *Defense News*, April 16, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/04/16/turkish-shipyards-join-forces-to-develop-engine/>; Dorian Archus, “Turkish Navy Will Build Indigenous Submarine,” *Naval News*, October 16, 2019, <https://navalnews.net/turkish-navy-will-build-indigenous-submarine/>.

shipyards have been able to expand their capabilities from operating solely as repair shipyards to producing new high-tonnage ships. A feat that is evidenced by Turkey annually placing in the top 10 countries in terms of deadweight production.⁹⁵

b. Research and Development Investment

In addition to investing in its shipyards, Turkey also had to invest in research and development companies. These entities are not only the backbone for Turkish naval modernization, but also the backbone for the domestic defense industry. During the 1980s, Turkey experienced an overhaul of priorities focused on modernization in both the government and private sector. On the government side, the Defense Industry Development and Support Administration (DIDA) was established in 1985. DIDA's goal was to establish cooperation between the private and public sectors in order to fully utilize all of Turkey's resources in developing the defense industry.⁹⁶ DIDA's other role was overseeing the Defense Industry Support Fund (SSDF), the primary fund for Turkey's defense industry and expenditures. In 1989, DIDA was reorganized as the Undersecretariat of the Defense Industry (SSM), maintaining its same roles, but now organized under the Ministry of Defense.⁹⁷ In 2018, another name change occurred to reflect the role of the Presidency in Turkey. The current name of the organization is now the Presidency of Defense Industries (SSB).⁹⁸

The SSB represents the government's contribution to modernizing a domestic defense sector. This is a large contribution considering the amount of purchasing power the SSDF maintains. According to a 2019 SSB report, the Ministry of National Defense maintained the fifth highest budget of all governmental ministries. However, the SSDF is not limited by the National Defense budget. It maintains an independent budget free from restrictions with an additional presidential discretionary fund, stipulations which are

⁹⁵ Parker, "Optimism Driving Resurgence in Turkish Shipbuilding."

⁹⁶ Karaosmanoglu and Kibaroglu, "Defence Reform in Turkey," 158.

⁹⁷ Karaosmanoglu and Kibaroglu, 158.

⁹⁸ "About Us," Presidency of Defence Industries, <https://www.ssb.gov.tr/WebSite/contentlist.aspx?PageID=39&LangID=2>.

currently questioned due to a lack of oversight.⁹⁹ Because of these stipulations it is generally assumed that the SSDF maintains a large budget. However, a large defense budget does not produce a domestic defense industry on its own. Domestic companies need to produce equipment and technology in order to grow an industry. During the post-embargo period in Turkey many domestic companies were established for the purpose of domestic production. These companies have developed into major Turkish defense contractors. Some of the major corporations include: ASELSAN, AYESAS, Havelsan, ISBIR, and MILSOFT.¹⁰⁰ However, these companies failed to invest significantly in research and development and relied heavily on foreign technologies for the first years of their existence.¹⁰¹ Since the late 1990s the policies have changed and these companies have helped to produce a domestic defense industry. In terms of naval development and modernization, the aforementioned corporations and others have increased the capabilities of naval shipbuilding, achieving 70% domestic production on naval vessels and technology in 2017.¹⁰² Additionally, the navy trusts these companies' capabilities, demonstrated by planning for the delivery of 88 domestically-built naval vessels for the period of 2017–2034.¹⁰³

c. MILGEM Project

One of the premier examples of Turkey's naval modernization and domestic production in the twenty-first century is the MILGEM project. As previously mentioned, the MILGEM (short for Milli Gemi, Turkish for National Ship) project was established in 2004 with the intent to build naval vessels with maximum domestic contribution. The Turkish government felt that it had successfully acquired the infrastructure and gained enough knowledge from Blohm+Voss to embark on domestic naval production. In 2010,

⁹⁹ Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry*, 100.

¹⁰⁰ Ibrahim Sunnetci, "Turkish Navy's Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities," *Defence Turkey* 14, no.95 (2019): 8.

¹⁰¹ Özer, *The Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry*, 53.

¹⁰² Sunnetci, "Turkish Navy's Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities," 8.

¹⁰³ Sunnetci, 8.

former SSB Undersecretary Murad Bayar emphasized this philosophy, “Later, we began production in-country at our naval shipyard facilities, using licensed designs, largely German in origin...while these programs limited the extent of our contribution in design and materials, they provided good experience for our naval shipyards. We’ve been able to build support ships, corvettes, even frigates under this model.”¹⁰⁴

The first task for the MILGEM project was building four new Ada-class corvettes (see Figure 2). The project officially commenced production when the keel of TCG Heybeliada (F-511) was laid down in 2005.¹⁰⁵ All four ships were commissioned over an eight year span: the Heybeliada in 2011, TCG Buyukada (F-512) in 2013, TCG Burgazada (F-513) in 2018, and finally TCG Kinaliada (F-514) in 2019.¹⁰⁶ In addition to legitimatizing Turkey’s domestic naval production and meeting the modern requirements of the Turkish navy, the Ada-class corvettes have become a source of national pride. At a ceremony for the launching of the TCG Heybeliada, President Erdogan stated, “Here we are launching the first ‘National Warship’. In order to have a strong voice on our seas, we need to build naval vessels. We will witness that the Turkish navy will return to its old bright days in the future periods. Turkish people will become a marine nation again.”¹⁰⁷

The Ada-class corvettes are designed to accomplish a range of missions including reconnaissance, surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, surface to surface warfare, surface to air warfare, and others.¹⁰⁸ They can reach speeds of 30 knots and have a flight deck and hangar for one S-70B Seahawk helicopter. The corvettes are similar in design to the United

¹⁰⁴ Daly, “Hot Issue: The Rise of Turkey: The Mediterranean’s New Regional Power.”

¹⁰⁵ Daly.

¹⁰⁶ Sunnetci, “Turkish Navy’s Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities,” 10.

¹⁰⁷ “TCG Heybeliada-(MILGEM-Milli Gemi-National Ship) Patrol and Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship,” Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tcg-milgem.htm>.

¹⁰⁸ Global Security, “TCG Heybeliada-(MILGEM-Milli Gemi-National Ship) Patrol and Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship.”

States' Freedom-class littoral combat ships, but with more firepower.¹⁰⁹ The Turkish navy and the private sector cooperated together in order to maximize domestic production of the ships, with 50 local companies from the private sector participating.¹¹⁰ Turkish companies achieved significant milestones while producing subsystems for the ships. When TCG Heybeliada was commissioned it was the first ship to have a Turkish designed and produced hull mounted sonar provided by the Turkish company TUBITAK. Aselsan provided the first Turkish designed and produced fire control radar. Additionally, there were many milestones in water treatment and marine subsystems.¹¹¹ TCG Kinaliada added to the milestones with its domestic firepower. Rokestan designed the ATMACA Block I anti-ship guided missile. This missile has high precision strike capabilities for use against surface and coastal targets. It has a range of 220km, uses GPS and INS guidance, and contains a domestic active radar seeker developed by ASELSAN.¹¹² Overall, Ada-class corvettes ranged from 65% domestic production (Heybeliada) to 80% domestic production (Kinaliada).¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ "Ada Class Corvette," Seaforces-Online, <http://www.seaforces.org/marint/Turkish-Navy/Frigates/Ada-class.htm>.

¹¹⁰ Ayse Betul Bal, "Modernized Navy Adds Further Muscle to Turkey's Aspiration to Protect National Interest," *Daily Sabah*, February 9, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/business/2020/02/09/expanded-modernized-navy-adds-further-muscle-to-turkeys-aspiration-to-pursue-protect-national-interests-on-high-seas>.

¹¹¹ "TCG Heybeliada Commissioned. A New Era For Turkish Navy," Bosphorus Naval News, September 28, 2011, <https://turkishnavy.net/2011/09/28/tcg-heybeliada-commissioned-a-new-era-for-turkish-navy/>.

¹¹² Sunnetci, "Turkish Navy's Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities," 12.

¹¹³ Sunnetci, 12.



Figure 2. Modified Image of an Ada-Class Corvette¹¹⁴

d. TCG Anadolu

Turkey took another large step toward modernization and domestic production with its amphibious ship project. The TCG Anadolu (L-408) is an amphibious assault ship (LHD) whose keel was laid down in 2016 and is expected to be delivered to the navy by the end of 2020.¹¹⁵ Its design is based on the Royal Spanish Navy's Juan Carlos I LHD, but most of its weapons control and sensor systems will be domestically produced.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Source: Mitch, "Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030."

¹¹⁵ Sunnetci, "Turkish Navy's Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities," 16; Dorian Archus, "Turkey's Indigenously-Built LHD 'TCG ANADOLU' to Start Harbour Trials," *Naval News*, February 2, 2020, <https://navalnews.net/turkeys-indigenously-built-lhd-tcg-anadolu-to-start-harbour-trials/>.

¹¹⁶ Trevor Hollingsbee, "The Turkish Navy-An Increasingly Potent Player in a Turbulent Region [Naval Gazing]," *Baird Maritime*, January 31, 2020, <https://www.bairdmaritime.com/work-boat-world/maritime-security-world/naval/column-the-turkish-navy-an-increasingly-potent-player-in-a-turbulent-region-naval-gazing/>

Overall, the Anadolu will be roughly 68% domestically produced and designed in Turkey.¹¹⁷

While the Anadolu is not as domestically produced as the Ada-class corvettes, it is the classification which is significant. As a large amphibious ship, the Anadolu greatly increases Turkey's power projection and blue-water capabilities. The former Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces, Admiral (Retired) Bulent Bostanoglu, stated that the Anadolu will provide sustainability for,

longer overseas commitments at the national and international level without support from the main base, realize force projection/amphibious operations by deployment of Land Force elements at the area of operation, support land operations with naval air elements, act as command control center at sea and...intervene in crisis regions or contribute to...emergency aid.¹¹⁸

TCG Anadolu's design is foremost for amphibious assault (refer to Figure 3). In order to accomplish this role, the Anadolu will have the capacity to carry a battalion-size of 1,000 troops.¹¹⁹ Additionally, she will be able to carry 27 amphibious assault vehicles (AAV), 29 main battle tanks (MBT), and a well deck for various combinations of four landing craft mechanized (LCM) or two landing craft air cushion (LCAC), or two landing craft vehicle personnel (LCVP).¹²⁰ However, the ship can also be deployed as a substitute for an aircraft carrier. The flight deck will have a 12 degree ski jump for 12 short take-off/vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft. In this configuration, she will also be able to carry

¹¹⁷ Sunnetci, "Turkish Navy's Current Fleet and the Role of Turkish Naval Industrial Capabilities," 16.

¹¹⁸ "Interview: Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces Admiral Bulent Bostanoglu," *C4 Defence Issue* 29, 41.

¹¹⁹ Micha'el Tanchum, "Turkey's New Carrier Alters Eastern Mediterranean Energy and Security Calculus," *Jerusalem Post*, February 4, 2014, <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/op-ed-contributors/turkeys-new-carrier-alters-eastern-mediterranean-energy-and-security-calculus-340352>.

¹²⁰ Archus, "Turkey's Indigenously-Built LHD 'TCG ANADOLU' to Start Harbour Trials."

12 helicopters.¹²¹ These designs greatly increase Turkey’s amphibious assault capabilities and have “altered the naval balance in the Eastern Mediterranean.”¹²²



Figure 3. TCG Anadolu Under Construction¹²³

¹²¹ Tanchum, “Turkey’s New Carrier Alters Eastern Mediterranean Energy and Security Calculus;” Archus, “Turkey’s Indigenously-Built LHD ‘TCG ANADOLU’ to Start Harbour Trials.”

