

ПОЛІТИЧНІ НАУКИ

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MILITARY-TECHNICAL COOPERATION
BETWEEN TURKEY AND UKRAINEВІЙСЬКОВО-ТЕХНІЧНЕ СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВО
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The study tested military-technical cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey that has been gaining momentum over the last years. Recent tensions with Russia have become the focus of Turkey and Ukraine's bilateral cooperation. Over the past few years, Russian forces have dominated the Black Sea, after illegally annexing Crimea and ridding it of Ukrainian military forces, which has placed both countries at a strategic disadvantage. The stand-off they both have against Russia is a factor that binds them and draws these two littoral states of the Black Sea closer together. Both countries started the dialogue on spheres that until recently were considered too sensitive, such as military-technical cooperation. Apart from unifying political reasons, Turkey and Ukraine pursue their own interests. Turkey seeks to increase arms exports and to gain military-industrial independence. Ukraine, in its turn aims to strengthen the Armed Forces and achieve their compatibility with NATO standards. As a result, the interests of both countries coincide and drive military cooperation in many areas: the joint production and supply of transport aircraft manufactured by Antonov State Enterprise, expansion of cooperation in the direction of unmanned aerial vehicles, integration of dynamic and active protection systems in Turkish armored vehicles, development and production of power plants for armored vehicles; development and production of passive radar stations, military communication, civil shipbuilding that apparently signifies a growing level of cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine, which has expanded substantially over the past few years. The weakest link in the Turkish military-industrial complex is engine building and today Ankara views Ukraine as an alternative engine provider. But still Ukraine cannot replace Russia as Turkey's main partner in the post-Soviet space because of considerable levers of influence Moscow has on Turkey. For example, the purchase of the S-400 missiles by Turkey is highly sensitive issue and rebuts the strategic partnership between Turkey and Ukraine. The author concludes that Turkey has a pragmatic approach in relation to Ukraine.

Keywords: Black Sea region, military-industrial independence, Ukroboronprom, Havelsan, Aselsan, IDEF-2019.

Дослідження дало оцінку військово-технічному співробітництву між Україною та Туреччиною, яке набирає обертів протягом останніх років. Напружені відносини з Росією стали головною причиною двостороннього співробітництва Туреччини та України. Російські війська займають домінуюче положення в регіоні Чорного

моря, незаконно анексувавши Крим та витіснивши звідти Збройні Сили України, що поставило обидві країни в невідне стратегічне становище. Протистояння, яке обидві країни мають проти Росії, є фактором, який пов'язує їх і зближує ці дві прибережні держави Чорного моря. Україна та Туреччина розпочали діалог з тих сфер, які до недавнього часу вважались занадто делікатними, наприклад, військово-технічне співробітництво. Крім політичних причин, Туреччина і Україна переслідують свої власні інтереси. Туреччина прагне збільшити експорт зброї і отримати військово-промислово «незалежність». Україна, в свою чергу, прагне посилити Збройні сили і досягти їх сумісності зі стандартами НАТО. В результаті інтереси обох країн є комплементарними та стимулюють військово-промислово співробітництво в багатьох напрямках: спільне виробництво і постачання транспортних літаків виробництва Державного підприємства «Антонов»; розширення співпраці в області безпілотних літальних апаратів, інтеграція систем динамічного та активного захисту в турецьку бронетехніку, розробка та виробництво електростанцій для бронетехніки; розробка і виробництво пасивних радіолокаційних станцій, військовий зв'язок, цивільне суднобудування, що, свідчить про зростаючий рівень співпраці між Туреччиною і Україною, який значно розширився за останні кілька років. Найслабшою ланкою в турецькому військово-промисловому комплексі є двигунобудування, і сьогодні Анкара розглядає Україну як альтернативного постачальника двигунів. Але Україна все ще не може замінити Росію в якості основного партнера Туреччини на пострадянському просторі через значні важелі впливу Москви на Туреччину. Придбання ракет S-400 Туреччиною є спірним питанням і піддає сумніву стратегічність партнерства між Туреччиною і Україною. Автор приходить до висновку, що Туреччина має прагматичний підхід по відношенню до України.

Ключові слова: Чорноморський регіон, військово-промислова незалежність, Ukroboronprom, Havelsan, Aselsan, IDEF-2019.

(стаття друкується мовою оригіналу)

Problem statement. Ukraine foreign policy had always been primarily bipolar and oscillated between East and West; the Southern vector of policy was not a priority. The cooperation with Turkey was sporadic and declarative. However, a change in the geopolitical situation in the region occurred and the Southern policy vector became the priority of Ukraine, especially in the context of the serious aggravation of the situation in the Black Sea region.

