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# Turning the Kurdish Question into a Peace of Capital



# Turning the Kurdish Question into a Peace of Capital and Hostility Toward the Ideal of the Republic!

**Kemal Okuyan - TKP General Secretary**



The first Kurdish rebellion of the Republican era in Turkey broke out in 1924 under the leadership of Sheikh Said and was suppressed with great force. However, to define this event solely as a “Kurdish uprising” would be misleading. What occurred was, without a shadow of a doubt, a reactionary revolt against the Republic, driven by open support for the caliphate. One of the forces behind the rebellion was none other than the most powerful imperialist of the time—the UK. Those who refer to the revolt as a Kurdish uprising typically point to the fact that it was carried out by Kurdish tribal forces. Another reason for this characterization lies in the present-day Kurdish nationalist movement’s tendency to embrace such reactionary rebellions and to portray their leaders in a favorable light.

The Communist International adopted a clear and resolute stance regarding the uprising, and even expressed understanding for the excessive measures taken by the Ankara government in suppressing it. However, both the Comintern and the TKP persistently emphasized that without a comprehensive and effective land reform, and without lifting the prohibitions imposed on the Kurdish language and culture, the problem would deepen—leaving fertile ground for exploitation by imperialists and counter-revolutionaries alike.

However, the young bourgeois government in Turkey remained loyal to its class character and ideological foundations, opting for a different path. It refrained from altering property relations in agriculture and effectively handed over regions densely populated by Kurds—and also strongholds of religious structures—to tribal chieftains. Those tribal leaders who bend the knee to the state became increasingly wealthy, and some of them later entered the path of capitalist development. Those who rebelled from time to time—whether under religious

or national (Kurdish) banners—were harshly punished.

Under these conditions, the Kurdish question began to fester. The Comintern’s warnings proved to be well-founded.

In the 1960s, when the socialist movement in Turkey first began to gain social traction, what it termed the “Eastern Question” (i.e., the Kurdish question) resurfaced with renewed intensity in the 1980s, triggering a new and large-scale uprising. This ushered in an extremely complex equation.

The PKK, organizer of this latest uprising, was known in the 1970s for violent operations and assassinations against revolutionary movements in Turkey. The full implications of these policies for the state were never fully revealed. However, while the labor movement was silenced following the severe defeat inflicted by the fascist coup of September 12, 1980, the “Kurdish rebellion” that began during this silence caused a persistent imbalance in social struggles in Turkey—a tension that has continued to this day. This “national question” pushed class contradictions to the background, becoming a sustained agenda not only within the country but also, especially, in Europe.

Over time, the international dimension of the issue gained increasing prominence. For imperialist countries, the unresolved Kurdish question presented an opportunity for intervention in Turkey and the region. But this opportunity was also seized by certain factions within Turkey’s capitalist class and the state apparatus. Above all, the Kurdish poor served as a reservoir of cheap labor for capitalism in the country. Kurdish workers who migrated westward due to conflicts and unemployment, worked in the most grueling jobs—especially in construction—and for lowest wages. Furthermore, many fundamental rights were suspended

under the pretext of “terrorism,” and as the conflicts persisted, an economy of war grew, becoming a means of capital accumulation for some. Most importantly, the workers were divided.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, imperialist countries such as the United States, the UK, Germany, France, and Italy competed to develop relations with the PKK, trying to leverage this important instrument for the transformation of both Turkey and the region. Competing with Turkey, Iran also joined this struggle and at times exerted influence over the PKK. However, especially in recent years, Israel has become the boldest player making moves and setting the game on the Kurdish question.

Meanwhile, in Turkey, the state had been holding PKK leader Öcalan imprisoned for long time, waiting for the right moment to leverage him to its advantage amid this complex environment.

Neo-Ottomanism emerged as a strategic orientation resulting from the overlap of Turkey’s capitalist expansionist tendencies and the Islamist ideology of the AKP. Rooted in Sunni Islam, this strategy aimed to weaken the influence of Iran and Shiite organizations like Hezbollah in the Middle East, while establishing Turkish guardianship over both Kurds and Arabs. The AKP strongly supported the Arab Spring and intervened in the civil wars in Libya and Syria. About 12–13 years ago, Erdoğan and Salih Muslim, leader of the Syrian Kurds, held private talks during the peace process over the Kurdish issue, with Muslim being recognized at the head of state level protocols.

This process stalled, and for another approximately 9–10 years, the conflicts reignited. However, the PKK’s main focus was no longer Turkey but Syria. The cooperation between the UK, Israel, Qatar, the United States, and Turkey to overthrow



Assad closely concerned the future of Syrian Kurds. At this moment, the leader of Turkey's radical nationalist party made a surprising statement: "Israel threatens us; therefore, we must consolidate the internal front and establish Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood." The phrase "Why should we leave the Kurds to Israel and the U.S.?" was echoed by pro-government journalists. Indeed, in 2024, Israeli officials frequently declared, "The Kurds understand us best," many Kurdish parties carried Israeli flags during their demonstrations, and appeared indifferent to the massacre of the Palestinian people.

Following the fascist leader's call, a statement came from Öcalan as well, and a process began in which the arms would be laid down and PKK would be ultimately dissolved. According to ruling circles, the game of imperialist countries and Israel had been foiled, and Turkey's path was now open.

Regarding the Kurdish question, Turkey is engaged in various levels and intensities of tension and struggle with the United States, the UK, France, Germany, Israel, Iran, Iraq, and even Russia. Preventing other powers from exploiting a problem that has been rendered unsolvable for years is, of course, an important goal for the country. However, there is no Kurdish issue independent of Turkey's processes of capital accumulation, the expansionist objectives of Turkish capitalism, the capital class's need for resources, foreign policy dynamics, and the ideological and political interventions that ensure the dominance of capital domestically.

Therefore, while tensions on this and other issues certainly have material foundations, we communists categorically reject the government's recent claim that it has thwarted the imperialists' game.

Because the agreement emerging today between the government and Öcalan confronts the foundations of the Republic of Turkey—a republic that imperialist countries, especially the UK, have never accepted and which blocked their post-

World War I plans. It is important not to forget that the founding of the Republic of Turkey was made possible through the alliance with Soviet Russia during the War of Independence and was profoundly influenced by it.

The parties of this new process repeatedly emphasized that Islam would be the cement of brotherhood, and that through this cooperation Turkey would become a regional power, expanding its influence and reach. In other words, the issue at hand is the loosening of Turkey's borders with Syria, Iraq, and possibly Iran, and the increase of Turkey's economic, political, cultural, ideological, and military presence in the region.

There are many states unwilling to allow Turkey to suddenly become the strongest regional actor. On the other hand, Turkey's external expansion would help corner Iran further, but it would also likely lead to instability within the country and to increasing questioning of its territorial integrity. Therefore, there are many reasons to believe that Turkey's temporary lead in the competition over the "Kurds" may have been intended.

Moreover, it is absurd to expect that Kurdish ruling classes, which have established their own administrations in Iraq and Syria and maintain strong political presence in Iran, will long accept remaining under the wings of Turkish capitalism.

At this point, it is necessary to caution against interpreting the matter narrowly within the framework of the Kurdish question. What is currently unfolding in the region sheds light on the plans of the Western imperialist powers—despite their mutual rivalries—to transform a vast area stretching from Palestine to Azerbaijan (including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE,

Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq) into an economic zone of attraction. This economic hub, to be established atop a landscape of cheap and unassuming labor, energy resources and transit lines, trade routes, and other riches awaiting plunder, is intended to ensure Israel's security and its integration with regional countries. While serving the profit-seeking interests of multinational monopolies, it is also understood to function as a mechanism for encircling China and constructing an alternative geopolitical center to it. Within this context, the sidelining or capitulation of Iran also emerges as a strategic objective.

