

## 70 Years In Nato: Turkey As A Strategic Alliance

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### Abstract

In the post-World War II period, the Soviet threat manifested itself in Europe and the Caucasus. The USA and European countries have developed a common defence force against this threat. For this reason, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949 by 12 countries. This Organization's purpose is to ensure the security of member states through political and military means, collective defense, and world peace. In line with these purposes, it has reached the present day by improving and updating itself.

Turkey, which opposed Soviet Russia's expansionist policies during the Cold War, joined NATO in 1952. After the end of the Cold War, it completed its founding purpose. However, the Organization did not disintegrate and continued to exist within the framework of new missions, and its work has continued for more than 70 years. Turkey, which has the second-largest army in NATO, is essential for both Turkey's security and NATO's future to continue its contributions<sup>2</sup>. This framework examined the general situation of NATO, Turkey's membership, and Turkey's contributions to NATO and cooperation within the Organization.

**Keywords:** NATO, Turkey, Security, Turkey's Geopolitics, and Collective Defense.

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1 The NATO-Turkey Relationship: Envisioning Future Prospects Amidst Growing Rifts, <https://global.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/perry-world-house/NATO-Turkey.pdf> p. 6.

### Özet

İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemde Sovyet tehdidi Avrupa ve Kafkasya'da kendini gösterdi. ABD ve Avrupa ülkeleri bu tehdide karşı ortak bir savunma gücü geliştirmiştir. Bu nedenle 1949 yılında 12 ülke tarafından Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü (NATO) kurulmuştur. Bu örgütün amacı siyasi, askeri yollarla üye devletlerin örgütlenmesini, güvenliğini, toplu savunmayı ve dünya barışını sağlamaktır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda kendini geliştirerek ve güncelleyerek günümüze ulaşmıştır.

Soğuk Savaş döneminde Sovyet Rusya'nın yayılcı politikalarına karşı çıkan Türkiye, 1952'de NATO'ya katıldı. Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden sonra kuruluş amacını tamamlamıştır. Ancak örgüt dağılmamış, yeni misyonlar çerçevesinde varlığını sürdürmüş ve 70 yılı aşkın bir süredir çalışmaları devam etmektedir. NATO'nun en büyük ikinci ordusuna sahip olan Türkiye'nin katkılarını sürdürmesi hem Türkiye'nin güvenliği hem de NATO'nun geleceği için önemlidir. Bu çerçevede NATO'nun genel durumu, Türkiye'nin NATO üyeliği, NATO'ya katkıları ve örgüt içi işbirliği incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** NATO, Türkiye, Güvenlik, Türkiye Jeopolitiği ve Toplu Savunma.

## Introduction

Security is a critical need for both individuals and the state. To address this requirement, which is a necessary condition for society's evolution. In the international arena, self-defence by states is insufficient to ensure regional and global peace. For this reason, states are increasing their military power by partnering with various organizations. NATO is now regarded as the most advanced example of this form of military Organization. The Organization's security responsibilities are joint defense, crisis management, and joint security.

NATO, founded in response to the Soviet threat, faced numerous challenges following the threat's demise. Terrorism, asymmetric terrorism, civil wars, environmental and migration issues, food, and cyberattacks are all included in NATO's mandate. Military might alone will not solve these problems. There is variation in both solutions and challenges. NATO uses its political, economic, social, and cultural links and powers in addition to its military power. However, NATO has been maintaining its presence in the security field for years by adapting and developing itself.

Turkey's geography makes it an indispensable member of NATO. This demonstrates that the establishment of global balance is largely a function of the world's powers. It also highlights the significance of the world's superpowers maintaining a delicate balance. Since the day it joined NATO, it has taken on numerous duties to maintain international peace, both with its position and with its military contribution, and has successfully carried out its obligations.

This article's purpose is to examine how Turkey and NATO have benefited one another over the duration of Turkey's 70-year membership journey. In addition, this study helps to fill an important gap in Turkish literature. In this study, the 70th centennial anniversary of Turkey, which has a strong and strategic membership in NATO, in fact, will focus on the establishment and aims of NATO's parts, affiliated facilities, Turkey's becoming a member, contributions, and sharing of expenses. Also, NATO's contributions to TURKEY's security and partnerships will be evaluated.