After the annexation of the Crimea, Russia tried to change the spheres of influence in the Black Sea region expanding its military presence, modernizing its fleet and militarizing the peninsula that influenced the defense strategy of both Turkey and Ukraine. Turkey, in connection with the crisis in relations with Russia, started the dialogue with Ukraine on spheres that until recently were considered too sensitive, such as military-technical cooperation.

Purpose. The aim of the article is to investigate the causes of military-technical cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine; identify the main areas of military-technical cooperation and explore perspectives and obstacles in this direction.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Question of military-technical cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey was investigated by such authors as M. Vorotniuk [22], V. Shyshkina [23], D. Bechev

[6]. However, in the context of recent events connected with Russian aggression the reasons and basis for military–technical cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey remain under–investigated. The investigation of the perspectives and obstacles for such cooperation also remain a pressing issue.

Basis for cooperation: political background and reasons. The stage for the formation of the Turkish–Ukrainian alliance was set mainly due to the worsening of the Turkish–Russian relations. Kyiv and Ankara’s shared desire to counter Moscow and weaken Russia’s position in the conflicts is compelling enough reason for Ukraine and Turkey to align defensively with each other, at least for now [17]. In Ukraine, Russia backs up the separatists in eastern Ukraine, and in Turkey, Russia supports the forces of Syrian President Bashar al Assad and endorses the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) in the Syrian conflict. Both Ukraine and Turkey have been involved in indirect military combat operations against Russia and have seen relations with Moscow aggravate as a result [16].

Moreover, both Ukraine and Turkey are located in the Black Sea region that has been the object of Russia’s large military buildup over the past five years. The Turkish Foreign Ministry, headed by Davutoglu, has brought Turkey’s foreign policy to a «strategic depth». This approach largely relies on the creation of new ways of cooperation with countries of the Black Sea basin. As far as Turkey has its own substantial naval presence in the Black Sea region and controls access to and from the sea via the Bosphorus, the annexation of Crimea largely influences the Turkish military policy. Russia’s actions prompted Kyiv to relocate naval assets and challenged Ankara’s naval presence on the Black Sea at the same time [17].

Apart from political reasons, Ankara seeks to increase arms exports and improve the military–industrial complex and thus set out to increase its defense exports by 25 billion dollars, according to the Justice and Development Party Vision Document [19]. Ukraine in this regard is of a particular interest to the Turkish authorities.

Ukraine’s main objective is to strengthen the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the context of the conflict in the East and against the new military campaigns of Russia. This may intensify cooperation with Turkey through NATO, including the achievement of the compatibility of the Armed Forces with NATO standards. In mid–December 2015, during a visit to Brussels of President Petro Poroshenko, a «road map» was signed between Ukraine and NATO «on defense–technical cooperation» that defines the basic measures of cooperation for the development of Ukraine’s capabilities in the field of armaments and military equipment and aims to achieve interoperability with NATO standards (STANAG) [11]. The ongoing partnership between Turkey and Ukraine is focused on the transformation of the Ukrainian defense and security sectors. Major General Petrenko, the Ukrainian Military Representative to NATO expressed the country’s intention of reforming the «Armed Forces of Ukraine to become fully capable and interoperable in accordance with NATO standards». The newly formed military partnership with Turkey can prepare Ukraine

for its set goal of the compatibility of the Armed Forces with NATO standards by 2020 expounded in The State Program for the Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine until 2020 issued by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine [9].

Thus, the abovementioned political motivations of both countries coincide and make their aims complementary driving military cooperation between the two.

Turkish military policy. Turkish military policy has always been influenced by its geopolitical position. Turkey’s location in a risky region necessitated the country to have strong and effective national defense industry in order to resist the threats coming out from its environs. Thus, it has always been of a great importance to have a qualified personnel, modern defense systems and a national defense industry in its territory [12].

According to 2019 Military Strength Ranking with 113 countries in its database, Turkey ranks tenth [1]. The think tank SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) shows that Turkey spent 2.5 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on ‘Defence’ in 2018, down from a peak of 4 per cent in the late 1990s [14] and still, Turkey is the 15th biggest military spender worldwide. High military spending has long been necessitated by its rivalry with Greece and the Kurdish conflict in the past. Today these two factors became less defining but the new threats emerged and affected the Turkey’s military policy.