Viewed from this angle, the Middle East should no longer be analyzed through the language of identities, sects, national questions, geo-strategic calculations, or even only inter-imperialist rivalries, but rather through the lens of class contradictions. The developments point to the fact that one of the main sponsors of a new "peace process" in Turkey will be TÜSİAD—the organization of the big capital. It is also becoming clear that the Kurdish bourgeoisie, which has always constituted a strong component of the Turkish bourgeoisie, will become increasingly visible through a new phase of integration, and that Kurdish capital will assume a facilitating role in Turkey's regional expansion efforts, particularly in Syria.

TKP categorically supports putting an end to all armed conflict.

However, we will not be part of the hostility toward the Republic and labor, nor of NATO-ism, religious brotherhood, or the peace with capital. For some international analysts, the reconciliation between the PKK and the government and Öcalan's statements may have come as a surprise. We were not surprised. Everything is unfolding in an entirely logical manner.

What is illogical is to generate hope for "democratization" or "revolutionism" from this peace with capital. The only hope for Turkish and Kurdish workers lies in a Socialist Republic that will make equality, brotherhood, prosperity, and peace possible.





# Why is Now the Right Time to Question NATO?



**Berkay Kemal Önoğlu,**  
*Member of TKP Central Committee*

In recent weeks, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) has launched a new phase of struggle aimed at terminating Turkey's NATO membership and expelling NATO from Turkey, a campaign set to escalate step by step until the 2026 NATO Summit in Istanbul. Following the Hague Summit, mass actions and public declarations have marked the beginning of this effort. As of July 1, citizens have been invited to sign a petition—available both online and at stands set up in public squares—addressed to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), demanding Turkey's withdrawal from NATO.

This is not the first anti-NATO campaign by the revolutionary movement in Turkey. Especially for the TKP, opposition to NATO has long been a cornerstone of its revolutionary strategy. However, it must be emphasized that in today's political landscape, anti-NATO positions carry a renewed and vital relevance. Questioning NATO membership has moved far beyond an abstract ideal—it now presents itself to large segments

of society as a tangible and realistic option. This shift is largely driven by intensifying regional tensions, rising security threats, NATO's accumulating record of aggression, and its declining credibility. This reality awaits to be addressed by revolutionaries—so that the demand for withdrawal from NATO reveals its anti-systemic character, and it becomes clear that questioning NATO means questioning the system as a whole, thereby stripping away the veil that conceals exploitative relations.

It is well known that the NATO alliance functions on the principle of member states relinquishing a portion of their sovereignty. This structure is not merely military—it also has political and ideological foundations, through which dominant imperialist powers consolidate their control over other member nations. The claim that the alliance is built upon the equal sovereignty of its members is a blatant lie. In fact, this lie no longer resonates, neither among intellectual circles nor among the people—especially in the post-Soviet era, where the law of the jungle has prevailed.

This raises a long-standing question in Turkey: Who does NATO

target? Non-member countries? Or member states subjected to dependency through their membership? Or both?

When the interests of a nation are equated with those of its bourgeois class, which is deeply entrenched in international capital, then of course NATO membership may appear profitable. However, the increasingly undeniable reality is that the bourgeoisie is dragging the world, our region, and our country into ever-deepening disaster. The cost of their geopolitical gambles is always paid in the lives of workers.

We assert that Turkey's withdrawal from NATO and the closing of foreign military bases on Turkish soil are real, tangible, and achievable goals—and we strive to show this to our people. As imperialism sets the entire region ablaze, as its internal factions fuel new conflicts in already burning lands, as it turns every country where it increases its influence into a party to bloody war, and as it prepares to coerce Turkey—through both carrot and stick—into becoming a loyal member of an anti-Iranian alliance in the region, questioning NATO membership becomes an urgent, non-deferrable



necessity. It is an inseparable part of the struggle for peace.

Turkey is already dangerously entangled, hosting over 50 nuclear bombs—weapons over which it has no operational control. In addition to nuclear arms, radar systems, arms depots, and airbases make NATO's military presence in Turkey a direct conduit for regional warfare. The security of our people is blatantly jeopardized, and our citizens are pressured into participating in wars they do not support and did not choose.

Some argue that leaving NATO would make Turkey a target of NATO itself. Yet no country's security can be guaranteed within a fraudulent, internally contradictory, and sickly alliance structure. Turkey's withdrawal from NATO would fundamentally mean expelling NATO from Turkey, thereby enabling the people to reject the structures of domination imposed upon them. Those who claim that withdrawal would turn Turkey into a NATO target fail to see

that membership has already made Turkey a target—an easy one at that. A people's ability to confront both friend and foe with political clarity and resolve is the true basis of its capacity for self-defense. Those who seek to secure the country through the duplicity of bourgeois politics suffer primarily from a lack of faith in the people.

NATO membership is a systemic issue. Any perspective on NATO that ignores capitalist exploitation and confines itself to the narrow lens of realpolitik is fundamentally flawed. Without confronting exploitation, what remains to discuss? Shall we entertain arguments justifying Turkey's integration with Western capital for so-called "realpolitik" reasons? Shall we debate whether Russian or Chinese military alliances are "preferable" to NATO? Let those infected by this infamous disease of our age have that conversation. We are not realpolitik tacticians—we are revolutionaries. And revolutionary struggle aims to emancipate every inch of land,

dismantle every form of military, economic, and cultural tutelage imposed on it. Our belief in the working class is unwavering.

It is now clear that NATO's ideological justification has eroded in the eyes of the public. Those defending NATO membership are well aware that the ideological capital of the West has long been exhausted. Yet they continue to legitimize membership under the guise of "reelolitik necessities." As long as socialism remains abstract, they will not perceive any risk in basing NATO support on "strategic imperatives." They see that myths of "free West" and "ally America" no longer resonate. But we also clearly see that an anti-NATO stance which lacks a vision for another world—and which fails to challenge the system of exploitation—has no chance of surviving or succeeding within this system.

Indeed, today's NATO defenders rely less on the ideological capital of the West and more on so-called "reelolitik necessities" to justify their position. They know that as long as the socialist front does not gain strength, the discourse of "necessity" poses little risk and is far more persuasive than tired clichés about the "free West." They are not wrong. An anti-NATO discourse that does not challenge capitalist exploitation has no chance of sustaining itself or gaining ground. It is our duty to convey this truth, and to turn all anti-NATO forces into components of a revolutionary struggle.

We will not stand by as this historically reactionary alliance—this bloody criminal organization that offers nothing to the world but fire, blood, and tears—gathers in İstanbul in 2026. Just as the ideological pillars of NATO have been thrown into the dustbin of history, we will shatter its political foundations as well. The anti-NATO struggle will become a clear and visible marker in the course of the socialist movement.

Alongside the goal of equality and freedom, socialism is also the condition for our independence and sovereignty. This is the truth we will organize around.



# Turkey-Iran Relations on the Neo-Ottoman Axis

**Murat Akad,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

The war triggered by Israel's attacks on Iran and intensified by Iran's retaliation lasted for 12 days. Although short-lived, this war marked a significant turning point in world politics. It is essential to analyze this conflict from various angles, including what it means for the relationship between Turkey and Iran.

Turkey and Iran are two of the most powerful countries in the Middle East. A look at history reveals that the relationship between these two countries has experienced many ups and downs. Even during the most cooperative periods, underlying tensions have always been present. It would not be an exaggeration to say that such tensions also surfaced during the 12-day Iran-Israel war.

The AKP government in Turkey has, for quite some time, preferred to maintain a balanced relationship with the countries in the region – including Iran. A similar approach, at least on the surface, was displayed during the recent war as well. In fact, toward the end of the conflict, on June 21, Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani made a statement expressing appreciation for the clear and determined stance of four countries. The countries she named were Russia, China, Pakistan, and Turkey. However, the situation is far from that simple.