### 1. Establishment and Mission of NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established on April 4, 1949<sup>2</sup>. The United States, Canada, and several Western European countries united to provide collective security against the Soviet Union. Twelve founding countries established NATO. Macedonia, the Alliance's newest member, joined the Organization in 2020. Union currently has 30 members. The expansion of the Union's number of Alliances demonstrates that it is still valuable today.

NATO's essential and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. According to British Lord Ismay, Alliance was founded to keep the Soviet Unions out, the USA in, and the Germans down<sup>3</sup>. Collective defence is at the heart of the Alliance and creates a spirit of solidarity and cohesion among its members<sup>4</sup>. Since its establishment, it has been performing collective defence despite the changing security conditions<sup>5</sup>.

2 Szenes Zoltan (ed.), *The Adaptation of NATO to a New World, NATO 4.0, and Hungary*. Edt. Szenes Zoltan and Siposne Kecskemethy Klara, Budapest: Zrinyi Kiado, 2019, p. 17.

3 Szenes Zoltan (ed.), *The Adaptation of NATO to a New World. NATO 4.0 and Hungary*. Edt. Szenes Zoltan and Siposne Kecskemethy Klara, Budapest: Zrinyi Kiado, 2019, p. 17.

4 NATO. 2020. NATO's Purpose. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_68144.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_68144.htm), (06.01.2022).

5 Szenes Zoltan (ed.), *The Adaptation of NATO to a New World. NATO 4.0 and Hungary*. Edt. Szenes Zoltan and Siposne Kecskemethy Klara, Budapest: Zrinyi Kiado, 2019, p. 19.

NATO; is generally based on the values of individual freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. It also seeks long-term peace. North Atlantic Treaty Organization maintains these goals through political and military means. Furthermore, organizations in member countries can share information and act together in the security field. Therefore they function as a transatlantic forum. It has a crucial role in the security of the United States and the European Union because of this feature. One of the cornerstones of NATO, article 4; when a member state's security is threatened, all members can come together and consult<sup>6</sup>. The North Atlantic Treaty, Article 4: The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any of the Parties is threatened<sup>7</sup>.

Another notable article 5 of the Washington Treaty states that if any NATO member state is attacked or faces a security danger, all members can indicate, for defensive purposes, that they accept the attack as if it were directed at them. In other words, cooperation in military and political fields is deemed more important. It also assures that member countries will not be left alone. It also imposes liability on member states' defence forces. In this situation, the members assist the countries in their joint efforts to fulfill their partners' aims without inflicting any loss.

Furthermore, if any of the member states are subjected to an armed attack, the right to individual or collective defence outlined in Article 51<sup>8</sup> of the UN Charter may be invoked. However, they have agreed to support the attacked party or parties, individually and collectively, to ensure and maintain security in the North Atlantic region. The Security Council will be informed of the actions and measures to respond to such assaults. The steps will be terminated when the United Nations Security Council takes the necessary measures to maintain international security and peace.

The following are the primary tasks of the Union as declared by the heads of government of NATO member countries during the Lisbon Summit in 2010: Collective defence (Defence of Alliance territory), crisis management (Missions and operations conducted outside of Union territory), and cooperative security (partnerships).<sup>9</sup>

Today, the main elements of the discouragement of NATO resolutions are conventional capabilities, ballistic missile defence systems, and nuclear capabilities. The main reasons for the establishment of the Alliance<sup>10</sup> are: Resolve international disputes peacefully, ensure the friendly and peaceful development of international relations, promote economic cooperation, enable its member countries to develop their individual and collective capabilities, and allow member states to consult with each other.<sup>11</sup>

The main fundamental principles of NATO are the maintenance of international peace and security, solidarity, consensus, and the adoption of common global values. Also, with article 5, it is stated that the "one for all, all for one" movement and strengthening of the transatlantic link between America and Europe<sup>12</sup>. In terms of fundamental principles, it possesses political and military power: Politically, by giving priority to concepts such as human rights based on individual freedom and human values, it offers security-related cooperation to solve the problems of its member countries, cre-

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6 The Consultaion Process and Article 4 [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49187.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49187.htm), (07.01.2022).

