
COVER FEATURE

Turkey in Transition: Modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces and the Role of the Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey

By

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THE PAST MEETS THE FUTURE

It has been a decade since the first feature article on Turkey was published in *The DISAM Journal*. Although a number of significant changes have taken place over the last ten years, some things never change. To paraphrase LTC C. H. Bernath, USA, the author of the 1985 article, Turkey today is still a country with warm, friendly people, surrounded by not-so-friendly neighbors, extremely vital to the best interests of NATO and the United States, and your best bet for a truly unique assignment.

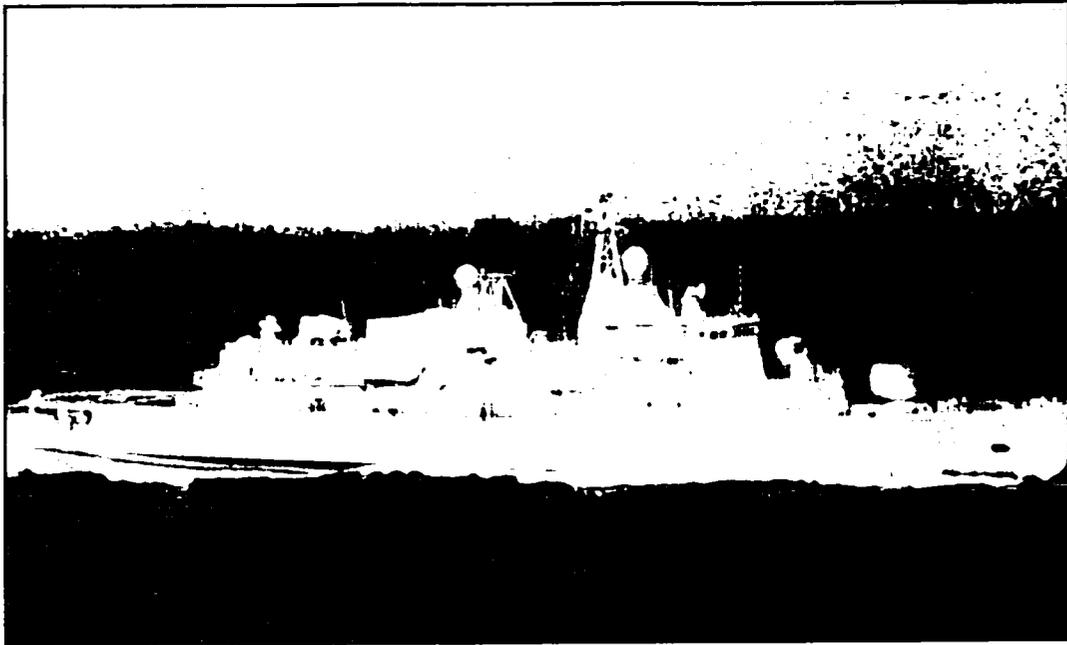
Turkey has been and continues to be in the midst of tremendous change in all aspects of Turkish society, including the military, economic, and political areas. The population of Ankara, the capital city and home of ODC Turkey, has grown from over one million to almost five million. Barren hills are now covered with high rise apartment buildings. There are numerous modern, Western-style supermarkets and department stores with all the comforts of the U.S. There are several clean, efficient private hospitals in Ankara with Western-trained doctors and state-of-the-art medical equipment. There is even a modern subway under construction which, when completed in 1997, will add a new dimension to Ankara's mass transit System.

MODERNIZATION IS THE KEY

A decade ago, Turkey embarked upon an intensive program to modernize its armed forces to bring them in line with emerging technologies and the requirements of NATO. Many of the programs which were inaugurated in 1985 have now come to fruition.

The Army Directorate's (ARD) tank modernization program started with the upgrade of the M48 tank to the ASTI and T2 configurations and progressed on to the upgrade of the M60 tank, acquired as excess defense articles (EDA) through the Southern Region Amendment (SRA, Sec. 516, FAA), from the A1 to A3 model. ARD is now looking to the future when it will assist the Turkish Land Forces Command (TLFC) in fielding the M1 main battle tank.

A long-standing project for the Navy Directorate (NAD) has been its daily involvement with the Turkish Naval Forces Command (TNFC) frigate program. It has seen the program start with the construction of MEKO 200 class frigates and progress on to the acquisition of Knox class frigates. And as you read this, NAD is currently working a program to transfer Perry class frigates to the Turkish Navy.



Turkish Navy MEKO 200 class frigate underway,
with U.S. supplied engineering and combat systems

In 1985, the major concern of the Air Force Directorate (AFD) was the start-up of the Turkish Air Force Command (TAFC) F-16 co-production/co-assembly program. Today this continues to be the most important program in the Turkish armed forces quest for modernization and it has proven to be most beneficial to building Turkey's military-industrial complex. By the end of this century, Turkey will have built almost 300 of the world's most advanced jet fighters.