The AKP government had played a significant role in the regime changes in Iraq and Libya. In the subsequent civil war in Libya, it openly supported one of the warring factions and helped prevent that side's defeat. Later, Turkey also developed relations with the opposing side, and to this day, its influence over the country remains.

More recently, the AKP government played a major role in efforts to remove the Ba'ath regime from power in Syria. For years, Turkey openly supported many of the Islamist groups fighting



against the Assad government.

All of these initiatives were products of a foreign policy approach commonly referred to as Neo-Ottomanism. Claiming to inherit the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the AKP government developed a reflex of ownership over all the lands once ruled by the Ottomans, referring to them as the "Ottoman legacy." This Neo-Ottoman policy, of course, did not stem merely from a nostalgic longing for the pre-Republican past or for previous centuries – it was driven by very contemporary needs. Turkey's advanced capitalist economy was seeking to expand beyond its borders and create new spheres of influence. Turkey aspired to climb higher within the imperialist hierarchy, and this policy aligned closely with that ambition.

It was clear that a regime change in Syria would have far-reaching consequences. So far, the greatest blow has been dealt to the Palestinian resistance, as Assad's Syria had served as a vital gateway for that struggle. After Syria, it was evident that Iran would be next. The Neo-Ottoman policy played a significant role in reaching this point.

Neo-Ottomanism seeks to use imperialism's attempts to reshape the Middle East, seeing them as major opportunities. In this new Middle

East – where borders, balances, and alliances are beginning to shift – Turkey aims to carve out new spheres of influence for itself.

Israel's recent attacks on Iran sparked a sense of excitement within the AKP and among pro-government capitalist circles. While this excitement was never openly reflected in official policy, it could easily be sensed in the writings and statements of those close to the government. These circles referred to Iran as the historical enemy of the Ottoman Empire. Islamist segments of these circles often trace this hostility to the sectarian divide, framing it around the dominance of Sunni Islam in Turkey versus Shia Islam in Iran, and grounding the enmity in events from the 16th century in particular. At that time, the struggle for dominance over Anatolian lands was waged between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid Empire – a struggle that ended in favor of the Ottomans. The Safavid Empire is considered the precursor to modern Iran, and the establishment of Shiism as Iran's official sect dates back to the Safavid period.

Another approach, not directly targeting Iran, took shape around the idea of maintaining equal distance from both warring sides – viewing both countries as Turkey's key regional rivals. According to this perspective, the real target would eventually



be Turkey itself. For example, a prominent Islamist journalist close to the government described the Iran-Israel war as a “staged fight,” claiming that the primary goal was to divert attention away from Gaza. He argued that the ongoing tension between the Iranian government and its people had been resolved in favor of the regime, and that Iran had been turned into both a victim and a hero.

On the other hand, even though they were not close to the government, some pro-Western – and even pro-Israel – circles and journalists adopted an anti-Iran stance based on secularist ground. They argued that the collapse of Iran’s religious and reactionary regime would also be beneficial for Turkey.

However, the shift in atmosphere following Iran’s retaliation against Israeli attacks also influenced the aforementioned circles, leading to a noticeable retreat of those earlier narratives.

The government, for its part, adopted a balanced official stance. For example, while it condemned the U.S. airstrikes on Iran, it also criticized Iran’s retaliatory bombing of the U.S. base in Qatar. Meanwhile, close contact with the Iranian leadership continued. Yet there is a significant contradiction between this balanced rhetoric and Turkey’s ongoing cooperation with main imperialist powers. The military bases in Turkey that are open to use by the U.S. and NATO played an active role in Israel and the U.S.’s operations

against Iran. Most notably, the Kürecik Radar Base in Malatya contributed to detecting missiles launched from Iran. These facts reveal where the AKP government truly stands. In recent times, the government has steered its long-standing Neo-Ottoman foreign policy increasingly toward alignment with Western imperialism. In reality, it never weakened its ties with Western imperialist actors. However, in its search for new zones of manoeuvring to accommodate Turkish capitalism’s need for expansion, it occasionally experienced tensions with these actors. Within this context, closer relations were developed with countries like Russia and Iran – states targeted by Western imperialism. On the other hand, these relationships have also enabled Turkey to play the role of a transmission belt between Western powers and these countries. The most recent example of this occurred at the Economic Cooperation Organization summit held in Azerbaijan. The image of Pezeshkian, Erdoğan, and Aliyev standing together was widely shared by Turkey’s official media outlets, described as “sincere moments that spread rapidly on social media.”

Another dimension of the issue concerns the Azeri population living in Iran, which, according to various estimates, constitutes between 15% and 25% of the country’s total population. The potential success of imperialist attacks and the possibility of Iran’s disintegration as a result have stirred unrest among the Azeri

population. Azerbaijan’s rapidly deepening cooperation with Western imperialism in recent years has bolstered its ambitions of becoming a regional power. The growing tension in Azerbaijan-Russia relations should also be evaluated within this context. The close relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan has fuelled the idea that Turkey could benefit from Azerbaijan’s expanding influence into Iranian territory. Recent steps taken to include Armenia in this cooperation should also be understood in this same framework.

Another key dynamic involves the Kurds living in Iran and other countries in the region. In the early days of the Israeli attacks, some separatist Kurdish actors in Iran issued statements claiming that the assault presented an opportunity to topple the regime – and that this opportunity should be seized. However, these declarations were not followed by any concrete actions.

The AKP government would prefer such transformations to occur gradually, in a way that allows it to expand its own sphere of influence, rather than through rapid and uncontrollable change. The Neo-Ottoman foreign policy framework positions Iran as an adversary, both due to its status as a regional power and because of its alignment with a different sectarian bloc. From this perspective, Iran’s weakening is seen as favorable. However, a full regime change – which would likely lead to the country’s rapid disintegration and create power vacuums inviting intervention from imperialist forces and Israel – is not currently desirable. Such a scenario would trigger the emergence of uncontrollable Azeri and Kurdish dynamics, each posing significant challenges in terms of management and containment.

Turkish capitalism, which seeks growth and expansion, is driving a Neo-Ottoman foreign policy marked by opportunism and inconsistency. This policy, which shifts shape depending on circumstances, offers no meaningful hope for the peoples of the region whose futures are threatened by imperialist interventions.



*Aliyev, Pezeshkian and Erdoğan.*



# The Capitalists' Love for NATO

**Gülay Dinçel,**

Member of TKP Party Council

It is unthinkable to reduce NATO's significance for the capitalist class to a purely economic framework. The economic and commercial opportunities created by the imperialist organization—and the

profits derived from them—do not, by themselves, fully explain the capitalist class's enduring love for NATO.

What makes the organization truly indispensable is its role in securing the continuity of Turkish capitalism, maintaining Turkey's position within the imperialist-capitalist system, aligning the country's war machinery

technologically and operationally with the imperialist centers, and fulfilling a range of accompanying ideological and political functions. All of this constitutes "a protective umbrella" that goes far beyond minor economic interests. However, due to the nature of capitalism, the capitalist class has also seized many shifting "economic opportunities" alongside Turkey's NATO membership. This was facilitated by the country's position as an "advanced outpost" against the Soviet Union, as well as its relatively large scale due to factors such as population, production infrastructure, and border lengths.

Since joining NATO in 1952, the war-related expenditures made over the past 73 years have been the biggest source of profit for the capitalist class. Yet these were not the only opportunities seized. Capital groups flourished through NATO projects undertaken around the world, leveraging the advantages of NATO membership. This has not been limited to construction; the supply chain for military investments and expenditures of NATO member countries, particularly the United States, has provided the Turkish

## What Does Increasing NATO Members' Military Spending to 5% of GDP Mean?

In 2024, the average military spending-to-GDP ratio among NATO member states stood at 2.2%, amounting to roughly \$1.5 trillion. Under the new framework, 3.5% of GDP is designated for "core defense" expenditures, while 1.5% is allocated to "defense infrastructure" development. Raising the average from 2.2% to 5% implies a total annual military expenditure of approximately \$3.4 trillion—an increase of \$1.9 trillion. This figure, equivalent to 1.8% of global GDP, is large enough to eradicate world hunger and significantly address issues like malnutrition. In fact, with the current global military spending of \$2.7 trillion, it would already be possible to eliminate hunger and poverty and achieve even more.