7 Milestones: 1945–1952- Office of the Historian, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>, (06.01.2022).

8 Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_text\\_s\\_16937.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_text_s_16937.htm) (08.09.2022)

9 NATO, Strategic Concepts, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_56626.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm), (07.01.2022).

10 Colonel Patrick Warren. Alliance History and the Future NATO: What the Last 500 Years of Alliance Behavior Tells Us About NATO's Path Forward. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0630\\_nato\\_alliance\\_warren.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0630_nato_alliance_warren.pdf) (05.09.2022).

11 Gülnur Aybet, Turkey's Security Challenges and NATO Gülnur Aybet, Edam Center For Economics And Foreign Policy Studies, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Aybet\\_Brief.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Aybet_Brief.pdf)

12 NATO. NATO's Purpose. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_68144.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_68144.htm), (06.01.2022).

ate an environment of trust ensure long-term peace and prevent conflicts. Militarily: If efforts to find peaceful solutions to emergent diplomatic crises fail, military intervention in crisis management is authorized under the UN Charter and the Washington Agreement.<sup>13</sup>

Following the completion of NATO's founding purpose, transformation to serve, and the organization's new structure and meaning in shaping decisive two basic concepts of cooperation and partnership. However, there are also further steps towards understanding NATO partnership policy, which is crucial in light of general historical experience and preferences, such as the Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, İstanbul Cooperation, Global Partners, and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Countries.

The Partnership for Peace (PfP) program aims to expand and develop NATO's and partner countries' security space through interim political and military solutions that contribute to cooperation between the parties. It consists of 50 countries, including the 21 PFP countries and the 29 allies.<sup>14</sup>

NATO's partnership with its Mediterranean neighbors is another focus of the conversation. In the south, with their neighbors, they share similar opinions and cultivate partnerships based on trust to preserve regional security and stability and support the Mediterranean Dialogue, NATO's critical partnership, and cooperation framework.

NATO and the İstanbul Cooperation Initiative focus on border security issues such as counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, and defence reform, as well as collaborative training areas such as combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) entered into force at the Wales Summit in 2014<sup>15</sup>. To respond to new concerns arising from the Middle East and North Africa due to Russia's security problems, developing more in-depth and specially built bilateral relationships with partners such as Ukraine, Finland, Georgia, and Jordan has become necessary. Within the scope of this new strategy, it was determined to create a permanent format and platform aimed at managing any potential crises the allied countries may face in the following years in cooperation with their partners.

## 2. TURKEY'S NATO JOURNEY ADVENTURE

### 2.1. Become a Member

After establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Turkey made significant efforts to join the Alliance. It completed the membership process with the support of the United States. Turkey became a member of NATO on February 18, 1952<sup>16</sup>. Turkey's thriving membership is a result of its foreign policy. However, foreign policy development in the aftermath of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and Council of Europe membership demonstrates that Turkey is not alone. The United States had a favorable attitude toward Turkey. It worked to persuade other NATO member states that did not want Turkey's participation, which was one of the reasons why other

13 NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm). (10.01.2022).

14 Peter Stepper, (ed.), *Expanding Stability in the Neighbourhood: NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme*, NATO in the 21st Century, 2019, p. 258.

15 NATO, Partnership Interoperability Initiative, <https://www.nato.int/cps/em/natohq/topics132726.htm>, (07.01.2022).

16 Reem Abou El Fadl (ed.), "Turkey's Accession to NATO, 1950-2: Members of the Free World", Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 123-125.

states favored Turkey's NATO membership.

The strategic importance of Turkey's location is to support Turkey against Soviet Russia while also exploiting Turkey's position to intimidate Russia (by creating bases). As a result of these factors, Turkey's membership was accepted, and its admission to the Union was assured. Turkey had to send troops to Korea for its membership. In other words, the essential points in convincing the USA and European countries to participate in the Turkish army in the Korean War, and thanks to the positive reputation Turkish troops earned in the Korean War<sup>17</sup>. As a political and military partnership in NATO, Turkey attaches importance to the shared values of the Organization as both a political and military Alliance.

