

U.S. - Turkey Security Cooperation

From the Korean War to Afghanistan, and Beyond



KOREAN WAR

“Turkey provided the fifth-largest military contingent among United Nations forces – 5,453 soldiers at the peak of the war. The Turkish Brigade is credited with saving the U.S. 8th Army and the IX Army Corps from encirclement by communist forces and the 2nd Division from total destruction during critical battles in November 1950. United Nations’ Forces Commander in Chief, General Douglas MacArthur said, *‘the Turks are the hero of heroes. There is no impossibility for the Turkish brigade.’*” – The late U.S. Congressman John P. Murtha (D-PA)

AFGHANISTAN: OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Turkey has twice commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); first from 2002-2003 (ISAF-II) and then again in 2005 (ISAF-VII). ISAF assists the government of Afghanistan and the international community in maintaining security in the capital, Kabul, and several provincial areas. Its major goal is to make the capital and its surrounding areas safe and secure enough to permit development of democratic governance. Turkey contributes nearly 2,000 of the approximately 130,000 ISAF troops hailing from 28 NATO nations and 22 additional partner countries. Turkey currently heads the Regional Command Capital (RCC) – a role that it shares on a rotating basis with Italy and France. It also established and leads the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) based in Wardak Province. The PRT focuses on training the Afghan police force, rebuilding infrastructure, reinstating a transparent judiciary system, and raising the quality of life of the local population through public works. Turkey first trained Afghan military officers and helped Afghanistan in its state-building efforts in the 1920s and 1930s, under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the Turkish Republic. As a result, much military terminology in Afghanistan is in Turkish. Now Afghanistan’s soldiers are being trained in Turkish-established military academies. Turkish soldiers have made it a duty to demonstrate to the Afghans that they are not occupying forces in the country. In return, local Afghans have showed admiration for Turkish troops and are willing to cooperate and learn from them.

IRAQ: STABILIZATION AND REGIONAL REINTEGRATION

Turkey and the U.S. both aim to see a democratic, stable, and prosperous Iraq, which is reintegrated into the region and the international community. Both countries consult closely and frequently on issues related to Iraq. This close bilateral cooperation has been instrumental to many historic milestones in Iraq’s path towards durable peace and security. Turkey’s trade volume with Iraq has increased significantly as a result of the relative progress in Iraq’s security environment. In 2003, Turkey’s exports to Iraq were \$823 million. In 2011, this figure reached \$8.2 billion, making Iraq Turkey’s second largest export market. Nearly 80% of these exports went to the region administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

BALKANS: INTEGRATION WITHIN EUROPE AND EURO-ATLANTIC ALLIANCES

Turkey assumed the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP) from June 2009 to June 2010. As part of this leadership, Turkey developed high-level political dialogue with all Balkan countries and outlined an approach supporting economic integration of Balkan countries between themselves and among regional economic centers. Turkey formed the Group of Friends of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington D.C. as an informal forum to discuss challenging issues regarding reconciliation and integration as a normal and functioning member within Euro-Atlantic structures. Turkey played a stabilizing role and constructive role in the lead-up to the independence of Kosovo and was among the very first countries to recognize Kosovo’s independence. Turkey also hosts regular high-level meetings among Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia to reinforce regional peace and stability. Turkey continues to actively support the membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to NATO MAP (Membership Action Plan). Also, Turkey and the U.S. remain committed to Macedonia’s membership to NATO. Cooperation between Turkey and the U.S. continues to be one of the primary pillars of stability in the Balkans.