¹²² Tanchum, “Turkey’s New Carrier Alters Eastern Mediterranean Energy and Security Calculus.”

¹²³ Source: “TCG Will Protect Anatolia with Local ARAS-2023,” *Star*, April 10, 2020, <https://www.star.com.tr/savunma/tcg-anadoluyu-yerli-aras-2023-koruyacak-haber-1529877/>.

III. EVOLUTION OF NAVAL STRATEGIC POLICY

The previous chapter focused on the modernization of the Turkish defense industry, especially its effects on the Turkish navy. However, upon examination of the current evolution of the Turkish navy, one realizes that its strategic policy has evolved as well. Dating back to the establishment of the Turkish republic, the naval strategy focused on the littorals. This primary focus was crucial for the young nation, especially since Turkey's geographic location is surrounded by littoral waters of the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas. In recent decades, Turkish naval strategy has not only reemphasized the importance of the littorals but has also shifted toward projecting power through a blue water navy.

While the defense industry has led a modernization of Turkish naval vessels, the change in strategic naval policy cannot be classified as such. Instead, this policy change can be classified as an evolution or shift. However, the interplay between the defense industry and the strategic policy shift is dependent upon each other. The Turkish Navy cannot shift its strategic goals without modern defense procurement and the demand for such procurement would not be as high if strategic goals did not change.

A. OLD POLICY

As previously mentioned, Turkey's old naval policy focused exclusively on the littorals. This policy was solidified during the early years of the republic. During this time, The Turkish General Staff was dominated by Army officers, allowing army-centric theorists to maintain a monopoly on military strategy.¹²⁴ Central to military strategy during the interwar period was the focus on the defense gap surrounding the Turkish straits. This gap was created by treaty stipulations to demilitarize the straits after World War I. The General Staff believed that such a scenario would expose Turkey to an Italian threat from the west. In order to counter a perceived Italian threat, the General Staff decided the defense gap needed to be filled and the Turkish Armed Forces should be prepared to counter any

¹²⁴ Serhat Guvenc, "Building a Republican Navy in Turkey: 1924–1939," *International Journal of Naval History* 1, no.1 (April 2002): 3.

maritime assault. However, the Turkish navy was assigned auxiliary roles, focusing on coastal defense of the country. One of the reasons the navy was not assigned a central role is due to the individual experiences of the officers on the General Staff. Most of the officers saw combat action in either the War of Tripoli and the Gallipoli Wars, or the War of Independence. In each of these conflicts, the strategy and fighting were focused on armies, with the navy supporting in auxiliary roles.¹²⁵ In order to follow the General Staff's guidance, the navy focused on acquiring weapons and vessels which could be used for coastal defense. The navy decided that a submarine fleet and effective sea mines would be crucial to coastal defense of the Turkish Straits,¹²⁶ a decision which is reflected in the previous chapter's discussion on defense procurement.

The Turkish navy not only experienced an auxiliary role during the interwar period, but it also experienced limited funding. As the General Staff were mostly army officers, the bulk of the defense funding went to the army. Additionally, the perceived threat of an Italian attack did not come into fruition. Instead, events such as the Mosul Crisis in 1924 and the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 shifted the Turkish Armed Forces' focus from the west to the east, in areas of the country without significant maritime boundaries.¹²⁷ The nature of these conflicts shifted the funding to the army and Turkey's emerging aircraft industry, an industry that quickly became a source of national pride.¹²⁸

While the Turkish navy seemed to be neglected strategically, it was still an important facet of national defense, especially in Turkey's historic rivalry with Greece. Turkey's rocky relationship with Greece during the interwar period forced the navy to try to match the power and competency of the Greek fleet. In 1928, Greece executed a naval exercise off of the Dardanelles. Turkey responded in kind with an exercise of its own, commanded by Atatürk himself.¹²⁹ The Greek exercise initiated a two pronged approach

¹²⁵ Guvenc, "Building a Republican Navy in Turkey," 3.

¹²⁶ Guvenc, 3.

¹²⁷ Guvenc, 4.

¹²⁸ Guvenc, 4.

¹²⁹ Guvenc, 5.

for Turkish naval procurement. Submarines and sea mines were procured for coastal defense while destroyers were procured and the *Yavuz* modernized to bolster the surface fleet.¹³⁰ However, such an approach still focused on littoral capabilities. This strategic goal continued for the Turkish navy through World War II, as the threat of an Italian attack garnered more attention.¹³¹

As discussed previously, during the Cold War, Turkey entered into the security umbrella of NATO. During this time, naval policy continued to focus on the littorals. In fact, Turkey still adhered to this policy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. One of the main subjects of a special issue of *Naval Forces* in 2001 was the Turkish navy. In one of the articles dedicated to the Turkish fleet, the roles and missions of Turkish naval policy were discussed. The first sentence of the article clearly defines the Turkish navy as a littoral force, “the primary mission of the Naval Forces is to defend the country against threats from the sea and to protect the maritime interest of the nation.”¹³² Additionally, the command structure of the Turkish navy lends itself primarily for a littoral role. The navy is divided into four Main Subordinate Commands: Turkish Fleet Command, Northern Sea Area Command, Southern Sea Area Command, and Naval Training and Education.¹³³ While the training command is self-explanatory, the three other commands comprise the Turkish fleet’s disposition of forces. Turkish Fleet Command is the central body from which all policy and planning for the navy is established. Additionally, it contains the majority of Turkish naval assets.¹³⁴ The area commands provide the evidence that the Turkish navy is littoral. Their tasks are to provide logistic support in areas of operation of the Turkish fleet, “the Northern Sea Area Command covers the Marmara Sea, the Straits and the Black Sea....the Southern Area Command covers the Aegean Sea area,

¹³⁰ Guvenc, 4.

¹³¹ Guvenc, 7.

¹³² “Mission and Roles of the Turkish Naval Forces,” *Naval Forces* (2001), 21.

¹³³ *Naval Forces*, “Mission and Roles of the Turkish Naval Forces,” 22.

¹³⁴ *Naval Forces*, 22, 25.

Mediterranean Sea Area.”¹³⁵ These geographic areas relate to Turkish littoral waters, not far-reaching areas around the globe. Additionally, the article pointed out that at the time of its publication the Turkish navy only maintained bases in the Sea of Marmara, the Black Sea, and the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean coasts of Turkey.¹³⁶

The location of Turkey’s naval bases combined with its focus on the surrounding water gives credence to the argument that Turkey is a littoral navy. This conjecture was also echoed in a *Defense News* article in 2011. Burak Bekdil argued that Turkey’s naval procurement was still focused on littoral warfare. He argues that building indigenous corvettes is still a sign of a littoral navy because of their range and capabilities. Additionally, Bekdil argues that Turkey’s lack of supply and support ships make it difficult to maintain a long-term blue water presence.¹³⁷

B. NEW POLICY

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Turkish navy has begun to shift their strategic policy. The groundwork of the new naval policy was laid as the navy was experiencing a modernization. As the Turkish fleet continues to modernize, more goals of the new naval policy can be accomplished. The new strategic policy takes a two prong approach, the littorals and the high seas. The littoral approach is an expansion of the older policy. Turkey still desires to maintain a strong coastal defense of its borders. A new concept called the Blue Homeland argues that the littoral waters surrounding Turkey are actually an extension of its borders, hence Turkey needs to guard these waters similar to its land borders. The second approach to Turkey’s new policy is a focus on the high seas. While the Blue Homeland is important, the Turkish navy argues that it cannot be the sole focus. Additionally, the navy should also exert its presence around the world.

¹³⁵ *Naval Forces*, 25.

¹³⁶ *Naval Forces*, 25.

¹³⁷ Burak Ege Bekdil, “Turkey Seeks Full Littoral Defense Architecture,” *Defense News*, January 10, 2011, <https://advance-lexis-com.libproxy.nps.edu/api/document?collection=news=&id=urn:contentItem:5218-CJD1-JC3H-04TS-00000-00&context=1516831>.

C. BLUE HOMELAND POLICY

The concept of a Turkish Blue Homeland was created by retired Admiral Cem Gurdeniz in 2006 when he was the director of the Plan and Policy Division of the Turkish Naval Forces Command Headquarters. Gurdeniz believed that the Turkey's so called "blue homeland" would be vital to Turkish naval policy in the twenty-first century.¹³⁸ According to Gurdeniz, Blue Homeland is more than just a policy, it is a whole new thought process. He argues that, "the Blue Homeland is a concept, a symbol, and also a doctrine."¹³⁹ The concept component pertains to all of Turkey's declared or undeclared maritime jurisdiction zones. Gurdeniz posits that these maritime zones exist between 25–45 E longitudes and 33–43 N latitudes. Additionally, he argues that the symbol component of the concept focuses on a redirection for the country. A redirection from land-centric thinking to one focused on the seas.

The third component of the Blue Homeland concept is doctrine. The doctrine's goal is to protect the rights and interests of Turkey both within littoral waters and in waters outside of Turkey's periphery.¹⁴⁰ This goal is a break from the rest of the Blue Homeland concept, for it is the first time waters outside of Gurdeniz's "homeland" waters are mentioned. The doctrine implies that the Blue Homeland concept has a strategic goal to establish Turkish maritime presence not only in its littorals, but also in the "Red Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Arabian Sea, including the Persian Gulf."¹⁴¹ This portion of the doctrine has already had some early successes with Turkish naval presence in the Red Sea

¹³⁸ "Blue Homeland 'Shows Turkey has Become a Maritime Power,'" *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 4, 2019, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/blue-homeland-shows-turkey-has-become-a-maritime-power-141624>.

¹³⁹ Cem Gurdeniz, "What is the Blue Homeland in the 21st Century?," *United World*, July 31, 2020, <https://uwidata.com/12952-what-is-the-blue-homeland-in-the-21st-century/>.

¹⁴⁰ Gurdeniz, "What is the Blue Homeland in the 21st Century?."

¹⁴¹ "Turkey's Maritime Strategy Ambitions: The Blue Homeland Doctrine (Mavi Vatan)," *Occidental World*, May 14, 2020, <https://occidentalworld.com/turkeys-maritime-strategy-ambitions-the-blue-homeland-doctrine-mavi-vatan/>.

and the Bab El-Mandeb Straits. Additionally, Turkey has pursued a strategic partnership with Pakistan to help Turkey establish a permanent presence in the Arabian Sea.¹⁴²

While Admiral Gurdeniz's Blue Homeland concept provides detailed goals for Turkey, it still is just a concept. There has been no official government approval for the concept. The ideas within this concept may be too politically dangerous as Gurdeniz states that the Blue Homeland is a direct defense against aggressive policies by European governments and the United States.¹⁴³ However, in the past two years, the concept has achieved incredible influence even without sanctioned approval. Turkey's Naval War College founded its official journal titled *Mavi Vatan*, Turkish for Blue Homeland. In 2019, Turkey conducted its largest military exercise in its history. The name chosen for the exercise was Blue Homeland with operations occurring in the three seas surrounding the country.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, a photograph opportunity (refer to Figure 2) with President Erdogan stirred controversy of implied government approval of the Blue Homeland concept. In September 2019, Erdogan visited the National Defense University in Istanbul for a weekend event. The photograph depicts Erdogan signing the university's visitor book in front of a large map of the proclaimed Blue Homeland.¹⁴⁵ Critics argue that the photograph represents a conscious decision justifying the concept, as it was posted on the official Presidency's website.¹⁴⁶ These three examples prove that the Blue Homeland concept is growing in influence and popularity.

¹⁴² Occidental World, "Turkey's Maritime Strategy Ambitions."