In addition, the Alliance assists Turkey in ensuring its security and implementing its defence policies. It has positively impacted Turkey from Euro-Atlantic cooperation due to its NATO membership. On the other hand, Turkey has completed its responsibilities to fulfill the organization objectives with its historical background and cultural ties while utilizing its military capabilities. However, in the 1990s, Turkey supported Alliance policies (crisis management in the Balkans) and the Peace for Partnership Treaty in 1994. Turkey participated in NATO military operations in countries such as Bosnia, Macedonia, and Kosovo.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2. Turkey's Contributions to NATO

Turkey is a pivotal country for NATO. Because its location, in turn, is with its location and military structure. As Ludger Kühnhardt said, geography, in turn, is a function of politics<sup>19</sup>. NATO contributes to the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic region as a whole. As a valuable member of NATO, Turkey makes significant contributions to the adoption of organization and the realization of values through various projects, owing to its geostrategic location and historical relations with other states. Besides, Turkey has been a member for 70 years and has the second-largest army in NATO. According to the 2021 estimates, Turkey spent \$13 billion on NATO<sup>20</sup>. With this figure, Turkey was among the top ten countries that contributed the most.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, There are reactions in domestic politics as well as from countries opposed to Turkey's NATO membership. Because Turkey is an Islamic state<sup>22</sup>. However, although there are those who hold opposing views, Turkey has made significant contributions to the Alliance.

Turkey is attempting to ensure its national security while also continuing its fight against these terrorist organizations, which it refers to as Kurdistan Workers' Party PKK/ The Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat), PYD/ The People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel.)YPG/, Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization ( FETÖ), The Islamic State (ISIS.)<sup>23</sup> It also fights not only them but also other

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17 Ayşe Ömür Atmaca, "The Geopolitical Origins of Turkish-American Relations: Revisiting the Cold War Years.All Azimuth": A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace. p. 11. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/147454>. (15.01.2022).

18 Sylvie Gangloff. Turkish Policy Towards the Conflict in Kosovo: The Preeminence of National Political Interests. <https://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/517>. (05.09.2022).

19 Ludger Kühnhardt (ed.), The Geopolitical Environment in the 21st Century: Challenges for European Defence, 2019, p. 28.

20 Number of Military Personnel in NATO Countries in 2021 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/584286/number-of-military-personnel-in-nato-countries/> (21.01.2022).

21 Defense Spending of NATO Countries, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/this-is-how-much-nato-countries-spend-on-defense/>, (21.01.2022).

22 Kalev Stoicescu and Hille Hanso, Turkey's Future Role in NATO An Indispensable and Difficult Ally, Estonia International Centre For Defence and Security, p. 7, [https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICDS\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_Turkey%C2%B4s\\_Future\\_Role\\_in\\_NATO\\_Stoicescu\\_Hanso\\_January\\_2022-1.pdf](https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICDS_Policy_Paper_Turkey%C2%B4s_Future_Role_in_NATO_Stoicescu_Hanso_January_2022-1.pdf)

23 Stratejik İttifakın Güçlü Üyesi, [iletisim.gov.tr](https://iletisim.gov.tr), (21.01.2022).

terrorist organizations as well. Furthermore, it promotes regional and global peace and stability by undertaking tasks and making significant contributions to the completion of Alliance operations and missions in various regions. Turkey provides personnel support in this area. It undertakes tasks in crisis response operations in light of the Alliance's Strategic Concept.

In the NATO mission, Turkey supported Afghanistan Resolute Support Mission, Iraq NATO Mission, Operation Kosovo Force, ALTHEA Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Sea Guard, NATO Permanent Naval Force, NATO activity in the Aegean Sea, NATO Response Force, and NATO Readiness Initiative.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, it acts as a buffer country due to its geographical location. In particular, Turkey, which is at the center of the illegal immigration threat, is also displaying a determined struggle in this regard. It maintains an active military presence in the Organization as a stabilizing and mitigating actor of various problems such as human and drug trafficking and smuggling arising from regions of instability.<sup>25</sup>

NATO Land Forces Command is located in Izmir, Turkey<sup>26</sup>. The airbases in Incirlik and Konya were turned over to NATO to aid in the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, Konya Air Base is one of the two forward operations bases of the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Warning Force (NAEW&C) and is accessible to NATO AWACS aircraft. On another note, due to its geographical location, Turkey actively maintains its existence in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as in the air and on the sea. In terms of assurance measures, Turkey's position is critical because it contributes significantly to NATO's enhanced deterrence and defence capability.

