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Arestakes Simavoryan

► **To cite this version:**

Arestakes Simavoryan. Turkey's Military-Technical Cooperation With the Turkic Nations. SSRN Electronic Journal, 2019. hal-03431643

HAL Id: hal-03431643

<https://hal.science/hal-03431643>

Submitted on 23 Jun 2022

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Published online: 18 November 2019

Publisher: Orbeli Center

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.5730933

Source:https://orbeli.am/en/post/316/2019-11-18/Tur-key%E2%80%99s+Military-Technical+Cooperation+With+the+Turkic+Nations?__

Turkey's Military-Technical Cooperation With the Turkic Nations

Simavoryan Arestakes

The cooperation between Turkey and Turkic speaking states, such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan started immediately after the declaration of independence from the Soviet nations. Bilateral and multilateral relations in political, economic, cultural, educational and transport fields have been formulated from hundreds of agreements and protocols, which were the basis for the development and strengthening of ties.

Since 1993, Turkey has been closely cooperating with the Turkic speaking countries of the former Soviet Union in military and military-technical fields, such as: a) officer training, b) material and technical support, c) arms sales, d) joint exercises, and e) joint military production.

In the first stage of the cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic speaking states of Central Asia the aim was to develop ties in the field of military education. The agreements signed between Turkey and the four countries ([Kazakhstan](#), [Uzbekistan](#), [Turkmenistan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#)) in 1990s, envisaged to improve the following objectives:

1. Improvement of professional competence of military personnel (officers and sub-officers) in numerous military educational institutions of Turkey,
2. Mutual visits of servicemen,
3. Military observer's participation in military exercises,
4. Cooperation in the field of military technology, military medicine and military technology data exchange and consulting,
5. Cooperation in the field of military industry,
6. Mutual maintenance, supply and repair of surplus military equipment, as well as development of training plans for headquarter staff and for military support specialist.

In spite of the earlier agreements, the partnership relations entered into true force during the military education and military-technical joint projects from the beginning of the 2000s. According to the Turkish sources, about 2000 officers and sub-officers have received military education in Turkey within the framework of the agreements signed between 1992-

2000 (**Mustafa**, 2016). However, it is not specified, which country and how many military personnel were involved in the training process¹.

About 50 citizens of Turkey between 1993-2007, and about 100 citizens of Kyrgyzstan in 2014 received military education in Turkey. It is noteworthy that in 2019, Turkey allocated only two places for the servicemen of the Armed Forces for the Kyrgyz Republic for a 5 years term. Azerbaijan allocated the same amount of places for Kyrgyzstan. In 2015, A. Alymkozhoev, the former Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Kyrgyz Republic reached an agreement with Turkey. From 2016, Turkey would allocate more quotas for military training for Kyrgyzstan. In addition, military representatives of Kyrgyzstan in Turkey will start working in the NATO headquarters in Izmir. To add, the sides agreed to build a Military Institute for officers' training in Kyrgyzstan.

Other types of cooperation with the Turkic speaking countries till 2000 was the Ministry of Defense of Kyrgyzstan and Armed Forces of Turkey signing a protocol on the training of special operations units. Between 2000-2004, a total of 339 Kyrgyz serviceman received appropriate training (**Костюхин**, 2009). Turkish policemen also teach their Kyrgyz partners methods of combating crime by organizing seven-week-long training courses. These courses are for serviceman of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan and internal troops of border service. There is also a cooperation in military medicine, within the framework of which Turkey supported Kyrgyzstan with medical equipment and medicines besides training specialists (**Акматабекович**, 2018; 121).

Since 1993, Turkey also contributed to the education and training of Kazakh servicemen. According to the 2008 data, more than 300 Kazakh officers have graduated from the Military Academy of the Republic of Turkey. Since 2004, Turkish language courses were taught at the Military Institute of Foreign Languages next to the Defense Ministry of Kazakhstan. It's also known that medical courses were organized for Kazakh officers at Gülhane Military-Medical Academy, in Turkey. Turkish specialists also trained Kazakh battalion of Special Forces in military education centers of Kazakhstan. Under this program more than 400 Kazakhstani servicemen have been trained (**Shilibekova**, 2008).

Kazakhstani military personnel (as well as Special Forces of airborne troops) were trained under “Commandos”, “Special Forces”, “Sniper Training” and “Internal Security” programmes held by Turkish instructors, as well as participated in both bilateral and multinational military exercises.

¹ According to the data 2006, Turkish military staff trained 1299 military personnel in Turkmenistan, 426 in Uzbekistan, 401 in Kyrgyzstan and 383 in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has continuously received military support from Turkey, which was mostly implemented by the agreement on gratuitous military assistance signed between the two states in 1998 and in 2003². Turkey assisted in the building of the naval base at Aktau and in constructing the port at Yeraliyevo and also supplied communication equipment, particularly in terms of strengthening Kazakhstani Special Forces and naval capabilities. Turkey has also supplied Kazakhstani Special Forces with upgraded Land Rover 110 military vehicles (McDermott, 2012).