¹⁴³ Gurdeniz, "What is the Blue Homeland in the 21st Century?."

¹⁴⁴ "Blue Homeland 'Shows Turkey has Become a Maritime Power'."

¹⁴⁵ "Erdogan Takes Photograph in Front of 'Blue Homeland' Map," *Ekathimerini*, September 2, 2019, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/244125/article/ekathimerini/news/erdogan-takes-photograph-in-front-of-blue-homeland-map>.

¹⁴⁶ "Turkish President Erdogan Stands in Front of Map Showing Half of Aegean Sea Turkish," Thema Newsroom, September 2, 2019, <http://en.protothema.gr/turkish-president-erdogan-stands-in-front-of-map-showing-half-of-aegean-sea-turkish-photo/>; "Erdogan Photographed in Front of 'Turkey, Blue Homeland' Map," *Greek City Times*, September 3, 2019, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2019/09/03/erdogan-photographed-front-turkey-blue-homeland-map?amp>.



Figure 4. President Erdogan at the National Defense University¹⁴⁷

D. BLUE HOMELAND IN ACTION

While there has been no sanctioned naval policy addressing the Blue Homeland concept, there have been numerous examples of its influence in the navy. The following section will examine major examples of Blue Homeland influence in naval policies. It is important to note that while Admiral Gurdeniz's concept has been around for 14 years, the concept has only gained significant influence in the last decade.

1. Turkish Naval Forces Strategy 2015

The Turkish navy has not officially endorsed the Blue Homeland concept. However, the Turkish Naval Forces Strategy 2015 contains policies and directives influenced by the concept's littoral and peripheral approaches of its doctrinal goals. The strategy states that the waters of the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea, "have become one of the most important issues affecting relationships among the

¹⁴⁷ Source: *Ekathimerini*, "Erdogan Takes Photograph in Front of 'Blue Homeland' Map."

littoral countries.”¹⁴⁸ Due to this belief, the strategy document contains an entire chapter dedicated to security concerns, with three quarters of the chapter focusing on Turkey’s surrounding seas. In the chapter’s section on the Black Sea, the authors highlight that Turkish policy in the Black Sea centers on creating a regional identity and building cooperative relationships with neighboring countries.¹⁴⁹ The Turkish navy supports this policy through the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR). BLACKSEAFOR’s main goal is to develop interoperability and trust among the neighboring countries.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, since the group was founded by Turkey, Ankara tries to use it to diminish Russia’s role and established Turkey as a major player in the region.

The strategy document also focuses on the Aegean Sea. The document posits that the Aegean Sea provides a vital sea link for international trade and is also critical for Turkish security and economic resources.¹⁵¹ The document states that the argument between Turkey and Greece over claims of contested territorial waters is the most important issue in the Aegean.¹⁵² For this reason, the Turkish navy needs to keep a strong presence in the sea. Additionally, the document addresses concerns in the Mediterranean. This is another important sea because 25% of Turkish maritime trade flows through its Mediterranean ports. Another Turkish interest in the sea is the current dispute over the exclusive economic zones around the island of Cyprus. These disputes have created controversy as oil exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean has increased,¹⁵³ a reason that the Turkish navy argues for its increased presence in the area.

¹⁴⁸ Turkish Naval Forces, *Turkish Naval Forces Strategy* (Istanbul, Turkey: Printing Office of Turkish Naval Forces, 2016), 8.

¹⁴⁹ Turkish Naval Forces, *Turkish Naval Forces Strategy*, 9.

¹⁵⁰ Turkish Naval Forces, 10.

¹⁵¹ Turkish Naval Forces, 11.

¹⁵² Turkish Naval Forces, 12.

¹⁵³ Turkish Naval Forces, 13–14.

The strategy document also highlights peripheral objectives of the Blue Homeland concept. In the security chapter, the Turkish navy argues that a blue water, high seas navy is vital for the country. Turkey needs to maintain a naval presence and interest in the high seas because “four of the global choke points (namely the Turkish Straits, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab-el Mandeb) connect our adjacent neighboring seas to the high seas and are intensely used by merchant ships and war ships.”¹⁵⁴ This argument is further echoed by the navy citing their presence in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to perform counter-piracy operations. Additionally, this rationalizes the Turkish navy’s desire to operate in the Indian Ocean.¹⁵⁵

The Naval Forces Strategy document also lays out strategy to implement its naval policy. The document lists nine major objectives of the Turkish navy. Two of these objectives are solely focused on the littoral defense of the Blue Homeland, “to secure neighboring seas and SLOCs [sea lines of communications] that carry the bulk of Turkish maritime trade... and to contribute to create a stable security perimeter in vicinity of Turkey and to global peace and stability.”¹⁵⁶ In order to achieve these objectives, the Turkish navy plans to continue its operations in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean through Operation Black Sea Harmony, BLACKSEAFOR, and Operation Mediterranean Shield. In addition, activities in the Aegean Sea will continue.¹⁵⁷ One naval objective focuses on the periphery stating support for “Turkish foreign policy and defense industry objectives.”¹⁵⁸ In order to support this objective, the navy will monitor actions in the “Indian Ocean, the African Continent, Persian Gulf and Asia-Pacific region.”¹⁵⁹ Additionally, the Turkish navy outlines its desire to procure combat support ships in the medium term (6-10 years).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Turkish Naval Forces, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Turkish Naval Forces, 16.

¹⁵⁶ Turkish Naval Forces, 28.

¹⁵⁷ Turkish Naval Forces, 29–30.

¹⁵⁸ Turkish Naval Forces, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Turkish Naval Forces, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Turkish Naval Forces, 31.

These ships will allow the navy to sustain long range deployments, a critical component in operating outside of the Turkish periphery.

2. Blue Homeland Exercise

As mentioned earlier, Admiral Gurdeniz's concept was the inspiration for the name of a Turkish naval exercise in 2019. The Blue Homeland Exercise 2019 lasted from February 27-March 8 and consisted of 103 ships and 20,000 military personnel.¹⁶¹ The navy conducted joint operations with the Turkish army and air force in the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean Seas. Such actions were to showcase the interoperability of the Turkish Armed Forces. Additionally, the naval exercise showcased the navy's new weapons systems, especially the targeting systems of the MILGEM ships and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in maritime operations.¹⁶² Gurdeniz believes that, "the Blue Homeland naval drill shows Turkey has become a maritime power."¹⁶³ While there is debate on whether such a conjecture by Gurdeniz is valid,¹⁶⁴ there is no denying Turkey's political goal. Any naval exercise which utilizes over 100 ships asserts bold rhetoric. Turkey is seeking to project maritime power not only to its neighbors, but also on the global stage. By naming the exercise Blue Homeland, the Turkish navy validates the popularity of the doctrine and solidifies the doctrine's place within Turkish naval policy, even without official governmental support. The Blue Homeland is becoming the focal point of the navy's self-defense doctrine.

As one might expect, the naval exercise was met with skepticism or disapproval among Turkey's neighbors, especially Greece. The biggest reaction to the exercise was the

¹⁶¹ Can Kasapoglu, "The Blue Homeland': Turkey's Largest Naval Drill," Andaolu Agency, February 27, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/-the-blue-homeland-turkey-s-largest-naval-drill/1404267>; Andreea Stoian Karadeli, "Blue Homeland: Turkey's Naval Exercise," European Security and Defense, June 18, 2019, <https://euro-sd.com/2019/06/articles/13642/blue-homeland-turkeys-naval-exercise/>.

¹⁶² Karadeli, "Blue Homeland."

¹⁶³ "Blue Homeland 'Shows Turkey has Become a Maritime Power'."

¹⁶⁴ Mehmeet Cem Demirci, "Turkish Naval Drills Ineffective Against United East Med Competitors," Ahval, October 3, 2019, <https://ahvalnews.com/eastern-mediterranean/turkish-naval-drills-ineffective-against-united-east-med-competitors>.

trilateral maritime exercise Medusa 8. This exercise was conducted by Greek, Egyptian, and Cypriot forces designed to enhance the partnership between the countries. While reports state that the exercise was planned in advance, the trilateral event occurred a month after Blue Homeland 2019. Turkey has been critical of the trilateral alliance since 2014, possibly contributing to the rising naval exercises in the Mediterranean by all countries.¹⁶⁵

3. Turkey's Long-Range Deployments

Definitive actions are needed in order for the regional and international community to believe Turkey is dedicated to the Blue Homeland concept. No action is more credible than deploying naval assets to the areas that the concept outlines. The Blue Homeland 2019 exercise is one of the credible actions focused on the littoral nature of the doctrine. The peripheral nature of the doctrine has received attention through a series of recent long-range deployments and forward operating maritime ports.

In the last decade, one of Turkey's continuous long-range commitments has been to the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151). CTF-151 was founded as a global maritime response to deter and defeat piracy in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden.¹⁶⁶ Turkey prides itself on its continuous commitment to supporting anti-piracy operations. Since 2009, the Turkish navy has commanded CTF-151 five times and views its participation in the task force as a corner stone of current naval policy. Deployments anchored on CTF-151 involvement provide Turkey with a global presence, reinforced by Turkey being the only country which has always assigned assets to standing NATO maritime groups.¹⁶⁷ This presence has given Turkey real scenarios to test its long-range capabilities.

In the time frame between 2014–2015, the Turkish navy also embarked on two long-range deployments. The first was the Barbaros Turkish Maritime Task Group

¹⁶⁵ Shaul Shay, "Egypt, Greece, Cyprus Conducted Joint Military Exercise," Israel Defense, April 28, 2019, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/38302>.

¹⁶⁶ "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," *Defence Turkey* 12, no.80 (2018): 16.

¹⁶⁷ *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 16.

deployment in 2014. This task group deployment was a circumnavigation of Africa and consisted of two frigates, a corvette, and a replenishment tanker. It was the first time Turkish naval vessels had navigated around the Cape of Hope in 148 years. The Turkish flag was flown throughout African ports in 28 countries.¹⁶⁸ However, the deployment was not just a flag-waving ceremony. It also showcased Turkey's naval assets and its commitment to international cooperation. Turkey was one of the few countries outside of the African continent to participate in the Obangame Express Exercise 2014 in the Gulf of Guinea.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, Turkey conducted live missile firing on the Denel Overberg Test Range off the coast of South Africa.¹⁷⁰ In the spring of 2015, the TCG Gediz (F-495) embarked on a deployment following the original route of the Ottoman frigate *Ertugrul*, conducted 125 years prior. This route ranged from Istanbul to Yokohama consisting of port visits in 14 countries, including India and the Maldives.¹⁷¹ While both of these deployments were limited in terms of time (roughly 100 days in length) they signaled Turkey's commitment to projecting its maritime presence across the globe.

The peripheral component of the Blue Homeland doctrine has also manifested in Turkey's pursuit of forward operating bases and ports. These maritime pursuits have focused on the Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea with experts calling it Turkey's String of Pearls akin to China's Belt and Road initiative.¹⁷² Turkey's primary partner in this strategy has been Qatar, evident by Qatari financial banking. Additionally, Turkey established Tariq bin Ziyad base in 2016 in Qatar with the capability to house Turkish

¹⁶⁸ "Turkish Task Force Starts its Circumnavigation of Africa," Bosphorus Naval News, March 16, 2014, <https://turkishnavy.net/tag/softpower/>.

¹⁶⁹ Dirk Steffen, "Obangame Express 2014: Together. Forward. Slowly.," Center for International Maritime Security, May 23, 2014, <http://cimsec.org/obangame-express-2014-together-forward-slowly/11348>.

¹⁷⁰ Bosphorus Naval News, "Turkish Task Force Starts its Circumnavigation of Africa."