Turkey actively participates in NATO's efforts to maintain peace and Stability in the Black Sea. It is the main element of balance and deterrence in the Black Sea with its international and national military activities, especially Operation Black Sea Harmony. However, Turkey contributes to the ground, air, naval, and special forces elements of the Strengthened North Atlantic Treaty Organization Response Force. Since 1995, Turkey has participated in Alliance operations such as IFOR, SFOR, KFOR, ISAF, Essential Harvest, Amber Fox, Allied Harmony, Active Effort, Ocean Shield, and "United Protector in the Balkans."<sup>27</sup>

Turkey is included in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan as part of its NATO mission. It is also a framework country in Kabul within the scope of its Resolute Support Mission and assumed the security and operation responsibility of Hamid Karzai International Airport<sup>28</sup>. It is included in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and serves as the Framework Country in Kabul and the security and operation of Hamid Karzai International Airport. In addition, The Kosovo Force is the NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force "KFOR" entrusted with maintaining security in Kosovo.

Turkey contributes a surveillance and control mission to Organization to aid in its efforts to prevent illegal crossings in the Aegean and Black Seas. However, Turkey is one of the three countries that contribute the most to NATO's Permanent Naval Force and its Mediterranean command<sup>29</sup>. It is also the country that made the most outstanding contribution to the Sea Guard Operation. In addition, it supports this contribution

24 NATO. Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan (2015-2021). [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/to\\_pics\\_113694.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/to_pics_113694.htm). (26.08.2022).

25 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Efforts In Combating Organized Crime. [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-efforts-in-combating-organized-crime.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-efforts-in-combating-organized-crime.en.mfa). (06.09.2022).

26 Allien Land Command, <https://lc.nato.int/>, (11.01.2022).

27 Turkish Armed Forces, <https://www.kkk.tsk.tr/bdh.aspx>, (11.01.2022).

28 North Atlantic treaty organization. Turkey Continues Its Efforts For Afghanistan's Lasting Security, Through the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_182914.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_182914.htm). (26.08.2022)

29 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Relations with NATO. <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/nato.en.mfa>. (06.09.2022)

logistically with Aksaz Naval Base. In addition, Alliance Mission in Iraq, and Turkey, contributes military trainers and advisors. Furthermore, Turkey has agreed to send a force protection team.

### 2.3. NATO Affiliated Facilities in TURKEY

Turkey is one of the allies contributing to NATO's Command and Force organization in a significant way. NATO Land Command (LANDCOM), located in the Command Structure of the Alliance, and also NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Headquarters (NRDC-TU), one of nine High Readiness ground force headquarters in the NATO Force Structure (III Corps Headquarters, Istanbul), are located in Turkey.

Within the scope of the Alliance Ballistic Missile Defence architecture, the detection and tracking radar (X-Band radar) is located in Malatya/Küreçik in Turkey. NATO Center of Excellence for Combating Terrorism (CoE-DAT) and Partnership for Peace Training Center, which Turkey contributes to the Alliance with national means, are in Ankara. However, Turkey hosts the Multinational Maritime Security Center of Excellence in Istanbul.<sup>30</sup>

### 2.4. Sharing of Expenses by TURKEY

NATO regularly collects data on the defence expenditures of its member countries and presents them on graphs. The data accepted by the defence ministry of each member state is included in the reports created. These reports also highlight the payments that the armed forces of the various nations made and planned to make throughout the fiscal year to support the union's needs.<sup>31</sup>

When it comes to defence expenditures, the armed forces of the countries come to mind first, but it is not limited to this. In other words, it includes the budgets of the departments of the defence ministries such as space, cyber, coast guard, military health, and logistics. In addition, research and development (R&D) costs are also considered defence expenditures.

Turkey, a strong and indispensable member of NATO, has been struggling with the threats of the regional security complex due to its recent position and is an important factor in the peaceful resolution of regional problems. This situation shows that Turkey should always be prepared in the military field.