For Turkey, with defense expenditures making up about 2% of its GDP in 2024, this change would mean an increase from \$26 billion to \$66 billion—an additional \$40 billion. In 2024, the funds allocated to defense from the public budget were roughly 70% of health spending and 42% of education spending. If defense spending were to rise to 5% of GDP—even assuming the public budget grows proportionally—the share allocated to defense would exceed health spending by 75% and surpass education altogether. In 2024, the combined public spending on education and health was \$71 billion. If the 5% regulation leads to an additional \$30 billion for defense, it would mean a sum that could have triggered a major leap in education and healthcare will instead be consumed by war expenditures.



industrial and commercial bourgeoisie with significant prospects that cannot be overlooked.

Limiting the opportunities seized in Turkey to NATO bases and activities in the country would be highly underwhelming. For the period between 1960 and 2018, military expenditure in Turkey accounted for an average of 3.3% of GDP. Even considering that a portion of these expenditures consists of imported weapons, ammunition, and equipment, a significant market has emerged for capital investment in various sectors—ranging from infrastructure and building construction to the domestic production of military equipment and ammunition, and diverse commercial services, as well as the various entitlements of an army with a historically averaging close to one million personnel.

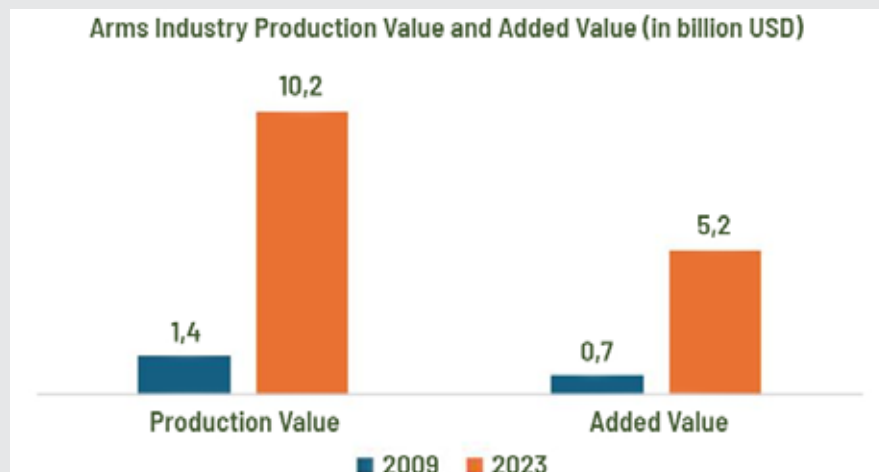
### **NATO Contractors: One of the Key Channels for the Internationalization of Turkish Capital**

Hundreds of capital groups have become wealthy through military contracts across sectors from food to textiles. However, two capital groups stand out as significant examples. The first includes the so-called “NATO contractors”—capital groups that grew and expanded through military bases and infrastructure projects. Leading examples include Doğu İnşaat (the foundation of the Doğu Group), ENKA, GAMA, Tekfen, Nurol, Alarko, Metiș, Faruk Yalçın, and Aziz Yıldırım.

NATO contractors did not only play a role in NATO projects in Turkey, but also took on projects in various parts of the world. These overseas activities were not limited to NATO member countries or the usual areas of NATO activity. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, they expanded into former socialist countries, the Middle East, and North Africa, benefiting from logistical advantages. In Engineering News-Record (ENR)'s list of the world's top 250 international contractors, Turkey ranked second after China with the highest number of companies (43 companies in 2023, with revenues of \$18.5 billion). It can be easily said that this performance is based on “NATO contracting” rather

## **Arms Industry Breaks Growth Record Through “NATO Value Chain”**

Between 2009 and 2023, Turkey's arms industry experienced significant growth—largely within what can be described as the “NATO value chain.” In 2009, the arms industry's share of total manufacturing output was just 0.5%; by 2023, it had risen to 1.5%. Its share of total value added grew from around 1% to 3.2%. The production value increased from \$1.4 billion to over \$10 billion, while value added rose from approximately \$700 million to over \$5 billion.



Source: TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute)

This rise can also be observed through the growth of companies listed in the İstanbul Chamber of Industry's Top 500 ranking.

### **Arms Companies in ISO 500- 2024**

		Sales from Production (billion dollars)	
TUSAŞ	3	BMC	0,37
Aselsan	2,4	HAVELSAN	0,34
Roketsan	1,3	Samsun Yurt Savunma (Canik)	0,2
Otokar (Koç Grubu)	0,8	HEMA	0,17
MKE	0,53	Alp Havacılık	0,16
TUSAŞ Motor	0,47	Nurol Makine	0,15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>9,89</b>	

Source: ISO

Both public arms companies and private sector exports have seen a significant increase, largely through sales to NATO suppliers, international arms monopolies, or directly to national armies under the NATO umbrella. Exports, which stood at around \$800 million in 2009, reached \$7.1 billion in 2024. From the perspective of capitalists, the sector offers both high profit margins and the appeal of operating under the security of NATO and state endorsement.

than purely “business” motives. Indeed, following the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Turkish construction capital arrived almost simultaneously with the U.S. military. Construction capital was followed by trade and industrial capital, particularly those producing and trading construction materials—thereby forming one of the

key channels through which Turkish capital internationalized beyond mere exports.

### **Expanding Opportunities for Exploitation in Arms Manufacturing**

The second segment of aforementioned capital consists of capitalists who are directly involved in arms production. Some are part

of the “ecosystem” led by public arms companies (Aselsan, TUSAŞ, Roketsan, Havelsan, Aspilsan, MKE), while others are directly involved in the value chains created by international monopolies that are NATO’s major arms suppliers. The growth of this manufacturing world, which is grouped under three main headings—weapons, ammunition, and military vehicles—has been striking over the past 15 years. Among the private sector actors, Baykar stands out with its growth in UAV production and its recent partnership with Leonardo. However, there are dozens of capital groups—some dating back to the 1980s and thriving through the 1990s and 2000s—such as Kale Group, Koç Group, Nurol, Vestel, Hema, Canik, and Sarsılmaz, several of which are also in partnerships with international arms corporations. According to 2023 data, the production value of the arms industry has exceeded \$10 billion. It is estimated that approximately half of this amount is produced by private sector arms companies. The arms industry is one of the most profitable sectors in manufacturing, with the highest value-added ratio—meaning the highest rate of exploitation. Indeed, while it makes up only 1.5% of total manufacturing output, it accounts for 3.2% of total value added. In contrast, the apparel industry, which employs ten times more workers than the arms sector, accounts for only 5.4% of value added.

In addition to supplying public arms companies, there are also firms that serve as suppliers to NATO-linked arms monopolies such as Boeing, Airbus, Thales, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin, Rolls-Royce, and Pratt & Whitney. Rolls-Royce and Pratt & Whitney, for example, have joint ventures in Turkey with the Kale Group.

It’s also notable that many capital groups from the metal sector, especially those in automotive subcontracting—such as Coşkunöz, Parsan—have become arms industry suppliers in the last 15–20 years. These companies, already major suppliers within European automotive value chains, have found a new and lucrative field.