¹⁷¹ "TCG Gediz Sets Sail for Far East," Bosphorus Naval News, April 3, 2015, <https://turkishnavy.net/2015/04/03/tcg-gediz-sets-sail-for-far-east/>; "TCG Gediz Finished her Visit in Chennai," Bosphorus Naval News, July 5, 2015, <https://turkishnavy.net/2015/07/05/tcg-gediz-finished-her-visit-in-chennai/>.

¹⁷² Micha'el Tanchum, "Turkey's String of Pearls: Turkey's Overseas Naval Installations Reconfigure the Security Architecture of Mediterranean-Red Sea Corridor," AIES, April 2019, <https://www.aies.at/download/2019/AIES-Fokus-2019-04.pdf>, 1.

ground, naval, air, and special operations forces. Turkey has also established a forward deployed base in Somalia.¹⁷³ The String of Pearls initiative has also extended to the Red Sea with Turkey securing a deal with Sudan to restore the old Ottoman port of Suakin for commercial usage.¹⁷⁴ Turkey has also suggested building a naval port on the Turkish Cypriot portion of Cyprus.¹⁷⁵ These naval establishments coupled with the TCG Anadolu's ability of sustained power projection will serve both Turkey's political and military interests.¹⁷⁶ Naval ports across Turkey's periphery will enable Turkey to not only project influence, but also enable the navy with the capability of long-range sustainment.

4. Mediterranean Power Play

Since the conception of the Blue Homeland doctrine, the Mediterranean has been the biggest prize. This is the case for a number of reasons. The first reason is focused on power projection. The Eastern Mediterranean borders countries in Europe, the Levant, and North Africa. This means that the potential exists to be a major influence in multiple regions if enough power is projected in the Mediterranean. Another major reason Turkey sees the Mediterranean as the biggest prize is the recent discovery of natural gas reserves. In 2010, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that there was over 300 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas in the Eastern Mediterranean with the possibility that undiscovered reserves exist.¹⁷⁷ Over the past decade, Europe has viewed these gas reserves as a way to

¹⁷³ Tanchum, "Turkey's String of Pearls," 1.

¹⁷⁴ Ali Kucukgocmen and Khalid Abdelaziz, "Turkey to Restore Sudanese Red Sea Port and Build Naval Dock," Reuters, December 26, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-sudan-port/turkey-to-restore-sudanese-red-sea-port-and-build-naval-dock-idUSKBN1EK0Z>; "Turkey to Remain on Sudan's Suakin Island for Civilian Purposes," *Daily Sabah*, April 26, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2019/04/26/turkey-to-remain-on-sudans-suakin-island-for-civilian-purposes>.

¹⁷⁵ Dorian Jones, "Reports of Planned Turkish Naval Base Stokes Tension Between Greek, Turkish Cypriots," VOA, December 4, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/europe/reports-planned-turkish-naval-base-stokes-tension-between-greek-turkish-cypriots>.

¹⁷⁶ Can Kasapoglu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture," in *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, no. 4 (2017): 3.

¹⁷⁷ Selcan Hacaoglu, "How Turkey is Spoiling its Neighbors' Big Gas Plans," Bloomberg, December 10, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-12-10/how-turkey-is-spoiling-big-plan-for-mediterranean-gas-quicktake>.

reduce dependency on Russia.¹⁷⁸ Potential profits and influence are for the taking to whomever can discover and control the flow of natural gas from the Eastern Mediterranean to European markets. Since the discovery of natural gas in the region, Turkey has been trying to reap its benefits. However, Turkey has met significant push back from neighboring countries. A reason for this is that one of the main gas reserves in the region is located off the coast of Cyprus. Since the conflicts in the 1970s, Turkish influence in and around Cyprus has been a controversial issue, especially since Turkey is the only country to recognize the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on the north part of the island.

In 2003, the Greek Cypriot government signed a multilateral agreement with Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel delineating the countries' respective exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in the Mediterranean,¹⁷⁹ following United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) regulations.¹⁸⁰ Under UNCLOS, a country's EEZ is the area encompassed by the distance from the country's baseline (coastal) claims out to 200 nautical miles.¹⁸¹ However, Turkey rejects Cyprus' EEZ claims (see Figure 3). Turkey provides three reasons for rejecting the claims: Turkey is not a signatory to UNCLOS; therefore, it does not have to recognize Cypriot claims, the Cypriot government does not guarantee rights and interests for Turkish Cypriots¹⁸² and Turkey argues that every island nation does not receive an EEZ, just the recognized 12 nautical miles of territorial waters.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ John Bowlus, "Eastern Mediterranean Gas: Testing the Field," Energy Reporters, May 27, 2020, https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/eastern_med/gas_fields.

¹⁷⁹ Murat Sofuoglu, "Gas Reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are Fostering Division. Why?," TRT World, October 31, 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/gas-reserves-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-are-fostering-division-why-21247>.

¹⁸⁰ *Convention on the Law of the Sea*, December 10, 1982, 1833 U.N.T.S. 397, Article 15.

¹⁸¹ *Convention on the Law of the Sea*, December 10, 1982, 1833 U.N.T.S. 397, Article 57.

¹⁸² Sinan Ulgen, "Turkey Turns Up the Dial in Eastern Mediterranean," Bloomberg, December 11, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-12-11/turkey-has-turned-up-the-dial-in-the-eastern-mediterranean?cmpid%3D=socialflow-twitter-view&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_medium=social&utm_content=view&utm_source=twitter.

¹⁸³ "Turkey Sends Non Paper to EU, Warning to Stay Away from Cyprus EEZ," Keep Talking Greece, June 23, 2019, <https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2019/06/23/turkey-eu-cyprus-eez-greece/>.

Turkey is trying to assert its influence and dominance by rejecting Cypriot EEZ claims. By rejecting the claims, Turkey believes there is no international law blocking its access to the gas reserves. This is evident by Turkey's exploration activities by two seismic vessels¹⁸⁴ and its drilling operations by three drilling vessels.¹⁸⁵ These assertions are echoed throughout the Turkish government as Erdogan stated, "we will not accept attempts to seize natural resources in eastern Mediterranean through exclusion of Turkey and the TRNC. We do not have an eye on other countries' rights, laws, and territories. We only protect the rights of our country and of our brothers."¹⁸⁶ In order to justify its assertions, the Turkish government has issued navigational messages reserving maritime space for naval exercises and seismic surveys within Cyprus' EEZ.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, the Turkish navy has played a vital role in the country's drilling operations. The biggest naval show of force has been the previously mentioned Blue Homeland 2019 exercise. However, the navy has directly impacted drilling operations by supplying warships and drones to escort drilling vessels,¹⁸⁸ while also blocking other countries' drilling and naval assets from conducting their own operations.¹⁸⁹

Turkey's actions have not gone without international disapproval. Cyprus has been petitioning for formal actions against Turkey since the beginning of the drilling

¹⁸⁴ "Turkey Will Not Accept Attempts to Seize Eastern Mediterranean Resources, Erdogan Says," *Daily Sabah*, November 4, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2018/11/04/turkey-will-not-accept-attempts-to-seize-eastern-mediterranean-resources-erdogan-says>.

¹⁸⁵ "Turkey Begins Deep Drilling Offshore in Mediterranean," TRT World, October 30, 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkey-begins-deep-drilling-offshore-in-mediterranean-21244>; "Third Offshore Drilling Vessel Arrives in Turkey," Ahval, March 15, 2020, <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-drillships/third-offshore-drilling-vessel-arrives-turkey>.

¹⁸⁶ *Daily Sabah*, "Turkey Will Not Accept Attempts to Seize Eastern Mediterranean Resources, Erdogan Says."

¹⁸⁷ "Turkey Keeps the Pressure in Eastern Med," *Ekathimerini*, December 12, 2018, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/235587/article/ekathimerini/news/turkey-keeps-the-pressure-in-eastern-med>.

¹⁸⁸ "Turkish Drone Fuels Tension Over Cyprus Gas Claims," BBC News, December 16, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50806877>.

¹⁸⁹ "Turkish Navy Chases Off Eni's Drillship," *The Maritime Executive*, February 23, 2018, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/turkish-warships-chase-off-eni-s-drillship>; *Daily Sabah*, "Turkey Will Not Accept Attempts to Seize Eastern Mediterranean Resources, Erdogan Says."

conflicts.¹⁹⁰ While not immediately, the international community has started to monitor the situation. The EU and the United States have even called Turkey's actions illegal.¹⁹¹ The EU has also withheld financial aid and aviation contracts with Turkey while French fighter jets have conducted overflights of Turkish drilling vessels.¹⁹² However, these actions lack substance. One of the few responses with any substantial consequence has been the creation of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) which purposefully does not include Turkey. The EMGF's goal is to organize the region's gas market. While Turkey's exclusion hinders energy cooperation in the area,¹⁹³ it sends a clear message that other regional players are willing to circumvent Turkey until the country changes its actions.

¹⁹⁰ Hacaoglu, "How Turkey is Spoiling its Neighbors' Big Gas Plans."

¹⁹¹ "Statement of the EU Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Eastern Mediterranean," European Council, May 15, 2020, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/15/statement-of-the-eu-foreign-ministers-on-the-situation-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/>; David Brunnstrom and Renee Maltezou, "U.S. Warns Turkey Over Offshore Drilling Near Cyprus," Reuters, October 5, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-greece-pompeo-mitsotakis/u-s-warns-turkey-over-offshore-drilling-near-cyprus-idUSKCN1WK04I>.

¹⁹² Matina Stevis-Gridneff, "E.U. Punishes Turkey for Gas Drilling Off Cyprus Coast," *The New York Times*, July 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/15/world/europe/eu-turkey-cyprus.html>; "French Aircraft Carrier Deployed to Cyprus," LGC News, February 2, 2020, <https://www.lgcnews.com/french-aircraft-carrier-deployed-to-cyprus/>.

¹⁹³ Nael M. Shama, "Gas and Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean," Atlantic Council, February 19, 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/energysource/gas-and-conflict-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/>.