Turkey has been maintaining the burden-sharing of defence expenditures within the Alliance for years without any problems. When the defence burden in NATO, without Turkey, is taken into account, it is clear that Turkey has a heavy burden. Because the Alliance's southeast flank could drastically increase spending. On the other hand, defending Turkey's side of NATO will be much harder, if not impossible.<sup>32</sup>

It has the second largest army after the United States and also it is among the data that among the top ten countries that contribute the most to the NATO budget<sup>33</sup>. At the same time, thanks to the steps taken in the field of defence technologies in recent years, Turkey's defence ecosystem has grown, and the NATO Alliance has begun to assist its member countries. In this context, Turkey has increased its presence in the

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30 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations. [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv\\_-european-security-and-defence-identity\\_policy-\\_esdi\\_p\\_en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-_esdi_p_en.mfa). (01.09.2022).

31 NATO. Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2021). [https://www.nato.int/cps/e\\_n/na\\_tohq/ne\\_ws193983.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/e_n/na_tohq/ne_ws193983.htm). (25.08.2022).

32 Samet Çoban and Furkan Akar, NATO-Turkey Relations in a Turbulent Environment: The Military Dimension of NATO-Turkey Relations, NATO-Turkey Relations Policy Brief-Beyond the Horizon ISSG, p. 10, [https://behorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NATO-Turkey-Relations-Policy-Brief\\_Beyond-the-Horizon-ISSG.pdf](https://behorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NATO-Turkey-Relations-Policy-Brief_Beyond-the-Horizon-ISSG.pdf)

33 NATO. Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2021). [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/ne\\_ws193983.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/ne_ws193983.htm). (25.08.2022).



Alliance from the status of being a country that only uses defence technologies to the status of a provider country.<sup>34</sup>

Turkey's defence expenditures to GDP ratio remained below the 2 percent target. While this rate was around 1.4 percent in 2014, it was recorded as 1.86 in 2020<sup>35</sup>. Also 2020 estimates show that Turkey will spend 1.91% of its GDP (better than half of its NATO Allies) Turkey's defence spending to GDP ratio fell one place in 2020 compared to the previous year, placing it ninth among NATO countries. Turkey has allocated a 13% share for research and development in the distribution of defence expenditures. This rate has kept it below the NATO threshold of 20%. The GDP ratio of Turkey's defence expenditures in 2020 was 1.86%. This figure has kept it below the NATO threshold of 2%.<sup>36</sup>

#### **In 2020, Turkey's defence expenditures were distributed as follows:**

Defence spending was 50.40% of personnel expenses, 34.20% of equipment expenses, 13.2 of research and development expenses, and the remaining 2.20% was allocated to other expenditures. Civilian Contributions to Civil Emergency Planning Civil Preparedness is critical to NATO's long-term adaptation to defence and deterrence. With these planning activities, Turkey's contribution and support to NATO's civilian capabilities significantly benefit to the organization so, NATO has a comprehensive collaboration system, which is critical for expanding stability. It has geographical partnerships with NATO (Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Global Partners) and other ongoing associations (empowered opportunities partners, operational partners, and interoperability platform).<sup>37</sup>

The main objectives of these partnership mechanisms are: Consult, improve interoperability, provide partner country support for NATO missions and operations, and aid in defence reform and capacity building. Besides, it cooperates with its member countries in the following areas: Combating terrorism (through the capacity building), Non-proliferation of WMDs and launch vehicles, responding to new security challenges such as cyber threats, energy security, maritime security, piracy combat, and Civil emergency preparation.

As a result, Turkey states that it is within the framework of NATO, provided that it establishes good relations with familiar allies based on mutual respect and tolerance. Turkey successfully fulfills its membership mission. In this regard, Turkey plays a critical role in building ties between Alliances and its allies in the Balkans, the Caucasus, North Africa, and the Middle East, as well as implementing NATO's open-door policy due to its geographic location.

#### **2.5. NATO's Contributions to TURKEY's Security**

The maintenance of NATO's dominant role in sustaining security and stability in its mission, as well as the principal transatlantic platform where its members hold political and military consultations on problems involving their safety, are both critical to Turkey. As a result, it considers it necessary to observe and preserve the Alliance's

34 DefenseExpenditureofNATOCountries2014-2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_184844.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_184844.htm), (21.01.2022).

35 Samet Çoban and Furkan Akar, NATO-Turkey Relations in a Turbulent Environment: The Military Dimension of NATO-Turkey Relations, NATO-Turkey Relations Policy Brief-Beyond the Horizon ISSG, p. 10, <https://behorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NATO-Turkey-Relations-Policy-Brief-Beyond-the-Horizon-ISSG.pdf>

36 NATO. Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2021). [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_193983.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_193983.htm). (25.08.2022).