Turkey’s regional policy has always been built mostly on military power rather than diplomacy. The role of the military in the political system of the country has always been decisive. Over the course of the decade, Turkey launched one of the largest military operations against the bases of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in northern Iraq, came close to military confrontations with Greece and Syria, and threatened military action against Cyprus and Iran. Owing mainly to the Syrian conflict, the precarious situation in the Black sea region as well as domestic threats coming out from Kurds uprisings Turkey’s military power has regained currency as means of its regional leadership projection.

The foundations of the modern Turkish military policy were established after coming to power in 2002 of the «Justice and Development Parties», led by R. Erdogan. The policy, promoted by A. Davutoglu, the then–chief foreign affairs adviser to the prime minister, was called «neo–Ottomanism», according to which the modern world was falling apart and Turkey had a historic chance to reestablish its position in the territory of the former Ottoman Empire. A. Davutoglu called the new Turkish policy «zero problems with neighbors» policy. The main means for re–ascendance as a regional power was the reduction in military–political dependence on the United States and Israel.

Nowadays, claiming regional leadership, Ankara seeks to increase its defense potential, as well as the export capabilities of the military–industrial complex. Today Turkey is the 13th largest importer of weapons in the world, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [21]. Erdogan called for the

independence of its defense industry from foreign imports in 2015. By 2014, Turkey managed to increase its exports to \$ 1.6 billion (compared to only \$ 887 million in 2011) and by 2023 Ankara plans to enter six of the world's largest suppliers of defense products [15]. Moreover, Turkey plans to increase the rating of world arms exporters and set out to increase its defense exports by 25 billion dollars, according to the Justice and Development Party Vision Document [19].

Such aspirations for military independence can be partly explained by the 'painful experience' of arms embargos in the past. In 1974 the four-year long arms sale embargo was imposed by the United States against Turkey as in response to the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus in summer 1974 that weakened its defence capacity as well as jeopardised the southern flank of NATO [8]. Moreover, in the 1990s Turkey experienced denial of the weapons by some NATO partners because of human rights concerns in the Kurdish conflict. Such a bitter experience became a turning point for Turkey that made self-sufficiency in military production a cornerstone of its military policy.

Owing mainly to the abovementioned Turkey has made military-industrial independence a top priority. Even though the major part of its military equipment is still bought abroad, Turkey aims to be self-sufficient by 2023 as stipulated in Justice and Development Party Vision Document.

«A nation without its own defence industry cannot fight the cause of liberation», said then Prime Minister Davutoglu in 2015 at the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli, adding that by 2023 a locally made combat plane will «fly the Turkish skies». During the 2015 election campaign, AKP proclaimed on its billboards, «We're making our own warplanes» and «We're making our own tanks». In May 2018, in the run up to the elections, the Erodgan declared that Turkey will continue to produce its own weapons and become a global power. As he stipulated, «We will increase our defence industry values like our Altay tank, ATAK helicopter, drones, armed drones. Turkey's goal is to have 100 percent indigenously-made land, air, and sea defence systems» [2].

Contractual framework and areas of military cooperation. In 2014, Ankara and Kyiv modernized an agreement on military-technical cooperation and agreed on joint production in many areas, in particular, radar stations, armored vehicles, military aircraft, rocket systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, aircraft engines, navigation and space exploration.

On May 16, 2016 Military Cooperation Implementation Plan was signed between the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Republic of Turkey that will remain in force until 2020. It determines in particular, the directions and areas of military cooperation between the countries until 2020 and contains practical steps aimed at increasing the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In April 2016, Ukraine's state-owned defense-industry enterprise Ukroboronprom began cooperating with Turkish company Havelsan on operating passive radar production facilities. The same year in October Ukraine signed an agreement with the Turkish firm

ASELSAN for the procurement of military radio systems together with the software [3].

In May 2017, Ukrainian state-owned plane-maker Antonov signed a memorandum of cooperation with Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) for the development and production of various modifications of combat unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and in April 2018, Turkey and Ukraine presented a jointly built transport plane, the An-188, constructed according to NATO standards [20].

Turkey views Ukraine as an important partner in the implementation of military communications projects. In this regard, Ukraine intensively cooperates with ASELSAN that supplies the means of military communication to Ukraine. ASELSAN ranks 61-st in the SIPRI Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in the world [13].

On October 9, 2017, Spetstechnoexport signed an agreement with Aselsan on the purchase of UAH 96,616 for the VHF communications for the series «9661». Radio stations are based on software-defined radio (SDR) technology, where the basic parameters of the device are determined by the software.