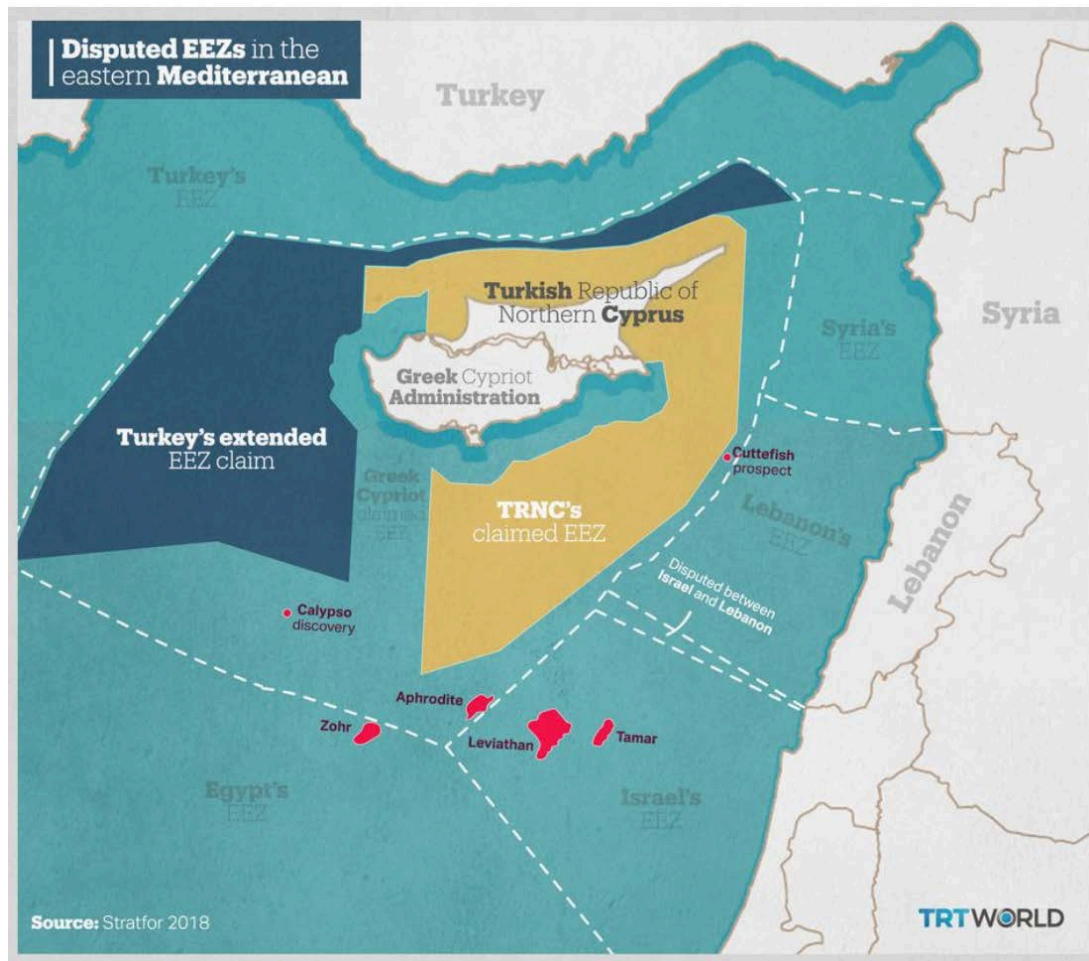


Figure 5. EEZ Disputes in Eastern Mediterranean¹⁹⁴

5. Libya Maritime Deal

Turkey has turned its attention to Libya as other regional neighbors have tried to limit Turkish influence in Mediterranean drilling. After other regional partners signed separate agreements, Ankara realized that multilateral EEZ agreements would be beneficial for international support for Turkey's drilling. Turkish officials tried to initiate agreements with Libya and Egypt as early as 2011, but the Arab Spring uprisings in the two countries

¹⁹⁴ Source: Sofuoglu, "Gas Reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are Fostering Division. Why?"

halted any progress.¹⁹⁵ Ankara continued to monitor the situation in Libya after the death of Gaddafi, knowing that the country presents Turkey with an opportunity for influence in both the Middle East and Mediterranean regions.¹⁹⁶ In looking to assert its influence, Turkey covertly supported Prime Minister Fayed al-Sarraj's Government of National Accord (GNA) since April 2019. Turkey has openly supported the UN-backed GNA since January 2020.¹⁹⁷

As a sign of good faith between the two countries, Turkey and Libya signed a Memorandum of Understanding delineating its maritime borders. However, Turkey has also used this deal to prove to the international community that Turkey cannot be excluded from gas exploration in the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁸ The deal outlines an 18.6 nautical mile wide stretch of Turkish and Libyan coastline. According to the deal, the sea area covered between the four points is exclusive to only Turkey and Libya,¹⁹⁹ outlined in Figure 4. Erdogan made this sentiment known through his statement, "other international actors cannot conduct exploration activities in the areas marked in the memorandum."²⁰⁰ Additionally, the deal permits Turkey to defend Libya's maritime interests and allows for joint extraction of natural resources between the two countries. However, the area covered by the deal overlaps with Greece's EEZ, especially around the island of Crete.²⁰¹ While

¹⁹⁵ "Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters," International Crisis Group, April 30, 2020, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/257-turkey-wades-libyas-troubled-waters>, 10.

¹⁹⁶ International Crisis Group, "Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters," 3.

¹⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, 4.

¹⁹⁸ "Why Did Turkey Sign a Maritime Deal with Libya?," TRT World, December 10, 2019, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/why-did-turkey-sign-a-maritime-deal-with-libya-32064>.

¹⁹⁹ Hacaoglu, "How Turkey is Spoiling its Neighbors' Big Gas Plans."

²⁰⁰ Sean Guler, "Libya Deal Shows Turkey Determined to Protect Rights'," Andaolu Agency, December 9, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/libya-deal-shows-turkey-determined-to-protect-rights/1668781>.

²⁰¹ Heather A. Conley and Rachel Ellehuus, "How NATO Can Avoid a Strategic Decoupling in the Eastern Mediterranean," Center for Strategic & International Studies, July 17, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-nato-can-avoid-strategic-decoupling-eastern-mediterranean#:~:text=To%20avoid%20this%2C%20allies%20should,principles%20to%20guide%20regional%20behavior>, 4; Ulgen, "Turkey Turns Up the Dial in Eastern Mediterranean."

the deal is only accepted by Libya, Ankara believes it puts pressure on the international community to examine Greek maritime claims.²⁰² In other words, Ankara may be playing a long game to force the international community to agree to equitable maritime settlements in the region.

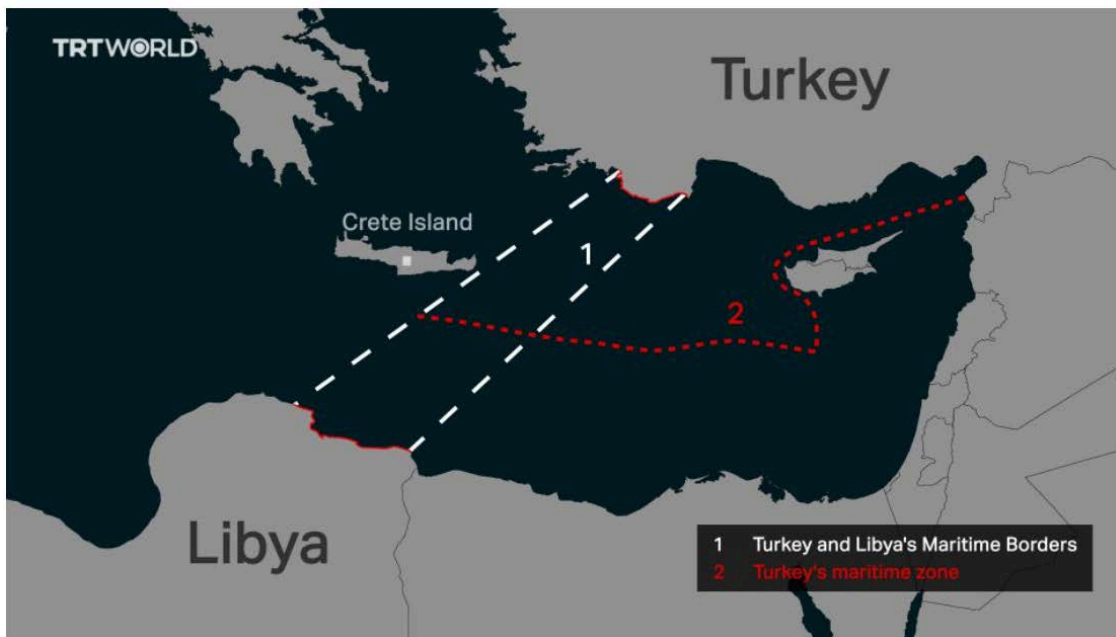


Figure 6. Area Covered by Turkey-Libya Maritime Deal²⁰³

Again, Turkey's actions have not gone without consequences. Upon the signing of the memorandum, Athens expelled the Libyan ambassador to Greece out of the country and filed a formal complaint to the UN.²⁰⁴ Regional neighbors have also continued circumventing Turkey in the natural gas sector. In January 2020, Greece, Israel, and Cyprus

²⁰² International Crisis Group, "Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters," 10; Micha'el Tanchum, "Turkey Enters Libyan Escalation Spiral at Great Risk," *The Turkey Analyst*, December 30, 2019, <https://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/631-turkey-enters-libyan-escalation-spiral-at-great-risk.html>.

²⁰³ Source: Ufuk Necat Tasci, "Ankara; Turkey-Libya Deal in 'Complete Accordance with International Law'," *TRT World*, December 4, 2019, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/ankara-turkey-libya-deal-in-complete-accordance-with-international-law-31910>.

²⁰⁴ Ulgen, "Turkey Turns Up the Dial in Eastern Mediterranean."

agreed to the construction of a pipeline with the potential to supply Europe with four percent of its natural gas needs. This pipeline will run 1,900 kilometers from the Eastern Mediterranean to Italy via Greece. The construction plans show the pipeline running through Turkey's claimed EEZ, but Ankara was neither consulted nor asked to participate in the joint venture.²⁰⁵

The biggest reactions to Turkey's memorandum have been met with military involvement, especially between navies. The maritime deal and Turkish open support of the GNA have placed Turkey in the center of the Libyan civil war. Since the fall of Gaddafi, Libya has been a country in search of political stability. Currently, the UN supports the GNA, but countries such as Egypt, Russia, UAE, and even France have provided support to the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar.²⁰⁶ While the UN supports the GNA, it has also established an arms embargo on the country in order to contain the conflict. Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI and Operation Sea Guardian have been established by the EU, UN, and NATO to enforce the arms embargo.²⁰⁷ In defiance of the arms embargo, Turkey has supplied the GNA with drones and air defense systems. Turkey argues that the embargo does not limit arms from countries other than Turkey, a sentiment that has caused the United States to ask the EU to reexamine the details of the naval missions.²⁰⁸ Additionally, the maritime agreement stipulates that Turkey defend Libyan maritime interests, actions which have caused tensions among NATO partners.

²⁰⁵ John Psaropoulos, "Greece, Israel, Cyprus, Move to Build East Med Gas Pipeline," Al Jazeera, January 2, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/greece-israel-cyprus-move-build-east-med-gas-pipeline-200102181235607.html>.

²⁰⁶ "Libya Conflict: French Missiles Found on Pro-Haftar Base," BBC News, July 10, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48935242>.

²⁰⁷ Conley and Ellehuus, "How NATO Can Avoid a Strategic Decoupling in the Eastern Mediterranean," 5; "Operation Sea Guardian," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 28, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136233.htm.

²⁰⁸ "Operation Irini: Turkey Slams EU Mission to Contain Arms to Libya," Al Jazeera, June 19, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/06/operation-irini-turkey-slams-eu-mission-arms-libya-200619160820054.html>; "US Says EU Mission on Libya Arms Not 'Serious'," MSN, June 16, 2020, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/us-says-eu-mission-on-libya-arms-not-serious/ar-BB16Psfr?ocid=msedgntp>.

One such event occurred on June 10, 2020. A Tanzanian-flagged cargo ship named *Cirkin* was heading toward Libya escorted by three Turkish frigates. Turkey claims that the cargo vessel was carrying humanitarian aid.²⁰⁹ However, a Greek frigate working with the IRINI operation was ordered to launch a helicopter to approach the cargo vessel under suspicion of carrying arms. As the helicopter approached, it received warnings from the Turkish frigates that the vessel was under protection of Turkey. The helicopter returned to the Greek frigate, for the guidelines of IRINI does not allow intervention of vessels protected by third parties.²¹⁰ Later that day, the French frigate *Courbet* tried to investigate the cargo ship. France claims that the Turkish frigates targeted the *Courbet* with their radar and manned light gunnery stations, a claim which Turkey denies. Turkey claims that the *Courbet* participated in dangerous high-speed maneuvers in close proximity to their frigates.²¹¹

This incident has caused fractures within the NATO alliance. France suspended its commitment to the Sea Guardian operation and demanded that Turkey agrees to not violate any NATO rules. Ankara wants France to apologize for its actions. In the meantime, NATO is currently investigating the incident and the United States has been sympathetic to France, distancing itself from Turkey.²¹² Additionally, France is joined by Germany and Italy in proposing EU sanctions against countries deemed responsible for shipping arms to Libya. This is a direct response against Turkey as France has accused Turkey of multiple

²⁰⁹ John Irish and Robin Emmott, “France-Turkey Tensions Mount After NATO Naval Incident,” Reuters, July 7, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-france-turkey-analysis/france-turkey-tensions-mount-after-nato-naval-incident-idUSKBN2481K5>.