37 SETA. Turkey in NATO: 70th Anniversary of Alliance and Partnership Event. <https://www.setav.org/en/events/turkey-in-nato-70th-anniversary-of-alliance-and-partnership-event/>. (01.09.2022).

core principles of security indivisibility, union solidarity, equal and fair risk, burden sharing, and consensus.

Due to the threats, Turkey has consulted with the North Atlantic Council on the following developments under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty. On the other hand, Turkey requested support from the Alliance for the subsequent actions: the “*ACE Guard*” Operation (January 3, 1991 – March 8, 1991)<sup>38</sup> : At Turkey’s request, NATO rapid response force (ACE Mobile) and Alliance air defence capabilities were deployed on Turkish soil to counter the threat posed by the First Gulf War.

Due to Turkey’s security concerns during the Second Gulf War three Dutch Patriot batteries were deployed to Turkey (Diyarbakir and Batman) following a council decision issued on February 16, 2003<sup>39</sup> , at Turkey’s request. After Syria’s downing of the Turkish reconnaissance plane in 2012, many Turks have been killed to this day. In addition, more than fifty people lost their lives due to the bomb attack in the Reyhanlı district of Hatay.<sup>40</sup>

In 2012, Turkey’s unarmed reconnaissance plane was shot down by Syria in international airspace in the Mediterranean. In the same year, 5 Turkish citizens were martyred in Akçakale by the fire opened by the Syrian regime forces. Following these events, Turkey requested that NATO provide a defence system. As a result, patriots from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States were deployed to Turkey.

The Netherlands, Germany, and the United States withdrew their Patriot missile defence systems in 2015, stating that the missile threat had decreased. Just after that, the patriot systems of Italy and Spain were established.<sup>41</sup>

In response to these events in Syria, the Council agreed on the Adapted Assurance Measures for Turkey in 2015. These measures include the regular flights of NATO AWACS aircraft stationed in Turkey; It shows that it has undertaken the task of air policing intending to protect the Turkish airspace. In addition, in the execution of this task; conducting intelligence surveillance-reconnaissance and maritime patrol flights in the Eastern Mediterranean; NATO Permanent Naval Forces visit Turkish ports in the Eastern Mediterranean; it is known to involve increasing the participation of allies and SNMG-2 in exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean.

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NATO provides opportunities for its member countries to develop their military capabilities and to benefit from the experience and knowledge of the Alliance members. The Association also contributes to the development of Turkey’s defence industry by participating in joint projects. Turkey and NATO still need each other today<sup>42</sup> . In addition, Organization provides individual and collective training at training institutions, exercise centers, and centers of excellence. These possibilities provide opportunities for the member states’ military personnel and raise the members’ education level. These possibilities were advantageous to Turkey as well, providing the Turkish

38 The-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.EuropeReportNo.230, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/The-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.pdf>, (08.01.2022).

39 TheNetherlandsSendsPatriotUnitstoTurkey,<https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2012/12/10/netherlands-sends-patriot-units-to-turkey>, (04.01.2022).

40 The-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.EuropeReportNo.230, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/The-rising-costs-of-turkey-s-syrian-quagmire.pdf>, (08.01.2022).

41 Rabin Emmott, Sabine Siebold, Phil Stewart. Turkey Urges NATO to Keep Up Its Patriot Defences. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-nato-idUKKCN0S20HN20151008>

42 John Krige, NATO and the Strengthening of Western Science in the Post- Sputnik Era, Springer, Vol. 38, No.1, 2000, p. 81.

armed forces with the means to collect and develop this knowledge.

## 2.6. Partnership

It is based on the practical cooperation of Partner Countries from the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe with NATO on an individual basis on military and defence-related issues. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) program is an essential NATO partnership initiative, formally launched in 1994<sup>43</sup> “Partnership for Peace Training Center” was established in 1998 within the Turkish Armed Forces to help the civilian and military personnel of the member states of the Organization achieve their goals with the common general principles to ensure peace. This center provides training opportunities for the personnel of the Mediterranean dialogue countries at the strategic and tactical levels for the allied nations.

NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue was initiated in 1994 by the North Atlantic Council. It currently involves seven non-NATO countries in the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.<sup>44</sup> The idea behind this initiative is that the Mediterranean’s security is meaningful for Europe’s safety and is linked to Europe’s stability. Turkey, one of the Mediterranean countries, has been supporting the Mediterranean dialogue since its establishment. It also shares the goal of strengthening the Mediterranean Dialogue in areas where the organization can add value.

Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was established at the NATO Summit held in Istanbul in June 2004. This initiative aims to contribute to regional and global security in the long term by developing cooperation in the protection field between the Middle East countries and NATO. It follows a policy open to the interest of all Middle Eastern countries, which makes the initiative important and stands against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Turkey strongly supports the “Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.”

The majority of the NATO military projects in which Turkey participates are infra-structural works for military facilities. Other military-related projects include:

- > Project to Clean Up Unexploded Ordnance
- > (Airborne Electronic Attack – AEA)-
- > (Maritime Unmanned Systems – MUA)
- > (Maritime Multimission Aircraft- M3A)

Apart from these, there are also Civil Dimension Cooperations. Some of these are: Since 2015, female officers have been appointed to the “Gender Advisor” staff for six-month periods to serve in the Kabul Training, Aid, and Advisory Command in Afghanistan, and training contribution has been provided to Afghan female police officers in Turkey.<sup>45</sup>

With the Counter-Terrorism Center of Excellence and the Partnering for Peace Training Center, Turkey offers courses, seminars, and other events to Alliance members and partner countries. It engages in educational initiatives, and thanks to its intimate cultural linkages and historical knowledge of the region, it contributes significantly to NATO’s accurate reading and understanding of the region.

43 Republic of Serbia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Partnership For Peace, [https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/security-policy/partnership-peace#:~:text=The%20Partnership%20for%20Peace%20\(PfP,in%20the%20Euro%2DAtlantic%20area,\(11.01.2022\).](https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/security-policy/partnership-peace#:~:text=The%20Partnership%20for%20Peace%20(PfP,in%20the%20Euro%2DAtlantic%20area,(11.01.2022).)

44 Mediterranean Dialogue, <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/52927.htm>, (11.01.2022).

45 United States of America Department of Defense. Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jul/01/2002348001/-1/-1/1/>. (02.09.2022).

The NATO Civil Emergency Planning Committee serves as the North Atlantic Council's senior policy and advisory unit on civil emergency planning and disaster relief. At this point, it coordinates the activities carried out by the planning boards and committees affiliated with it. Turkey provides expert and conceptual contributions to the Organization to support NATO's civilian (non-military) capabilities within the scope of civil emergency planning activities.

### **3. Conclusion**

Although Turkey has become more assertive within NATO, there are disagreements among members of the organization. In the Turkey-Union security priority-setting process NATO allies may occasionally disagree. Because of these variations in viewpoint, the threats or circumstances in the various nations change in accordance with those interests.

However, Turkey has been a member of NATO for 70 years and has the second-largest army in the Alliance, which entails significant duties and various demands. Turkey is one of the top nine allies contributing the most to the NATO budget, demonstrating that it is up to the task. Turkey supports Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and various other geographies. It provides sustainable and comprehensive contributions to NATO missions and operations.

In addition, it cooperates with NATO thematically in areas such as countering new security challenges such as countering terrorism, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and launch vehicles, cyber threats, energy security, maritime security, combating piracy, and civil emergency planning.

Since 1992, NATO has started to serve in a wide range of humanitarian aid to crisis management in a broad region from the Balkans to the Gulf of Aden, from Africa to Afghanistan. Thus, NATO went beyond just serving its members' security and became a security organization dealing with global problems. It carried out this transformation around the concepts of "cooperation" and "partnership," and the Organization's new identity was shaped. With this transformation, Alliance went beyond the Euro-Atlantic Region, its primary area of interest, and succeeded in establishing a comprehensive cooperation and partnership network with non-member countries worldwide, especially in the Mediterranean and Gulf regions, in the post-Cold War period. Turkey has placed NATO on the central axis of its defence and security policy. From the first day it became a member to this day, it has complied with its obligation to defend the shared values of NATO. Being a strategic member of the Alliance, Turkey has been successful in many missions and contributed to NATO for 70 years. So in the light of this information, both parties have benefited from this partnership.

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