Kazakhstan and Turkey also have developed their relations in military industry. In 2013, the two countries established Kazakhstan ASELSAN Engineering joint venture company, the 50% of the shares belonging to the National Company “Kazakhstan Engineering”, 49% shares to the Turkish military-industrial company ASELSAN and 1% to the Turkish Undersecretariat for Defense Industries. The company is located at “Astana-new city” special economic zone area. Generally, the companies produce defense electro-optical products, laser intelligence devices, remote-controlled weapon systems, night vision and anti-drone devices, radio communication systems. They also modernize tanks (T-72A, T-72B), communication, location and other systems for Ми-17 helicopters. Some of the products are exported to Turkey, Russia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan³. In 2019, Turkey and Kazakhstan signed a military cooperation packed, envisaging events in the field of combat training, military intelligence, cyber security and in other fields.

Although the military cooperation between Turkey and Turkmenistan had begun since the beginning of the 1990s, it has only started to develop mostly over the last decade. In the defense policy of Ashgabat, the contact with Turkey was mainly carried out in the following two objectives: arms trade and general officers’ training. After declaring independence, Turkey supplied Turkmenistan with a limited amount of used military equipment, but since 2010, Turkey became the main supplier of weapons. Turkmenistan has purchased from Turkey military equipment of various significance over the last decade:

1. Military vehicles “Land Rover Defender 130” for cargo transportation and sanitation, purchased from Turkish Otokar company
2. BMC Vuran (4X4) multifunctional and BMC Amazon (4X4) armored fighting vehicles⁴.
3. Since 2010, Turkish «DEARSAN» shipbuilding company has sold to Turkmenistan’s naval and border forces “Tuzla” class 10 Patrol Boats, 6 attack motorboat, 5 “SAR”

² According to the [agreement](#) signed in 2003, Turkey was committed to funding all of the Kazakhstan's military participation in Partnership for Peace (PFP) program conducted by NATO.

³ ТОО «Казахстан Аселсан инжиниринг». <https://www.kae.com.kz/uploads/sections/7/20190527-kae-ru.pdf>

⁴ Турецкая компания ВМС поставила ВС Туркменистана БМ «Амазон» и «Вуран».

http://factmil.com/news/26_02_2018_tureckaja_kompanija_bmc_postavila_vs_turkmenistana_bbm_amazon_i_v_uran/2018-02-26-7722

reach and rescue boat. According to the [contract](#) signed with Turkmenistan in 2019, the Turkish companies Gülhan and Dearsan should build a 92-meter corvette in Turkmenbashi Port.

4. According to the [report published](#) by the ASELSAN military industrial company, Turkmenistan has purchased from Turkey DSH 10 systems and DSH 300 rockets in 2012, designed for a protection against submarines.

Turkey sold Turkmenistan military equipment and hardware amounting to \$396 mil between 2008-2017. Statistics show that for Turkey Turkmenistan is ahead of Saudi Arabia (\$333 mil.) and of the United Arab Emirates (\$300 mil.) as a trade partner. Let's note as a comparison, that only Kazakhstan has purchased from Turkey military equipment. Amounting to about \$7 mil. and out of the other Turkic speaking countries of Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are not on the list (**Baran**, 2018).

Uzbekistan-Turkey military relations also began around 1992, when the parties signed an [agreement](#) on cooperation in the field of military education. In 2000, they signed an [agreement](#) on military technical cooperation, according to which Turkey was expected to provide Uzbekistan with material-technical and financial support and deepen the ties in the fight against international terrorism. Several other agreements were signed on military cooperation: in 2002 (gratuitous military assistance amounted \$1,2 mil., provided by Turkey), in 2003 (training of specialists in the fight against terrorism), in 2017 (agreement on military education). Between 1992-2010, a total of 123 officers and 220 cadets received military education in Turkey, and 100 military personnel participated in courses organized by “[The Partnership for Peace Training Center](#)” .⁵

Between 2018-2019, Turkish specialists with the support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), organized practical trainings for Uzbekistan National Guard Association devoted to the [fight against terrorism, protection of special units and people](#). It's also worth mentioning about Uzbekistan-Turkey-Pakistan triple military exercises held at the “Forish” combined-arms mountain range, in April 22-27, which was held between the parties for the first time⁶.

Under the agreements signed between the parties, Turkey also donated military equipment and vehicles amounted about \$4,2 mil. to the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan (2010 data). Recently, Uzbekistan has not only begun to purchase Turkish military equipment, but also has tried to start a joint military production. In 2017, Turkish Nurol Makina and Uzbekistan's UzAuto companies signed a [memorandum](#) on producing military vehicles in

⁵ Özbekistan-Türkiye Askeri İlişkileri Gelişecek. <https://www.sondakika.com/dunya/haber-ozbekistan-turkiye-askeri-iliskileri-gelisecek/>

⁶ Türk ordusu büyük deneyim ve askeri hareket tecrübesine sahip. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/turk-ordusu-buyuk-deneyim-ve-askeri-harekat-tecrubesine-sahip/1461410>

total of 100, by the Ejder Yalçın 4 × 4 platform, in Uzbekistan. According to Engin Aykol, General Manager of Nurol Makina, Turkey sold Uzbekistan 24 military vehicles in 2018. After the tests, Nurol Makina chose an open turret armed with a 7,62 mm machine gun for the Uzbek Armed Forces⁷.

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⁷Турецкая компания Nurol Makina поставила ББМ "Эйдер Ялчин" ВС Узбекистана. https://vpk.name/news/311233_tureckaya_kompaniya_nurol_makina_postavila_bbm_eider_yalchin_vs_uzbekistana.html