²¹⁰ Ragip Soylu, “Drama in the Med: Greek Navy Tries to Stop Cargo Ship Accompanied by Turkish Frigates,” Middle East Eye, June 10, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/greece-turkey-libya-navy-cargo-ship-standoff>.

²¹¹ Irish and Emmott, “France-Turkey Tensions Mount After NATO Naval Incident;” Al Jazeera, “Operation Irini: Turkey Slams EU Mission to Contain Arms to Libya.”

²¹² Irish and Emmott, “France-Turkey Tensions Mount After NATO Naval Incident;” “Turkey Insists on Apology From France Over Naval Standoff, Star Tribune July 17, 2020, <https://www.startribune.com/turkey-insists-on-apology-from-france-over-naval-standoff/571802132/?refresh=true>; “US Distances Itself From Turkey Over Naval Incident with France,” The Arab Weekly, June 16, 2020, <https://the arabweekly.com/us-distances-itself-turkey-over-naval-incident-france>.

violations of the arms embargo.²¹³ Through direct and indirect means, Turkey's assertion of influence through its maritime deal with Libya has been challenged by regional actors and members of NATO.

²¹³ Jasper Hamann, "Three EU States Prepare Sanctions for Libya Arms Embargo Violations," Morocco World News, August 10, 2020, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2020/08/314962/three-eu-states-prepare-sanctions-for-libya-arms-embargo-violations/>; "France Accuses Turkey of Violating Arms Embargo on Libya," Courthouse News Service, June 18, 2020, <https://www.courthousenews.com/france-accuses-turkey-of-violating-arms-embargo-on-libya/>.

IV. FUTURE OF PROCUREMENT AND STRATEGY

This thesis has discussed the modernization and evolution of the Turkish navy and its policies. As with most organizations that experience drastic modernization efforts, the Turkish navy is not willing to be satisfied with its current accomplishments. Instead, the Turkish fleet desires to continue modernization and improve its capabilities. This chapter examines future naval procurement projects (some of which have already achieved significant milestones) and how these projects combined with previous modernization efforts will contribute to the future influence of the Turkish navy.

A. FUTURE PROCUREMENTS

The focus of future procurements of the Turkish fleet is the continuation of its modernization efforts, especially its domestic production capabilities. The procurements which are significant for building a robust modern navy can be broken down into three groups: warships, submarines, and fleet logistic ships.

1. Warships

Turkish domestic production of warships has made significant strides with the Ada-class corvettes. As discussed in Chapter II, the Ada-class ranged from 65–80% domestic production. Additionally, corvettes are the smallest classification of modern major surface combatants.²¹⁴ In order for the Turkish navy to build upon its modernization efforts it needs to produce larger surface combatants with higher domestic production rates.

a. *Istanbul- class Frigates*

One of Turkey's future naval projects is the Istanbul-class frigate (see Figure 7). The first ship of this class, the TCG Istanbul (F-515) is expected to commission in 2021

²¹⁴ James P. McGrath III, "What Do You Call It? The Politics and Practicalities of Warship Classification," Center for International Maritime Security, October 31, 2018, <http://cimsec.org/what-do-you-call-it-the-politics-and-practicalities-of-warship-classification/38731>.

and enter full naval service in 2023.²¹⁵ Three more ships in this class are expected to be commissioned over the next four years; the TCG Izmir (F-516) in 2022, the TCG Izmit (F-517) in 2023, and the TCG icel (F-518) in 2024.²¹⁶ These ships are classified as frigates, as they are slightly larger than the Ada-class corvettes. This represents a significant milestone, as these ships will be the first domestically produced frigates in the Turkish navy. Admiral (Retired) Bulent Bostanoglu voiced this sentiment at the announcement of the project in 2017, “the Istanbul frigate was designed using experience we have gained from Burgazada and Kınalıada corvettes... this ship is going to be the first original Turkish frigate to be realized in our republican history. We must also underscore that there is a high degree of stability behind the physical presence of the ship.”²¹⁷ The stability which Admiral Bostanoglu alludes to is the concept of the common hull platform. This concept was introduced to make building warships easier. The hull designs between the Ada and Istanbul class are similar, removing the conceptualization step of ship building while also cutting costs.²¹⁸ Additionally, the TCG Istanbul will start off with a 75% domestic production rate with two-thirds of the 80 subcontractors being Turkish companies.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Dorain Archus, “Turkey to Launch Indigenous I-Class Frigate by the End of 2020,” *Naval News*, May 22, 2020, <https://navalnews.net/turkey-to-launch-indigenous-i-class-frigate-by-the-end-of-2020/>; “Turkey to Build First Indigenous Frigate,” *Maritime Business World*, June 4, 2020, <https://www.maritimebusinessworld.com/turkey-to-build-first-indigenous-frigate-1300h.htm>.

²¹⁶ “Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat,” *Defence Turkey* 12, no.80 (2018): 22.

²¹⁷ “Turkey Begins Construction of First National Frigate ‘Istanbul’,” *Daily Sabah*, January 19, 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2017/01/19/turkey-begins-construction-of-first-national-frigate-istanbul>.

²¹⁸ Bilal Khan, “Turkey Begins Constructing First Istanbul-Class Frigate,” *Quwa*, January 19, 2017, <https://quwa.org/2017/01/19/turkey-begins-constructing-first-istanbul-class-frigate/>.

²¹⁹ *Maritime Business World*, “Turkey to Build First Indigenous Frigate.”



Figure 7. Digital Model of Istanbul-Class Frigate²²⁰

Domestic production again takes center stage, showcasing Turkey’s defense industry’s capabilities. In addition, the classification of frigates carries significance. As previously stated, corvettes are the smallest classification of major surface combatants preceded by frigates. However, corvettes are mostly associated with littoral operations and not blue water capabilities,²²¹ while frigates are associated with both roles. Building domestic frigates (complementing the 16 foreign procured frigates²²²) illustrates that the Turkish navy is serious about its blue water goals and policies. Such a claim is reinforced by the improved range of the Istanbul-class frigates. The frigates’ range at economical speeds (14 knots) will be approximately 5,700 nautical miles, enough to travel to Somalia

²²⁰ Source: Mitch, “Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030.”

²²¹ McGrath III, “What Do You Call It? The Politics and Practicalities of Warship Classification.”

²²² “TCG Gokova F-496 of the Modern Turkish Navy is a Modernized, Ex-American Navy Oliver Hazard Perry-Class Fighting Frigate,” Military Factory, May 9, 2019, https://www.militaryfactory.com/ships/detail.asp?ship_id=tcg-gokova-f496-frigate-warship-turkish-navy.

or Yemen without refueling.²²³ The Istanbul-class will also upgrade naval weapons capabilities. The frigates will maintain the 76 millimeter (mm) main battery that the Ada class corvettes have but will have bigger auxiliary guns. Instead of two 12.7mm guns like the corvettes, the frigates will have two domestically produced 25mm auxiliary guns.²²⁴ The other major advancement on the Istanbul class frigate is its MK 41 VLS. VLS allows for a naval ship to store missiles below deck and launch them through vertical tubes.²²⁵ This system allows for a larger armament of missiles by saving space. The Turkish navy has already upgraded 12 of its frigates with eight cells of the Mk 41 VLS.²²⁶ The Istanbul-class frigates will improve missile capability by having a 16 cell VLS. This will allow an allotment of 64 total missiles to include the indigenous ATMACA surface to surface missile and the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile (ESSM).²²⁷ These features allow the Turkish navy to utilize its frigates for a multitude of missions both in the littorals and open ocean.

b. TF-2000 Destroyer

Another significant future project is the TF-2000 destroyer (refer to Figure 8). When this project was first announced in 2010, it was classified as a frigate project, as the new ships will replace the four non-upgraded Turkish frigates.²²⁸ Since then, there has been debate on the classification of this project until the Turkish navy officially announced

²²³ Ahmet Alemdar, "MILGEM: I (Stack) Class Frigate," Defence Turk, May 10, 2019, <https://www.defenceturk.net/milgem-i-sinifi-firkateyn>; Archus, "Turkey to Launch Indigenous I-Class Frigate by the End of 2020."

²²⁴ Dominic Villasanta, "Turkey Begins Building TCG Istanbul, Its First Domestic Naval Frigate," China Topix, January 26, 2017, <http://www.chinatopix.com/articles/110880/20170126/turkey-begins-building-tcg-istanbul-first-domestic-naval-frigate.htm>; "Milgem Istanbul-Class Frigate," Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tcg-milgem-frigate.htm>.

²²⁵ "Naval Swiss Army Knife: MK 41 Vertical Missile Launch Systems (VLS)," *Defense Industry Daily*, May 13, 2020, <https://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/mk-41-naval-vertical-missile-launch-systems-delivered-supported-updated-02139/>.

²²⁶ Mitch, "Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030."

²²⁷ *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat,"²⁴; Archus, "Turkey to Launch Indigenous I-Class Frigate by the End of 2020;" Global Security, "Milgem Istanbul-Class Frigate."

²²⁸ "TF 2000 Project," Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tcg-tf-2000.htm>; Mitch, "Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030."

the destroyer label in 2018.²²⁹ This is significant because Turkey will now be domestically building the second highest level of major surface combatants, giving even more credibility to its blue water ambitions and goals. The TF-2000 project calls for four ships with the possibility an additional two. The production goal is for the first ship to enter service in 2025, with the next three to be delivered to the Turkish navy in 2028, 2029, and 2030.²³⁰ The reason why the TF-2000 project has been classified as a destroyer is due to its specifications. The projected displacement of the ships is 6,500-7,500 tons (Istanbul-class projected displacement: 3,000 tons), the projected length is between 145–150 meters (Istanbul-class projected length: 113.2 meters) and will carry a total of 64 VLS cells.²³¹ While not equal in value, a comparison of the respective specifications of an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer (the main surface combatant of the United States Navy) provides context of the Turkish navy's developments. These specifications are: 8,775 ton displacement, 155 meters in length, and the capacity for a 96 cell VLS.²³²

One of the systems for the TF-2000 project which is being domestically developed and produced is the CAFRAD phased array radar. The Turkish defense company ASELSAN is developing this radar for the navy. CAFRAD is an indigenously designed radar suite which combines an identification friend or foe (IFF) system, an active phased array multifunction radar, an active phased array illumination radar, and an active phased array long range search radar. The radar suite will be integrated into the mast superstructure

²²⁹ "TF-2000 Frigate and Naval Projects," C4 Defence, May 7, 2020, <http://en.c4defence.com/Archive/tf2000-frigate-and-naval-projects/9880/1>; "Multi-Purpose Frigate Project TF-2000," Weapons of Fatherland, April 4, 2016, <http://bastion-opk.ru/tf-2000-turkey>; "TF2000," WAFF, May 9, 2019, <https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/worldarmedforcesforum/tf2000-t273309.html>; *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 24.

²³⁰ *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 24.

²³¹ *Defence Turkey*, 24; Alemdar, "MILGEM: I (Stack) Class Frigate," Mitch, "Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030."