The high growth rates in production and exports in the arms industry also signify qualitative development. A transformation is taking place from component manufacturing to system supply, or to becoming a more critical element of system supply. In line with the goal of NATO members increasing their defense spending to 5% of

their GDP, the increase in Turkey’s defense spending opens up new opportunities for capital. Moreover, Turkey’s ambition to fill the production gap of countries like Germany, which currently have insufficient manufacturing capacity, is driving the Turkish capitalist class to adopt more assertive positions.



## The NATO Summit Also Makes the Capitalists Drool

*The decision to hold the NATO Summit in Ankara in 2026 also seems to have whetted investors’ appetite. Gürsel Baran, Chairman of the Ankara Chamber of Commerce (ATO), argues that Ankara will seize this “historic opportunity” to showcase its economic potential:*

*“Our city of Ankara will host global diplomacy and seize an unprecedented opportunity to showcase its economic potential. It will demonstrate its multidimensional capacity, particularly in production, trade, and tourism. During the summit, international delegations visiting Ankara will stimulate economic activity in various sectors, from accommodation and transportation to security, communications, and services. Hotels, restaurants, logistics companies, and many other industries in our city will directly benefit from this process, invigorating the city’s trade and economic life. This will also open the door to new international connections and collaborations for Ankara’s business community. I am confident that our capital will capitalize on this historic momentum.”*

*Baran also pointed out that Ankara is the “capital of defense:”*

*“In such a period, I find it very meaningful that the 2026 Summit will be held in Ankara—home to companies such as Aselsan, Turkish Aerospace Industries, Roketsan, Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation, and ASFAT, which are among the strongest hubs of the defense industry and have made it onto list of global giants. That global defense and security strategies will be shaped in our city is highly significant.”*





# Lessons from the Iran-Israel War: How Can Turkey Be Defended?

**Yiğit Günay,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

The Iran-Israel war, which began with Israel's attack, ended after 12 days, following a U.S. strike aimed at halting the conflict and a seemingly pre-agreed counterattack by Iran.

A war that started with the permission of the U.S. was ended by the U.S. itself.

It is entirely reasonable and legitimate for those who witnessed the Iran-Israel war to ask, "How can Turkey be defended?" This question does not stem from paranoia, an attempt to distract public attention, nationalist obsessions, or an overblown security mindset.

The issue is not simply about the risk of the war spilling over into Turkey. Nor is it solely about how the use of missiles, aircraft, and air defense systems might influence military strategy and tactics.

Delving deeper into the Iran-Israel war offers numerous lessons about how vulnerable Turkey has become and how it might be defended.

## **The Overlooked Cost of Turkey's Occupation of Syria**

The Iran-Israel war revealed

the destructive power of Israel's intelligence network once again. Long-standing efforts of Mossad and Israeli military intelligence resulted in sabotage and assassination within Iran.

Moreover, it was revealed that Israel had established a covert unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) base deep inside Iranian territory.

An old truth has once again been confirmed: Defense is built not during war, but in times of peace.

Could Mossad find collaborators in Turkey to carry out similar operations? The answer is already known: Not just "could,"—it already has.

Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) conducted four Mossad-related operations since October 2021. Dozens of people remain in custody.

This should not lead to complacency—"Well, good, MIT's handling it." On the contrary, Mossad is getting organized systematically in Turkey. While some operatives are caught, the network continues to grow.

Therefore, action must be taken before it's left solely to

counterintelligence. That starts by examining which social and political groups Mossad recruits from and responding with preventive political and societal measures.

## **So, Who are Mossad's Collaborators?**

Some are foreign nationals—particularly individuals affiliated with political Islam, often aligned with Al-Qaeda-inspired ideologies.

This is not a coincidence. Israel has long maintained close ties with such organizations across the Middle East. Contrary to what many self-styled analysts in Turkey claim, it became crystal clear within just a few months how Israel benefited from the rise of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)—an Al-Qaeda offshoot—in Syria's Idlib served Israel's interests.

Today, Israel is once again collaborating with ISIS-aligned militias against Hamas in Gaza. It is funding and arming these groups to unleash chaos upon the people of Gaza.

So why are these jihadists in Turkey? Because, since 2011, the AKP government—first covertly, then openly—invaded Syria, actively supported these jihadist groups, brought them into Turkish territory,

and even granted citizenship to countless militants.

### **Borders Work Both Ways – Open One Side, and the Other Opens Too**

On the second day of the 12-day war, the Iranian state announced that it had intercepted large shipments of explosives and ammunition being smuggled into the country via its borders.

Of course, in order to carry out acts of sabotage, weapons must somehow be brought inside. This is where border security becomes crucial.

So, what is the current state of Turkey's borders? In a word: porous. This is not due to state incompetence, but rather the result of long-standing choices by the government. For years, in support of the occupation of Syria, Turkey's borders were deliberately left wide open. And weapons and fighters didn't just flow into Syria—they also flowed back into Turkey.

The issue goes beyond the Syrian border. For years, weapons intended for jihadists were smuggled into the Turkey from Libya and the Balkans via ports, border crossings, and airports. It was not difficult to foresee that such a policy would eventually lead to all kinds of smuggling—especially of people, gold, and narcotics. The government caused not only a collapse of state institutions—but also a collapse of the humanity.

### **What If the Weapons Aren't Smuggled In – But Already Inside?**

The fact that Mossad had established a covert UCAV base in Iran—and that explosives and munitions used in the initial sabotage attacks had been pre-positioned within the country—shows that national security is not just a matter of border control.

Let's rewind to the days leading up to the recent war. During the preparation for Israel's mass-casualty terror attack in Lebanon—carried out by detonating pager devices—it was discovered that Israeli intelligence had used manufacturing and trading companies established in Europe.

Could something similar happen in Turkey?

Let's turn to a report published by soL News Portal on June 17, the fifth day of the Iran-Israel war. In Eskişehir, the Provincial Police Department inspected a company producing explosives.

The findings revealed numerous, long-standing violations. According to a 2022 inspection report, ten buildings on the site were illegally constructed.

Yes, the safety of workers in such a facility is in itself a matter of national security—but let's set that aside and focus on what this system defines as "security."

The Eskişehir explosives factory is owned by Solar, one of India's largest arms manufacturers. Under the rule of Modi's Hindu nationalist government, India has become one of Israel's staunchest allies. Just last month, India expelled several Turkish companies, including Çelebi. During the 12-day war, images of young Hindu extremists lining up in front of the Israeli embassy in New Delhi, asking to join the Israeli army, made headlines around the world.

So here's the question: Could the possibility that a stash of explosives from an Indian-owned factory in Eskişehir is being stored for potential future use in Turkey escape state oversight?

What's a few crates of explosives when the state can't even shut down ten illegal buildings?

Once again, the recent war has shown us a bitter truth: A system that serves capital and corporations above all else is not just failing to protect national security—it is actively undermining it.

### **How did Mossad Recruit a Turkish Police Chief?**

Let's return to MIT's operations against Mossad. As noted earlier, only some of the arrested operatives were foreign nationals—many of them, it's believed, were used primarily against Palestinians and other Arabs residing in Turkey.

So who were the others?

According to MIT's statements, they were described as "private detectives." This term was used deliberately—because in reality, many

were former police officers, a fact that would reveal the deep erosion within Turkey's own security apparatus.

Take Hamza Turhan Ayberk, for example. He was one of seven people detained in the fourth Mossad operation on February 2, 2024. A former police chief, Ayberk who had spent years serving at high-ranking levels within the Turkish state.

According to the indictment, he had operated in several countries—including Serbia, Dubai, South Africa, and Iraq—and had a well-documented and extensive working relationship with Mossad.

As Journalist Murat Ağirel reported, this former police chief not only spied for Mossad but also posed as a MIT agent to scam Turkish citizens and seize their properties.

This must be underlined again: simply reducing the cases of spies working for foreign governments to individual cases and labeling them as "traitors" does not solve the problem. The real issue lies in understanding the underlying causes and eliminating them.