At the 6th meeting of the Turkish-Ukrainian Joint Commission on Defense Industry in Ankara, an offset agreement between Spetstechnoexport and Aselsan was signed in the framework of the supply of military communication equipment to Ukraine. Under this agreement, the Ministry of Defense will receive modern software and technologies that will strengthen the capabilities of the Armed Forces [4].

In January, the representatives of the State Company Ukrspecexport, which is part of the State Concern «Ukroboronprom», and the Turkish company Baykar Makina, signed the agreement on the purchase of Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs for the Ukrainian army according to which UAV manufacturer Baykar was to produce six Bayraktar TB2 and deliver them to Ukraine in a year. Along with the UAVs, three ground control station systems and equipment were also mentioned as scheduled to be delivered. The TB2 armed UAV was developed for tactical reconnaissance and surveillance missions and it can also carry ammo, do assaults, and has laser target acquisition. Turkey is one of the few countries in the world that acquired skills and experience in the manufacture of powerful unmanned aircraft systems. The purchase of armed UAVs is part of a partnership program between Ukraine and NATO member states that makes the purchase of Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs even more significant. Moreover, the creation of a joint Ukrainian-Turkish enterprise in southeastern Zaporizhia city of Ukraine that will produce components for modern unmanned technology is anticipated in the foreseeable future.

There is an ongoing cooperation in the field of geographical information. The Protocol on cooperation in the field of geographical information was signed in Kyiv on October 9, 2017 with Ukraine on the basis of mutual interest and reciprocity. Accordingly, the parties develop cooperation in the field of military geography in terms of technical support, exchange of geographic materials and data, technology transfer and exchange of experience, the implementation of

joint projects in this field and the provision of on-the-job training in military geography, which will be conducted separately for each case upon request [18].

In a framework of the international exhibition IDEF 2019 held annually in Istanbul two agreements were signed. On the first day of the international defensive exhibition IDEF-2019 in Istanbul, representatives of the Ukrainian state enterprise Spetstechnoexport, part of the State Enterprise «Ukroboronprom», initialed a contract with the Turkish state-owned corporation «Makina ve Kimya Endüstrisi Kurumu» («MKEK») for supply of guided missiles «Cone» produced by state enterprise «Luch» that are designed for firing of tank guns of NATO caliber 120 mm. In addition, supplies of guidance devices are provided for their integration into Turkish battle tanks. As a result of the partial transfer of technology, Ukrainian guided missiles will be produced at «Makina ve Kimya Endüstrisi Kurumu» (MKEK) facilities. It is expected that thanks to cooperation with MKEK, Ukraine will have the opportunity to increase the presence of its products on other markets that operate tanks with 120-mm cannons.

On the next day of the exhibition agreements were reached on the import of military imagers with a cooled matrix for installation on systems of controlled anti-tank weapons. In addition, the principles of the export of Ukrainian military products to Turkey and the joint production of weapons and equipment were defined. During the international exhibition the relevant contracts were signed by the Ukrainian state-owned enterprise «Spetstechnoexport» and the Turkish company Aselsan, which is the main supplier of VHF communications equipment for the Armed Forces of Ukraine (MAT).

Furthermore, Ukroboronprom signed a Memorandum with representatives of the corporation of the Ministry of Defense of Turkey ASFAT. The document defines the principles for exporting products of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex to Turkey, as well as the transfer of technologies for the development and creation of high-precision weapons. In addition, the possibility of joint action for the production of precision weapons and other weapons, as well as military equipment. The Turkish side expressed interest in purchasing gas turbine engines manufactured by Zorya-Mashproekt, which is part of Ukroboronprom, for naval surface ships. Joint projects for the supply of Ukrainian gas-generating units to Turkey were also discussed [18].

Ukraine, being one of the centers of military shipbuilding in the era of the USSR, and the only republic within the Union that built aircraft carriers, is now not in the best conditions as a shipbuilding power. At present, the issue of fleet development is topical for Ukraine. Civil shipbuilding is comparatively at a fairly acceptable level, but the military is in deep crisis and decline. After the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, the national fleet lost more than 80% of its assets and capabilities. This explains the interest of Ukraine in the experience that Turkey acquired during the local construction of warships. To foster industrial development, from the second half of the 1960s Turkey set up foundations to support e.g. local shipbuilding and aviation manufacturing, culminating in what is now the Armed Forces Foundations. Thus, Turkey can

provide Ukraine with technical support for the design and production of a warship on its own shipyards. In April 2017, the commander of the Ukrainian fleet, Vice Admiral Igor Voronchenko visited the Gölcük shipyard where a new class of corvettes was manufactured under the MILGEM project [5].