²³² "U.S. Navy Destroyer (Ship Class-DDG)," U.S. Navy, <https://www.public.navy.mil/surfor/pages/Destroyer.aspx>.

of the destroyers.²³³ The nuances of developing domestic has raised concerns the CAFRAD is the TF-2000s limiting factor, but the project has been able to meet its timeline milestones thus far. In early 2019, the first phase of the development was completed with the successful launching of an ESSM which achieved a successful hit on a drone using the CAFRAD system. This event was completed onboard TCG Goksu (F-497) using a radar platform on the flight deck.²³⁴ As a result, the project is trending for its on-time completion date in 2023.²³⁵ The CAFRAD radar system will greatly improve the Turkish navy's anti-air capabilities. The system combined with its increased VLS cells will designate the TF-2000 destroyers as the main air defense warfare platforms of the Turkish navy.²³⁶

²³³ "IDEF 2017: ASELSAN Showcasing its CAFRAD Phased Array Radar for TF-2000 Frigate," Navy Recognition, May 9, 2017, <http://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/2017/may-2017-navy-naval-forces-defense-industry-technology-maritime-security-global-news/5195-idef-2017-aseksan-showcasing-its-cafrad-phased-array-radar-for-tf-2000-frigate.html>.

²³⁴ Xavier Vavasseur, "Video: Turkish AESA Radar CAFRAD Completes First Live Fire Test," *Naval News*, February 11, 2019, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2019/02/video-turkish-asesa-radar-cafrad-completes-first-live-fire-test/>.

²³⁵ Beerke Uygac, "CAFRAD Awaits TF-2000 Destroyer," *Defence Turk*, July 15, 2020, <https://en.defenceturk.net/cafrad-is-waiting-for-the-tf-2000-destroyer>; Vavasseur, "Video: Turkish AESA Radar CAFRAD Completes First Live Fire Test."

²³⁶ "TF-2000 Air Defense Warfare (ADW) Destroyer Project," Turkish Naval Forces, February 20, 2019, https://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/icerik.php?dil=0&icerik_id=76.



Figure 8. Digital Model of TF-2000 Destroyer²³⁷

2. Submarines

The Turkish navy also has plans to modernization its submarine fleet. However, the timeline for domestic production of submarines lags behind the timeline of their surface fleet. Turkish future projects on submarines contain two strategies; first, the current process of domestically building German-designed submarines and second, designing and producing an indigenous submarine.

a. *Reis-Class Type 214TN*

The first strategy in future Turkish submarine production is domestically building German submarines. As previously referenced in Figure 1, the Turkish navy currently maintains a contract with ThyssenKrupp for six Reis-class submarines. The navy received the first of the class, TCG Pirireis (S-330), in December 2019. The TCG Pirireis is expected to be in service by 2022 with the final submarine being received by the Turkish navy in

²³⁷ Source: Turkish Naval Forces, "TF-2000 Air Defense Warfare (ADW) Destroyer Project."

2027.²³⁸ The German designs satisfy the Turkish navy's desire to have quieter and more efficient submarines. While the Reis-class' propulsion will still be diesel-electric like Turkey's other submarines,²³⁹ the newer vessels will be equipped with an air independent propulsion (AIP) system and high capacity batteries. A growing trend in modern submarine technology, the AIP system will enable the Reis class submarines to conduct three-week long operations without the need for snorkeling. Additionally, the submarines will have an enhanced range with the ability to reach the United States without refueling.²⁴⁰

b. MILDEN Project

The Turkish navy also has plans for a domestically designed and produced submarine. The plan is for the final Reis-class submarine to be the final foreign-designed submarine in the Turkish fleet. In October 2019, Rear Admiral Mehmet Sari, deputy general director for the Defense Ministry's shipyards department, announced the commencement of the MILDEN (short for Milli Denizalti, Turkish for National Submarine) project.²⁴¹ The project calls for six domestic submarines with the initial vessel

²³⁸ "Turkey to Boost Naval Strength with 6 New Submarines to Go into Service in 2022–2027," *Daily Sabah*, December 22, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/defense/2019/12/22/turkey-to-boost-naval-strength-with-6-new-submarines-to-go-into-service-in-2022-2027>.

²³⁹ Ibrahim Sunnetci, "Type 214TN REIS Class TCG Piri Reis Submarine Launched," *Defence Turkey* 14, no.97 (2019): 53–54.

²⁴⁰ Robert Farley, "Should the Navy Build New Stealth 'AIP' Submarines?," *The National Interest*, November 5, 2019, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/should-navy-build-new-stealth-aip-submarines-93556>; Ibrahim Sunnetci, "Type 214TN REIS Class & Submarine Capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Defence Turkey* 14, no.98 (2019): 82.

²⁴¹ Burak Ege Bekdil, "Turkey Launches Homemade Submarine Program," *Defense News*, October 22, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/10/22/turkey-launches-homemade-submarine-program/>; "MiLDEN (Milli Denizalti-National Submarine)," Global Security, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tcg-mildem.htm>.

to enter service in 2040. The MILDEN submarines will be copies of the Reis-class, except with domestic companies providing the final designs and systems.²⁴²

3. Fleet Logistic Ships

The Turkish navy has planned a vast amount of future modernization projects. The scope of these projects range from upgraded fast attack missile crafts and patrol boats to the countless indigenous electronic, radar, and weapons systems.²⁴³ However, the final project category which is significant for building a robust modern navy is the fleet logistic ships. One such modernization effort is the DIMDEG project. This project is a domestically designed and produced fleet replenishment ship which satisfies the Turkish navy's need for fuel, water, and supplies for its surface fleet.²⁴⁴ The DIMDEG ship will possess all underway replenishment capabilities including vertical replenishment, fuel transfer, and dry cargo and container storage. This ship will have a maximum speed of 24 knots and a range of 4,500 nautical miles. The Turkish navy expects delivery and service of the project by 2023.²⁴⁵ The DIMDEG project will upgrade and modernize the Turkish navy's replenishment capabilities, providing crucial support to the surface fleet in blue water and open ocean missions.

²⁴² "Turkey Launches MiLDEN Project to Build Own Submarines," *Defense World*, October 24, 2019, <https://www.defenseworld.net/news/25713/Turkey-Launches-MiLDEN-Project-to-Build-Own-Submarines#.X1tJlpNKjJ->; "Turkish Defence Industry Has Begun Work on Own Submarine," *Bulgarian Military*, October 23, 2019, <https://bulgarianmilitary.com/2019/10/23/turkish-defence-industry-has-began-work-on-own-submarine/>; Bekdil, "Turkey Launches Homemade Submarine Program;" George Tsiboukis, "MiLDEN: Turkey's Quest to Build a National Submarine," *Defence IQ*, June 26, 2017, <https://www.defenceiq.com/naval-maritime-defence/articles/milden-turkeys-quest-to-build-a-national>.

²⁴³ Mitch, "Turkish Naval Modernization and Shipbuilding Plans Through 2030;" *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 21–26.

²⁴⁴ "Analysis: Amphibious and Auxiliary Ships of Turkish Industry," *Navy Recognition*, April 21, 2020, <https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/focus-analysis/naval-technology/8297-analysis-amphibious-and-auxiliary-ships-of-turkish-industry.html>; *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 26.

²⁴⁵ "SNR-FRT19800 Fleet Replenishment Tanker (DIMDEG)," *Global Security*, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tcg-frt19800.htm>; *Defence Turkey*, "Turkish Naval Forces-Dependable in Cooperation, Deterrent in Crises and Decisive in Combat," 26; "Gas Turbines for the Fast Fleet Replenishment Tanker," *Bosphorus Naval News*, July 7, 2020, <https://turkishnavy.net/>; *Navy Recognition*, "Analysis: Amphibious and Auxiliary Ships of Turkish Industry."

The Turkish navy recently received a fleet logistic project in July 2020, the TCG *Ufuk* (A-591). The *Ufuk* is a significant signal and electronic intelligence platform. The ship is similar in design to the Ada-class corvette but has a different superstructure and main propulsion system. Additionally, it is slower than the corvettes and has no offensive weapon capabilities. However, the *Ufuk* possesses early warning, communication, and reconnaissance equipment. It also possesses equipment for electromagnetic, hydro-acoustic, and electro-optical gathering. The TCG *Ufuk* will be able to operate individually or with other units.²⁴⁶ It will also provide the Turkish navy with significant signals and intelligence capabilities which can be used in a variety of missions.

B. ROLE OF TURKEY MOVING FORWARD

The Turkish navy's presence in both littoral waters and the open ocean has increased due to its modernization efforts. The question is whether or not Turkey can turn its modern naval presence into influence.

1. Role in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas

As discussed earlier, the emerging Blue Homeland policy pays particular attention to the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey's actions supporting this policy have ranged from naval exercises to formal maritime agreements. As Turkey continues its implementation of the Blue Homeland policy, it needs to be aware of its potential consequences, including military action. Turkey is not the only country in the region with modern naval capabilities. Three countries in particular that Turkey should pay attention to are Greece, Israel, and Egypt. Greece does not maintain a fleet as big as Turkey's nor does it have as many modern capabilities. The Hellenic fleet consists of nine Elli-class frigates procured from the Netherlands. These frigates carry Harpoon and Sea Sparrow missiles. Additionally, Greece has four Hydra-class frigates procured from Germany. These frigates have been modernized and carry the improved version of the Sea Sparrow missile, the RIM-162

²⁴⁶ Korhan Ozkilinc, "New SIGINT and ELINT Ship for Turkey," European Security Defence, July 3, 2020, <https://euro-sd.com/2020/07/news/18050/new-sigint-and-elint-ship-for-turkey/>; Cem Devrim Yaylali, "Turkish Intelligence-Gathering Ship Starts Sea Trials," Janes, July 22, 2020, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/turkish-intelligence-gathering-ship-starts-sea-trials>; "TCG *Ufuk* Launched," Bosphorus Naval News, February 10, 2019, <https://turkishnavy.net/2019/02/10/tcg-ufuk-launched/>.

ESSM. The Hellenic fleet is also comprised of gunboats and patrol boats. Currently, Greece is undergoing its own modernization efforts by further improving the Hydra-class frigates and securing a contract with the United States for four Seahawk helicopters.²⁴⁷ One area in which Greece holds superiority over Turkey is its submarine fleet. The Greek fleet maintains 11 diesel-electric submarines, however, five have already been modernized with AIP technology.²⁴⁸

Israel also possesses a naval fleet which can influence operations in the region. The Israeli fleet is the smallest of the four countries but maintains powerful assets due to its gradual modernization efforts.²⁴⁹ The Israeli surface fleet is comprised of Sa'ar-class corvettes which carry surface-to-air missiles. The strategic advantage of the Israeli navy is its submarine fleet. Israel operates five Dolphin-class submarines procured from Germany. Two of these submarines have AIP technology while all carry torpedoes and cruise missiles, giving Israel the advantage in the region in terms of submarine warfare.²⁵⁰ The Egyptian navy has also focused on naval procurement in recent years. Its significant procurements have been two LHDs from France. Additionally, Egypt also procured four corvettes and a frigate from France. The Egyptian fleet is also comprised of six frigates procured from the United States, two frigates from China, and two frigates from Spain.²⁵¹

Examining other navies provides context for Turkey's modernization efforts. Of all the Eastern Mediterranean countries, Turkey operates the largest navy. While all navies are experiencing a modernization, the Turkish fleet is modernizing at a faster pace spurred by its domestic defense industry. This pace will give Turkey the ability to operate larger and

²⁴⁷ Paul Iddon, "[Turkey is Up Against Some Formidable Navies in the Eastern Mediterranean,](https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2020/08/13/turkey-is-up-against-some-formidable-navies-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/#72fc8cd24f72)" *Forbes*, August 13, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2020/08/13/turkey-is-up-against-some-formidable-navies-in-the-eastern-mediterranean/#72fc8cd24f72>.