Turkish F-16 Fighting Falcons

Just as the U.S. military is down-sizing and becoming a leaner fighting force, so too are the Turkish armed forces. Due to budgetary constraints, their efforts to modernize are tempered by pursuing only those programs which will truly increase combat capabilities and effectiveness. Therein lies the greatest challenge to ODC Turkey—we must support their modernization program by insisting that they plan ahead and buy smart to build an armed forces capable of meeting the requirements of the 21st Century.

One important step the Turkish government has taken in this regard is the creation of the Undersecretariat of Defense Industries (or SSM, to use the Turkish acronym). This organization comes under the Ministry of National Defense and is tasked with building a military-industrial complex and in entering into defense cooperation arrangements, like the F-16 co-production program. It is the initial point of entry for foreign defense contractors desiring to do business with Turkey.

ODC TURKEY

Many of the readers who have been in the security assistance (SA) world for a while may be asking, “who and what is ODC Turkey?” You may remember us better as JUSMMAT, Joint United States Military Mission for Aid to Turkey, which had been our name since 1958. We, too, have become a more modern and streamlined security assistance organization. In May 1994, JUSMMAT was renamed Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey, in keeping with our mission of helping the Turkish military to modernize, especially in areas of mutual concern regarding defense cooperative arrangements, such as co-development, coproduction, and co-assembly of defense systems.

Traditionally, security assistance in its many forms has been vital to the success of Turkey’s modernization. Over the years, Turkey has been one of the greatest recipients of U.S. grants and monies from the Economic Support Fund (ESF), Military Assistance Program (MAP) /Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP), and International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, as well as a valued user of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) process. Back in FY 1985, Turkey received \$700 million in FMS credits and MAP grants. For FY95, Turkey was allocated \$365 million in commercial rate loans; the era of credits and grants has come to an end. Turkey’s IMET allocation, which had been around \$3 million for several years, is now at \$1 million. As previously mentioned, this is our greatest challenge: how to make progress with less resources.

But this applies to all of us in the security assistance community. In 1985, we did the job with 74 military security assistance billets; today, our job has grown, but we do it with 52 military billets. Our major support base was Ankara Air Station, Balgat, just 3 miles from ODC Turkey. With the end of the Cold War and the drawdown of the U.S. military, our support base has closed and we have become more self-sufficient. But we continue to thrive; we have a DODDS school, a small commissary/exchange (COMEX), and exceptional community participation. As mentioned earlier, ODC Turkey does provide a unique opportunity to serve.

OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

At DISAM, students in the Overseas Course destined for service in security assistance organizations (SAOs) are told that there is much more to the job than purely security assistance operations. In the “real” world, this is certainly true. ODC Turkey personnel are involved in a myriad of activities: hosting/escorting all manner of official visitors, from high level delegations of the State and Defense Departments, to program management review (PMR) teams; explaining the requirements and limitations of the Turkish armed services to U.S. defense contractors; serving on the boards of the Embassy Recreation Association, the Turkish-American Association, and the DODDS school PTSA; and coaching youth sports teams.

The job of the Chief, ODC Turkey, is equally diverse. He wears three hats: SAO Chief, U.S. Defense Representative, and Country Representative. The role of the SAO Chief is self-explanatory: to manage/monitor the security assistance programs in effect in Turkey—FMS, FMFP, IMET, Direct Commercial Sales (DCS), International Cooperative Programs (ICP), and transfers of EDA under the SRA and the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) Treaty. As the U.S. Defense Representative in Turkey, the Chief is appointed by the Department of Defense as the single point of contact on all military matters affecting U.S. involvement in Turkey. This gives the Chief a role in Operation Provide Comfort, in that ODC Turkey handles specific in-country U.S. support roles and missions. The third hat worn is that of Country Representative. In this role, the Chief handles specifically delegated U. S.-Turkey agreements, such as the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) which sets forth the official status of the U.S. in Turkey as well as mutually agreed upon and supporting rights and obligations.

THE FUTURE

Although not always easy to predict, the future picture in Turkey is quite clear: continuation along the path to modernization. The political and military leadership of Turkey has made it abundantly clear that they place a high priority in ensuring that the Turkish armed forces remain completely capable and fully prepared to carry out its national defense missions, its NATO missions, and any future requests by the United Nations in its many peace-keeping roles. The job of ODC Turkey is to help them keep on this path.

The following series of articles gives a much better picture of just who we are and what we do, especially in our goal of helping Turkey modernize and prepare for the 21st Century. Although each article has a specific author or two, credit must be given to all of the men and women of ODC Turkey who contributed to the articles and who make it possible for us to successfully achieve our mission. This article is dedicated to them and to our Turkish hosts.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Major General Philip W. Nuber, USAF, is the last Chief, JUSMMAT, and the first Chief, ODC Turkey. He is a command pilot with over 4,200 flying hours and 300 combat missions. Prior to coming to Turkey in September 1992, he was the Director of International Programs, Air Force Headquarters, and Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, Air Force Secretariat.

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