The institutional corruption caused by the AKP government within the state has become a multifaceted national security crisis.

### **But—At Least Our Arms Industry is Booming, isn't It?**

Let's zoom out to the bigger picture. Some may say: These are minor issues. After all, the AKP is building a "strong Turkey." Look at our flourishing arms industry—we're selling arms around the world!

But this raises a critical question: Is Turkey's defense industry guided by a strategy of national defense, or one of commerce and war profiteering?

Can a privatized arms industry truly guarantee Turkey's security?

On June 15, the third day of the Iran-Israel war, Selçuk Bayraktar, Chairman of the Baykar Industry, signed a joint venture agreement with Leonardo, an Italian company, at the Paris Air Show, as part of a strategic partnership.

And who is Leonardo? One of Israel's largest arms suppliers.





It's widely known how American arms giants have influenced American foreign policy for decades. So isn't it worth asking how a Turkish company in partnership with Israeli suppliers might influence Turkey's foreign policy?

Even if Turkish firms avoided partnering with Israel or any foreign company, a deeper issue remains: How can a nation entrust its defense to private industry? A company's primary purpose—by law, by philosophy, by design—is profit. And it doesn't take much foresight to recognize that the interests of a private company and those of a nation do not always align.

### **"NATO Will Protect Us Anyway," Right?**

For years, many in Turkey have placed their trust in NATO membership as the ultimate guarantor of national security. But in reality, NATO is one of Turkey's greatest security vulnerabilities.

Because of NATO, the Kürecik Radar Base continues to serve Israel's interests.

On the 11th day of the Iran-Israel war, Iran targeted a U.S. military base in Qatar, once again proving a fundamental truth: Foreign military bases on Turkish soil make Turkey a target—even in wars it is not a part of.

Those who claim, "But those

bases can only be used with Turkey's permission" would do well to revisit the Iran-Israel conflict.

When Donald Trump took the U.S. into a military confrontation, he didn't even consult Congress. It is naïve to expect such powers to ask Turkey for permission before launching operations from Incirlik Air Base.

Yet the danger posed by NATO goes far beyond these obvious issues. The main problem lies in this: Turkey's entire security architecture—especially Turkish Armed Forces—has been structured and shaped by NATO.

### **The Real Fault Line: "Peace at Home, Peace in the World"**

Everything discussed so far concerns Turkey's national security. But security is not just a matter of guns, borders, or alliances—it is fundamentally shaped by foreign policy.

Contrary to what complacent opposition voices often claim, foreign and domestic policy are never truly separate.

On the eighth day of the Iran-Israel war, Aydın Ünal, former speechwriter to President Erdoğan, published an column in pro-Erdoğan newspaper Yeni Şafak arguing that Turkey had paid dearly for adhering to the principle of "Peace at home, peace in the world."

The phrase, founding pillars of the Republic of Turkey, was a declaration that the young Republic of Turkey would not pursue expansionist ambitions.

However, the Turkish capitalist class waged war on this foundational policy, replacing it with an assertive, expansionist foreign agenda. The transformation of Turkey's domestic political regime was inseparable from this radical shift in foreign policy.

This is why those attempting to separate today's foreign policy from domestic politics are, perhaps unknowingly, walking the very path that leads to the dismantling of the Republic.

The jihadist groups that were nurtured for Syria and now serve Mossad within Turkey...

The porous, lawless borders...

The foreign-owned explosives factory operating illegally in the heart of Anatolia...

The former police officers now apply their institutionalized lawlessness in service of foreign intelligence...

Baykar's partnership with Leonardo, a major Israeli arms supplier...

The illusion of safety under NATO's umbrella...

—all of these are direct consequences of abandoning the "Peace at home, peace in the world" principle.

And abandoning that principle was not an accident—it was a response to the needs of the Turkish capitalist class.

That is why the regime changed.

If any real lesson is to be learned from the Iran-Israel war about how to defend Turkey, this is where we must look:

The greatest threat to Turkey's security is not foreign—it is the political and economic system that governs it.

***\*The Turkish version of this article was published on the soL News Portal.***

# The “Legend” of Bayraktar Brothers

The story actually begins with the father, Özdemir Bayraktar — a mechanical engineer, a follower of the National Vision (Milli Görüş) Movement, and a devoted supporter of Necmettin Erbakan (the founder of the political ideology and movement). He graduated from İstanbul Technical University’s Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1972. In line with Turkey’s rising automotive assembly and export-oriented industrial policies of the time, he founded the company Baykar Makina in 1984, named after the abbreviation of “Bayraktar Brothers” (Bayraktar Kardeşler), as a supplier in the automotive sub-industry. Later, during the AKP era, the company entered the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) sector.

## Southeast as a Laboratory and the Second Generation

When recalling the post-September 12, 1980 military coup era and the Turgut Özal years—marked by the Turkish-Islamic synthesis ideology and the winds of liberalism—it becomes clear that Bayraktar, as a “engineer” figure, found opportunities opening up for him. His entry into the “sector” came relatively late, at the age of 38. One of the factors that undoubtedly contributed to the company’s development is also visible in the photo below.



*Erbakan and Bayraktar.*

It is known that Özdemir Bayraktar maintained close relations with the Turkish Armed Forces’ (TSK) command during the period of war that took place particularly in the Southeastern Anatolia region.

The Bayraktar brand’s entry into the now-prominent unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) field began with the involvement of the younger generation of the Bayraktar family. Naturally, the fact that this initiative, launched in the



year 2000, coincided with the early years of the AKP government—and that a previously “insignificant” company began working with the Turkish Armed Forces and major firms like Turkish Aerospace Industries, Inc (TAI)—is no coincidence.

## How Did Baykar Grow?

Turkey’s weapons industry began to take its first steps—albeit slowly and without diverging from the course set by imperialist powers—in the 1970s. This period was followed by the Özal era, during which the private sector was encouraged to open up to international markets. The state provided financial support, and agreements were signed with global actors for technology transfer, production, and assembly.

In the 1990s, serial production was carried out by paying license fees without contributing anything to the design process. By the 2010s, as the AKP government began to institutionalize, the defense industry shifted its focus to designing, developing, and exporting original products—an area in which significant steps were taken. One of the key focuses was unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

Since the mid-1980s, TSK had used UAVs primarily for reconnaissance and surveillance missions during domestic military operations against the PKK. However, it was reported that the performance of the GNAT-750 UAVs purchased from the U.S. and the Herons acquired from Israel fell short of

expectations.

UAV development efforts in Turkey began under the umbrella of TAI in 2004. By 2015, Turkey had reached a new level with the domestically produced ANKA UAVs from TAI and the Bayraktar UAVs developed by Baykar Makina.

## Ideological Influence



*Sümeyye Erdoğan, during the launch of the Fergani satellite.*

Beyond the Bayraktar family’s National Vision roots and Selçuk Bayraktar’s marriage to President Erdoğan’s daughter Sümeyye, the family and the Baykar company play a significant ideological role in the regime the AKP government seeks to establish. Today, family members are presented as ideal citizens: conservative, patriotic, well-educated, entrepreneurial, and aligned with liberal economic values, intervening in politics only on select issues.

In this context, the Bayraktar family stands at the forefront of the Muslim technocrats leading the “National Technology Initiative” promoted under the AKP government. This initiative is populated by individuals placed in key defense industry institutions such as ASELSAN Military Electronic Industries



Inc, STM Defense Technologies Engineering and Trade Inc, ROKETSAN Missile Industries, and TAI. These figures are typically second-generation members of devout families, educated abroad, and positioned as the “technical” managers approved by the AKP. Some have established private companies backed by state resources, while others serve in managerial roles within public institutions.

