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Turkish defense industry as a factor in its foreign policy strategy

Over the last few years, Turkish defense industry has made a tremendous progress, quickly pushing Ankara into the club of major arms exporters. Moreover, Turkiye managed to establish technological prominence in certain niches, most notably the production of UAVs: Bayraktar and Akinci became recognisable brands in the Middle East, post-Soviet countries and Eastern Europe. Most importantly, Turkiye successfully integrated arms exports into its foreign policy strategy. Turkish UAVs played a key role in Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day war, which opened new markets for Ankara's defense industry. Central Asian countries, Ukraine, a number of countries in the Middle East and Africa started to purchase Turkish weapons.

This paper will explore the role of Turkey's arms exports in its foreign policy strategy. It will show how Ankara converts them into bilateral bonds that contribute to its growing influence in the region and beyond. The author focuses on the impact of this policy on the spectacular revival of the idea of Turkic union, which for many years had mostly been on paper, and how it fits the post-Soviet countries'strategic goal of reducing their dependence on Russia, including the field of arms supply and defence capacity. The research will specifically look at the nexus between key decision makers and major arms producers which enables this coordinated development, and show what new foreign policy opportunities for Ankara it helps to unlock.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

Political science, foreign policy analysis

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?

No

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