²⁴⁸ Iddon, "Turkey is Up Against Some Formidable Navies in the Eastern Mediterranean;" Sunnetci, "Type 214TN REIS Class & Submarine Capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean," 83.

²⁴⁹ Iddon; Arda Mevlutoglu, "Naval Balance of Power in the Eastern," *Defence Turkey* 14, no.95 (2019): 31.

²⁵⁰ Iddon; Mevlutoglu, "Naval Balance of Power in the Eastern," 31; Sunnetci, "Type 214TN REIS Class & Submarine Capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean," 87.

²⁵¹ Iddon; Mevlutoglu, 32.

more modern surface ships in the near future. It will also allow the Turkish navy to quickly achieve parity in subsurface capabilities. Nowhere is this more significant than the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. Due to recent events with Greece, these seas have become one large area of focus for the Turkish navy. In a response to Turkey's maritime agreement with Libya, Greece and Egypt signed a similar agreement in early August 2020.²⁵² The same month witnessed two significant naval incidents between Turkey and Greece. The first was a small collision between frigates. The TCG Kemal Reis (F-247) and other frigates were escorting the *Oruc Reis*, a Turkish survey ship, which was actively conducting operations between Cyprus and Crete in waters both claimed by the two countries. The Greek frigate *Limnos* was shadowing the convoy during their operations when it collided with the *Kemal Reis*.²⁵³ There is dispute over which country's vessel performed reckless seamanship that caused the bow of the *Limnos* and the starboard quarter of the *Kemal Reis* to collide.²⁵⁴ However, Greek officials claim the incident was an accident while Turkish officials see it as a provocation.²⁵⁵ Later the same day, a Turkish submarine was located by the Greek navy operating between the Greek islands of Evia and Andros. The submarine was harassed by the Greek fleet and was quickly pursued out of Greek waters.²⁵⁶

²⁵² Burhanettin Duran, "Good Cop, Bad Cop Play Against Turkey?," *Daily Sabah*, August 11, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/columns/good-cop-bad-cop-play-against-turkey>.

²⁵³ Michele Kambas and Tuvan Gumrukcu, "Greek, Turkish Warships in 'Mini Collision' Ankara Calls Provocative," Reuters, August 14, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-turkey-warships/greek-turkish-warships-in-mini-collision-ankara-calls-provocative-idUSKCN25A161>.

²⁵⁴ Kambas and Gumrukcu, "Greek, Turkish Warships in 'Mini Collision' Ankara Calls Provocative;" Paul Antonopoulos, "Turkish Ship that Collided with the Greek Frigate is Severely Damaged," *Greek City Times*, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/08/17/turkish-ship-that-collided-with-the-greek-frigate-is-severely-damaged/>.

²⁵⁵ Kambas and Gumrukcu.

²⁵⁶ Paul Antonopoulos, "Aegean Tensions: Turkish Submarine had Difficult Night Surrounded by Greek Helicopter & Stealth Submarine," *Greek City Times*, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/08/20/turkish-submarine-had-difficult-night-surrounded-by-greek-helicopter/>; Paul Antonopoulos, "Two Weeks of Turkish Military Embarrassment Against Greece," *Greek City Times*, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/08/22/two-weeks-of-turkish-military-embarrassment-against-greece/>; Paul Antonopoulos, "Turkish Submarines Surrounded by Greek Military Blared with Ear Piercing Frequencies & Beatles Song," *Greek City Times*, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/08/23/turkish-submarines-surrounded-by-greek-military-blared-with-ear-piercing-frequencies/>.

The August naval incidents have increased dangerous rhetoric between the two countries. After the collision, Greek Defense Minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos congratulated the captain of the *Limnos*.²⁵⁷ Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has warned Greece to act with caution and reason and President Erdogan has stated, “They’re either going to understand the language of politics and diplomacy, or in the field with painful experiences...They are going to understand that Turkey has the political, economic and military power to tear up the immoral maps and documents imposed.”²⁵⁸ As the dangerous rhetoric increases, policy analysts argue that Turkey’s naval modernization efforts are going to be a major factor, if not a deciding factor, in altercations the region. Dr. Micha’el Tanchum, a senior associate fellow at the Austrian Institute for European and Security Studies, states, “From this point of view, the Greek Navy faces a one-to-two-year time window before its naval strength vis-à-vis Turkey will experience a relative decline. This further incentivizes Greece to take a more assertive approach in the eastern Mediterranean.”²⁵⁹ John Psaropoulos, Al Jazeera’s Greece correspondent, claims that Greece is worried because Turkey’s fleet has modernized faster than theirs. Psaropoulos states, “What they’re less confident about is the vast swath of the Aegean sea and now eastern Mediterranean sea...The Greeks have traditionally spent very highly on defense. They are now unable to keep up with Turkey, which has almost triple the defense budget of Greece.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Vassilis Nedos, “After Collision, Athens Plans Next Steps,” *Ekathimerini*, August 19, 2020, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/255987/article/ekathimerini/news/after-collision-athens-plans-next-steps>.

²⁵⁸ Recep Tayyip Erdogan quoted in Al Jazeera article. “Erdogan Raises Rhetoric in Greece Standoff in Mediterranean,” Al Jazeera, September 5, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/09/erdogan-raises-rhetoric-greece-standoff-mediterranean-200905171928246.html>.

²⁵⁹ Micha’el Tanchum quoted in Ahval article. Salim Kahraman, “Greek Navy Plays Catch-Up with Turkey in Naval Development,” Ahval, August 14, 2019, <https://ahvalnews.com/greece-turkey/greek-navy-plays-catch-turkey-naval-development>.

²⁶⁰ John Psaropoulos quoted in Al Jazeera article. Al Jazeera, “Erdogan Raises Rhetoric in Greece Standoff in Mediterranean.”

2. Role in the Black Sea and Blue Water Operations

Currently, the Turkish naval focus has been on the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. However, Turkish naval modernization will also be beneficial in the Black Sea. As Turkey's desire to be a major player in the region continues, so will its pursuit to maintain influence in the Black Sea. This explains Turkey's leadership and promotion of BLACKSEAFOR and Black Sea naval exercises. The obstacle in the way of Turkish influence is Russia. Before 2014, Turkey maintained outright naval superiority in the Black Sea. Since then, the Russian navy has engaged in a rapid modernization and defense posture in the region, stripping Ankara of its naval superiority.²⁶¹ Turkey's future naval projects will provide assets needed to reestablish the balance of power and influence. Some critics worry that Ankara is focused too much on building a Mahan-style navy that it will be outpaced by Russia in terms of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD).²⁶² However, Turkey's domestic ATMACA missile and its B-1 stand-off munition (SOM) help balance Russian A2/D2 superiority.²⁶³ Additionally, Ankara and Moscow have engaged in friendly relations in recent years with Ankara buying S-400 surface-to-air missile systems from Russia, a main component of the Russian A2/D2 system. While it might seem that Ankara and Moscow are in a new, friendly relationship, both see the other as an obstacle to influence. This is echoed by a statement from Vladimir Komoedov, head of the Russian Duma's defense committee, "Russia needs to take into account the strengthening of Turkey's navy, irrespective of the constructive nature of the relationship."²⁶⁴ Turkey's naval modernization efforts can be used to balance the power in the Black Sea region.

Additionally, Turkey's future projects of the TF-2000 destroyer and the DIMDEG project give more credibility for the Turkish fleet when participating in blue water

²⁶¹ "Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus," International Crisis Group, June 28, 2018, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/250-russia-and-turkey.pdf>, 15.

²⁶² Bleda Kurtarcan, "Russia, Turkey and the Black Sea A2/AD Arms Race," *The National Interest*, March 5, 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russia-turkey-the-black-sea-a2-ad-arms-race-19673?page=0%2C1>.

²⁶³ Kurtarcan, "Russia, Turkey and the Black Sea A2/AD Arms Race."

²⁶⁴ Vladimir Komoedov quoted in International Crisis Group article. International Crisis Group, "Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus," 15.

operations. These projects will enable Turkey to maintain a robust naval presence across the globe. The TCG Anadolu will also provide power projection capabilities in any region it will be deployed. In all, Turkey's naval modernization efforts provide the country with a strong naval presence, which will only increase as future projects will be completed in the next couple of decades.

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V. CONCLUSION

In the last few decades, Turkey has engaged in impressive naval modernization efforts and shows no sign of slowing down in the future. The navy's modernization is only a small portion of Turkey's defense industry transformation. However, as policies and strategies have shifted, the Turkish fleet has moved from an auxiliary to a leading position in terms of power projection capabilities. This shift has been witnessed both domestically and internationally. As this shift is still being played out in real time, this thesis' goal was to provide context on the reasons and factors causing the modernization efforts.

The motivation behind the navy's modernization was a combination of political, strategic, and foreign policy decisions encompassed under the umbrella of a security dilemma. The major event which sparked modernization was the 1975 arms embargo. At a time when Turkey was involved in armed conflict in Cyprus and acting as a frontline against the Soviet Union in the Cold War, the embargo threatened the country's sense of security. In order to eliminate the threat, Turkey focused on building a strong defense industry capable of domestic development and production. However, the Turkish navy did not immediately receive support from the defense industry and had to rely on foreign procurement to upgrade its vessels. This changed after Turkish foreign policy promoted self-reliance and the image that Turkey deserved to be a major international player. In order to achieve the country's goals, the navy not only needed modernization, but also domestic development and production.

Additionally, the Turkish navy's modernization was fueled by a sense of prestige. Throughout the numerous shifts in foreign policy, the idea that Turkey should play a prominent and influential role in its region and the world was almost always a constant. As Turkey is bordered by three important seas (the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean) and controls one of the strategic maritime chokepoints (the Bosphorous Strait), the navy needed to become an integral part of Turkey's foreign policy and image. Turkish policymakers, especially prominent AKP members, have been influenced by the naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan. Due to this influence, one can observe Mahan-centric ideas driving the Turkish naval modernization, specifically the desire for a large fleet and capital ships.

Mahan's influence is also seen in Turkey's belief that the ability to project naval power adds to a country's prestige and influence. Thus, the Turkish navy has not only focused on its littoral waters, but also desires to maintain a robust blue water navy.

The effects of Turkish naval modernization are relevant for current and future events. Recently, the Turkish navy has been influenced by an emerging concept called Blue Homeland, which combines elements of a security dilemma, prestige, and power projection all in one. Blue Homeland has influenced the navy's actions in both littoral and blue water operations but has had its greatest influence in the Mediterranean. Turkey's actions have heightened the vigilance of the region and the international community, possibly impacting policy changes in relation to Turkey. As referenced earlier, regional neighbors in the Eastern Mediterranean are trying to counter Turkish naval actions. These states are trying to force Turkey to limit its naval presence and economic interests in the region. Greece's policy toward Turkey may start to mimic its dangerous rhetoric. As the current conflicts between the two countries are primarily over maritime concerns, naval power is critical. Due to the Turkish-Greek conflicts, Turkey's naval modernization could have potential policy implications for NATO and the United States. In the past year, Turkey has been in naval incidents not only with Greece, but with France as well. NATO and the United States will need to closely monitor the situation if Turkey continues to engage in conflicts with its fellow NATO members. This thesis does not provide speculation on how future events will unfold. However, it provides the analysis that Turkish modernization efforts, caused by political and foreign policy factors regarding security dilemmas and prestige, have yielded a strong, capable navy which will only become more robust in the near future.

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