It is now well known that in Bayraktar’s early years, TAI—then producing similar UAVs—was sidelined by the state to pave the way for the Bayraktar brothers. However, realities like these are often obscured through events like Teknofest, and flashy military showcases. The Bayraktar family is presented as the model for the devout, nationalist youth envisioned by the AKP regime.

### **Why Were UAVs Successful in Turkey?**

As previously mentioned, the Turkish Armed Forces had specific operational needs in the Southeastern Anatolia region. In this context, not only in the field of UAVs but also across various weapons systems, the region effectively functioned as a testing ground for Turkish arms companies. Designs were developed in response to on-the-ground demands, tested in real operations, and then refined accordingly. In this sense, describing the region as a grim laboratory—one where war profiteers eagerly await new trials and have no desire to see the conflict end—would not be inaccurate.

Bayraktar UAVs were neither the first unmanned aerial vehicles developed nor the most powerful. What made them sought-after weapons in the defense industry was their relatively low cost, high technical performance, and proven effectiveness in actual combat scenarios. Following their deployment in Southeastern Anatolia, they were used extensively in conflicts such as the Libyan Civil War, the Syrian Civil War, the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, and the Russia-Ukraine War. In battlefields where air defense systems were weak, Bayraktar UAVs proved highly effective. However, as the Russia-Ukraine War progressed, the effectiveness of these drones diminished significantly due to

countermeasures taken by advanced Russian air defense systems.

### **Bayraktar: On the Path Toward an Imperialist Project**



*Bayraktar aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford during a military exercise.*

Bayraktar aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford during a military exercise.

With the AKP government, Bayraktar’s rapid growth has become increasingly evident. In many ways, Bayraktar can be considered a battering ram advancing through the channels opened by the AKP and aligned with the broader tendencies of Turkish bourgeoisie. Within this framework, it is important to mention Bayraktar’s affiliate, Fergani Space. Fergani is accelerating efforts to establish satellite constellations, mirroring initiatives in imperialist centers, and is also working in the field of domestic GPS systems. In addition, it is known to be involved in designing satellite launch vehicles and orbital transfer systems in cooperation with ROKETSAN. This suggests an implicit aim of developing intercontinental missile capabilities.

At the end of 2024, Bayraktar acquired the Italian company Piaggio Aerospace, and in March of the following year, it signed a partnership agreement with Italian arms giant Leonardo. Acquiring a company like Piaggio—especially in the aviation sector—requires special government approval. The unprecedented speed with which Bayraktar received these approvals, combined with its partnership with Leonardo (the world’s 12th largest arms producer), clearly indicates the endorsement of imperialist powers. Bayraktar is no longer just a national actor—it has caught the attention of the global military-industrial complex and is being nurtured and protected under its wing as a promising young protégé.

### **Could the “Son-in-Law” Be the “Heir Apparent”?**

Selçuk Bayraktar, married to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s daughter Sümeyye Erdoğan, is referred to in some circles as “the son-in-law”—a term historically used in the Ottoman Empire for those who gained proximity to the ruling dynasty through marriage. Today, there is ongoing speculation about whether Erdoğan will run for president again, or if not, who his successor might be. In this context, political whispers suggest that Selçuk Bayraktar—belonging to a family rooted in the National Vision tradition and known for designing the TB-2 drone that has achieved battlefield success in multiple conflicts—could be a potential presidential candidate. While it remains uncertain whether the “son-in-law” will indeed become the “heir” in a country like Turkey, where the political climate changes on a daily basis, it would not be an exaggeration to say that he might be being groomed for such a role. His political speeches at events like Teknofest and his public support for the government serve as clear indications of this possibility, yet still not a strong one.

### **Conclusion**

With the rise of the AKP, Turkish bourgeoisie and ruling elites—having taken off their old “shirt”<sup>\*</sup> and expanded beyond national borders—have found in Bayraktar a highly functional instrument, despite its UAVs being neither the first nor the most advanced of their kind. Thanks to a favorable political and military climate, they achieved unexpected success with a particular weapon, which emboldened them to fill the gaps left by imperialist powers in their own backyard and to embark on military adventures. In this broader picture, Bayraktar has emerged as a small but highly versatile tool of these ambitions.

<sup>\*</sup>a reference to President Erdoğan—who himself began his political career within the National Vision tradition—saying in 2003, after coming to power as Prime Minister, “We have taken off the National Vision shirt,” a statement that marked the AKP’s break from that tradition and its shift toward closer ties with the Western imperialism.

# Highlights from Turkish Foreign Policy



## NATO Summit

One of the main topics discussed at the NATO Summit was increasing defense spending. Specifically, US President Donald Trump demanded that allies spend five percent of their gross domestic product on defense. According to NATO data, Turkey's defense spending as a percentage of its GDP was about 2.09 percent in 2024, and it was expected to decline to 1.8 percent in 2025. Turkey's current defense budget is nearly 20 billion dollars. If spending increases to five percent, the budget will be around 58 billion dollars. In other words, an additional \$38 billion from the budget would have to be allocated to defense, which would likely lead to cuts in investments, subsidies, and public spending. Erdoğan argued that Turkey was one of the closest to reaching the five percent goal, emphasizing that removing restrictions between allies was crucial to achieving it. Likewise, he said, the participation of non-EU allies in national defense and security initiatives must be guaranteed.

Erdoğan has already referenced the decision made at the NATO Leaders Summit for allies to increase their defense spending in response to the Greek authorities' reaction to US Ambassador to Ankara Tom Barrack's statement on the F-35s.

Erdoğan showed that the government will use this decision to legitimize its foreign advances. He reiterated that the decision was to strengthen NATO countries' defense infrastructures in order to meet their needs and strengthen NATO's defense. And he called Greece's concerns unwarranted and meaningless.

It was shared with the press that during the NATO Summit in The Hague, Erdoğan and Trump discussed the conflicts and tensions in the region. Referring to Trump's "efforts" in the Israel-Iran ceasefire, Erdoğan expressed his hope that he would do the same to end the conflicts in Gaza and Russia-Ukraine. He took his praises another step further and directly called for Trump to intervene in the situation in Gaza, as they did not have any more time to wait. He even shared his concerns regarding the attacks on the people waiting in the food lines, which is preposterous considering that the distribution centers set up by the Israeli-US-sponsored "Gaza Humanitarian Foundation" under the guise of humanitarian aid have been the center of those attacks.

## Business with Israel Cloaked as Solidarity with Palestine

The AKP government, which labels Israel a terrorist state and

urges the U.S. to intervene in the region, is continuing the trade with Israel, according to the United Nations Trade Database. According to data shared by Israel with the United Nations, Turkey exported \$2.8 billion worth of goods to Israel in 2024. However, according to Turkey's records, its exports to Israel amounted to only \$1.5 billion until May 2024. Thus, there is a discrepancy of \$1.3 billion between Turkey's and Israel's export data, to which Turkish officials only responded by saying the data from Israel was false.

As of May 2, 2024, the Ministry of Trade had announced that all import and export transactions with Israel were suspended. According to the UN Trade Database, there have been no trade relations between Turkey and Israel since May 2024. Nevertheless, Turkey claims to have exported \$796 million worth of goods to Palestine. Following the suspension of exports to Israel, exports to Palestine increased exponentially. The fact that the goods sent to Palestine were the same items that were sent to Israel—such as cement and steel—only strengthened the suspicions.

A recent example of this hypocrisy is the cargo ship Vela, which set sail from Barcelona for Israel and docked at Mersin Port on June 9. The ship was carrying food and steel supplies





for Elbit Systems, an Israeli arms company that plays a direct role in war crimes committed by the Israeli government. Turkey opened its ports to the ship, which has worked for ZIM—one of Israel's military logistics giants—for more than two years. In response to objections and protests, the Turkish government released information about only a small portion of the cargo on board. However, no mention was made of what was in transit or where the cargo was headed. The majority of the 33 containers that were loaded from Turkey were, according to reports, foodstuff, and the buyer was identified as "Palestine"; once again using the façade of "solidarity" to do business with Israel. Meanwhile, the ship left Mersin and headed for Ashdod.