As a result of participation in the International Defense Exhibition «IDEF-2019», the Commander of the Ukrainian Navy based in Odessa, Igor Voronchenko, reported that Turkey and Ukraine had begun work on joint projects concerning shipbuilding. In particular, the directions for corvettes and rocket boats were mentioned, as well as the possibilities of Ukraine to provide power plants for the Turkish Navy.

In its turn, Turkey as a maritime state with a glorious naval history today is not completely self-sufficient in building its naval power. After all, the Turkish Navy is almost completely represented by ships of foreign projects, mainly German ones. For example, almost the entire submarine fleet of Turkey is German type-209 submarines. The frigates are represented by German MEKO-200 and American «Oliver Hazard Perry». Corvettes, again, are either French type A69 or Turkish type Ada of the project MILGEM.

At the same time, the Turkish Navy owing mainly to the abovementioned close cooperation with Western partners, especially Germany, was able to localize the production of a number of types of warships that can be precious experience for Ukraine.

Regardless of the declared intentions to gain military-industrial independence, the Turkish defense industry still cannot yet carry out the entire cycle of operations and needs to import technology. Currently the weakest link in the Turkish military-industrial complex is engine building. Political disagreements between Ankara and other NATO countries led to a crisis in technological cooperation. When Turkey planned to sell self-propelled howitzers T-155 Firtina to Azerbaijan, the German company MTU that supplied engines for Firtina, refused to provide engines for howitzers. In this regard, Turkey began to consider Ukraine as an alternative engine provider [14]. The development of the new Turkish Altay tanks was frozen because of the political crisis between Ankara and Vienna in 2017. When Austria did not provide technological support for the engine, Ankara turned to Ukraine. The Prime Minister of Ukraine, Volodymyr Groysman, visited Turkey on March 14, 2017, and the two countries signed a preliminary memorandum of understanding and Ukraine offered its 6TD-3 engine for a Turkish tank [10].

Obstacles for cooperation. It is important not to exaggerate the significance of this relations. So far, Ukraine cannot replace Russia as Turkey's main partner in the post-Soviet space. Moscow has two levers of influence, which Kyiv does not have: first, its armed forces are deployed around the borders of Turkey, in Syria, in Armenia and in the Crimea; secondly, Turkey remains dependent on Russian energy imports and is vulnerable to trade embargoes. When in November Ukraine sought the closure of the Turkish Straits, Turkey hesitated. In addition, Turkey continues to oppose the creation of a permanent naval mission of the Alliance in the Black Sea.

Washington's decision in 2015 to withdraw its Patriot surface-to-air missile system from Turkish border with Syria has weakened Turkey's air defense and prompted Ankara to boost its air defense. In September 2017, Turkey and Russia concluded the contract for the supply of S-400 that puts into question Turkey's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The retired Major-General of the Turkish Air Forces Beyazıt Karataş notes that the process of cooperation with Russia will not be limited only to the purchase of the S-400 and foresaw the acquisition of other Russian short- and medium-range air defense systems. He also emphasized that joint production may appear on the agenda [6]. In this context, Turkey explicitly ignores the geopolitical interests of Ukraine.

However, Kyiv and Ankara's shared desire to counter Moscow and weaken Russia's position in the conflicts and in its region is a powerful reason for both to enhance security ties and to align defensively with each other, at least for now [17].

Conclusion. It can be concluded that Turkish-Ukrainian military cooperation is focused on tackling the ever-growing Russian threat in the Black Sea region. Clearly, Ukraine and Turkey have a serious interest in bolstering their defenses to counter the perceived Russian threat. The aims pursued by both countries are complementary and transform the two countries into valuable partners for each other. In recent years, with its relations with both the U.S. and Europe on a downward spiral, Turkey has sought to highlight its capability to produce domestically-built military hardware. In the context of Turkey's aspirations to become one of the largest importers, Ukraine becomes a potential sales market for Turkey. Cooperation between two countries can help to speed up the transformation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and assist in bringing them closer to NATO standards. In its turn, Turkey is drawing on Ukraine's own intellectual and technical resources, especially construction and provision of the deadly needed engines for Turkey's defensive industrial complex. Ukraine is the nearest and most willing potential partner to help Turkey overcome the interruptions in military technology transfer from the United States and Europe because of frequent political disagreements. But the Turkey's ongoing military cooperation with Russia in the air defense witness that Turkey's relations with Ukraine rest on pragmatism and are driven by its national security interest. Thus, there is still a more realistic scenario, according to which Turkey will continue to pursue a cautious policy.

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