### **Strategic Partnership with the UK**

Fidan has met with Lammy, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the UK, describing the relationship between the countries a "strategic partnership" as two non-EU countries with strong connections to Europe and members of NATO. This might be seen as a way to bring the Eurofighter sale back to the table after Germany blocked it in response to the arrest of İmamoğlu, the presidential candidate of the main opposition in Turkey.

Fidan claimed that two countries were on the same page on almost every subject regarding Gaza, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Russia-Ukraine, which says a lot considering the fact that the UK has been a historical ally to Israel. Regarding Syria, which Fidan

defines as a great collaboration field with the UK, there has been talks of "aiding" the energy problem and other areas of investments. However, a new step has been taken by signing an "education collaboration protocol" between Syria and the Ministry of Education of Turkey, contents of which are yet to be seen.

### **ECO Meeting**

During the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) meeting in Khankendi, Azerbaijan, attended by Erdoğan, increasing collaborations with Azerbaijan, especially in the energy and transportation fields, were a major focus. There was an emphasis on the Zangezur corridor, which has been adding to the tensions between Azerbaijan and Russia. On his way back from the meeting, Erdoğan commented to the reporters that "The Zangezur Corridor will create new opportunities for Azerbaijan and the entire region. We see this

corridor as part of a geopolitical and geoeconomic revolution." He also mentioned that the peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan will transform the region's climate and open new historical windows of opportunity.

Russia's relationship with Azerbaijan and Armenia, especially after the coup attempt in the latter, has become increasingly tense. Two countries, which recently fought a war, are forming a united front against Russia. This reflects certain geopolitical transformations in the region which might also involve Turkey as the recent visit of Armenian leader Pashinyan, right after Aliyev's, might suggest. These visits sparked strong rumors from both Armenian and Azerbaijani sources who have begun making serious claims that Armenia has reached an agreement with Turkey and Azerbaijan regarding the Zangezur Corridor, suggesting that Aliyev amended the constitution, abolishing the de facto autonomy of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic.

One of the most important clauses of the Nagorno-Karabakh ceasefire was that Armenia had to accept the Zangezur Corridor. The corridor was to ensure a connection between mainland Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan and included a pipeline, a road, and a railroad that would pass through Armenian territory. Turkey also has a great interest in this corridor, as this might connect Turkey to the Caspian Sea and beyond.



# NATO in Turkey, Turkey in NATO

## \$0,23 THE COST OF TURKEY'S ENTRY INTO NATO: THE 23 CENT SOLDIER



Owing to its NATO membership, Turkey has been directly or indirectly complicit in crimes committed across various regions of the world. The U.S. occupation of Korea, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the destruction of Syria are notable examples. Turkey became a NATO member in 1952 after Turkish troops were deployed abroad for the first time during the Korean War. Following a war that resulted in the deaths of millions, U.S. officials infamously remarked that “Turkish soldiers cost them only 23 cents a piece”—an explicit valuation of human life in imperialist terms.



## 2 THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN NATO, RANKED 9TH IN THE WORLD

Among NATO member states, Turkey possesses the second largest military force. According to the January 2025 Global Firepower Index—which ranks 145 countries based on more than 60 criteria—the Turkish Armed Forces ranked 9th in the world in terms of military capability.

## 30 30 FOREIGN MILITARY BASES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE US AND NATO

There are approximately 30 foreign military bases on Turkish soil. These installations include radar systems, arms depots, logistical support hubs, and surveillance stations. All strategic assets at these bases are under the U.S. and NATO control. For instance, the Kürecik Radar Base in Malatya plays a pivotal role in U.S. military operations in the Middle East. This radar system monitors ballistic missile activity in the region, providing early warning intelligence—particularly to the U.S. and Israel. During recent escalations between Iran and Israel, the Kürecik base functioned as a crucial component of Israel's early warning system.



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### MILITARY EXPENDITURES INCREASED BY 110% IN 10 YEARS



Turkey's military expenditure in 2024 reached approximately \$25 billion. This corresponds to an increase from 1.5% of GDP in 2023, to 2.09% in 2024. Meanwhile, a significant rise in Turkey's defense exports has been observed. According to officials from Baykar, Turkey now dominates 65% of the global UAV market. Moreover, at the end of last year, a defense agreement signed between Turkey's defense firm STM and Portugal, marking the first instance of Turkey exporting a military vessel to a NATO and EU member state.

## 50 ONE OF THE FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WHERE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE STORED

Nearly 2,000 U.S. military personnel are stationed in Turkey, primarily in Adana-İncirlik, Malatya-Kürecik, and İzmir. These forces operate under the command of U.S. and Western imperialists' interests. İncirlik Air Base is one of only five sites in Europe where U.S. nuclear weapons are deployed. The base houses at least 50 B61 nuclear bombs, protected by Permissive Action Link (PAL) mechanisms. Turkey holds neither the authority nor the technical means to operate these nuclear weapons independently.





## TKP Calls for Struggle against NATO

The TKP Central Committee made a statement **calling for a struggle against NATO** and relentless aggression in the region. The statement emphasized that the time has come to discuss NATO's presence in Turkey, the moment is to rise against the threat against our country's independence and sovereignty. It is the right time to discuss NATO, to talk about the US bases and nuclear weapons in Turkey.



## 'Turkey Must Withdraw from NATO, Foreign Military Bases Must be Closed'

In response to the announcement that the 2026 NATO Summit will be held in Turkey, TKP called on people to "rise up and display the working-class patriotism of Turkey and show who truly owns this country". In addition, TKP Central Committee made the following statement focusing on **withdrawing from NATO and closing all foreign military bases**. This statement was widely disseminated as a declaration by all TKP organizations throughout Turkey and is actively reaching the public, accompanied with a petition campaign against the 2026 NATO summit to be held in Turkey and demanding the immediate withdrawal from NATO.

Meetings and discussions were organized in the District Houses to debate on Turkey's withdrawal from NATO and possible outcomes.

## Protest by TKP: Turkey Out of NATO

In İstanbul, hundreds of people marched against NATO, demanding NATO to be thrown out of Turkey with slogans **"Murderer NATO, get out of our country!"**





## Interview with Kemal Okuyan on U.S. Hegemony

TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan answered soL TV's questions on U.S. hegemony: "It is said that U.S. hegemony is coming to an end and that the U.S. is weakening. If that is true, why can't the U.S. be stopped?"

To watch the video you can click [here](#).



"What set İzmir ablaze was profit-driven greed and privatization. Gediz Elektrik must be expropriated immediately."

## Responsible for Disasters: Private Sector

Turkey is experiencing intense forest fires in İzmir and Hatay. While the government was unprepared and failed to take action on these fires, TKP organizations were in the field for solidarity and to respond to the crisis.

In İzmir, forest fires broke out due to electricity distribution lines. TKP organization in İzmir was in front of the Gediz electricity company to hold them to account, pointing out the disaster is a direct result of marketisation and privatization. 'You made a fortune by turning İzmir into a fire zone, and left the devastation to the people,' they declared, as they dumped the ashes of the burning city in front of the building.

## Initial Assessment on the "Expanded People's Alliance"

TKP **responded** to President Erdoğan's statement emphasizing the "Turkish-Kurdish-Arab alliance," which includes the AKP, MHP, and DEM Party, following a symbolic weapon-burning ceremony by a group of PKK members.

While TKP stated the "silence of arms" as a positive development, it emphasized that the more critical issue is the "political direction and content." The party warned that the AKP, backed by monopolies and religious sects, is dragging Turkey into a "Middle East regime" chaos through a neo-Ottoman lens.

