

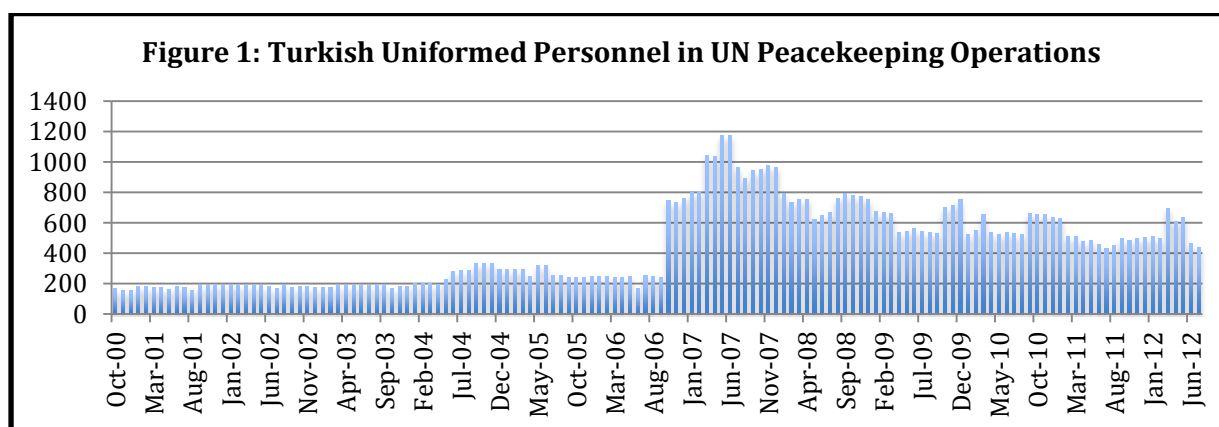
Contributor Profile: Turkey

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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
510,600 World Ranking (size): 9 Army: 402,000 (inc. 325,000 conscripts) Navy: 48,600 (inc. 2,200 Coast Guard; 3,100 Marines) Air Force: 60,000 Paramilitary: 102,200	Attack: 37 Multi-Role: 37 Transport: 237 (75 med; 162 light)	2010: \$10.0bn (1.36% of GDP) 2011: \$10.3bn (1.35% of GDP)	438 (8 women) (31 August 2012) Ranking: 37 th (4 th biggest NATO contributor)	MINUSTAH 28 police MONUSCO 7 police UNAMA 1 expert UNAMID 40 police UNIFIL 286 troops UNMIK: 2 (1 police, 1 expert) UNMIL 27 police UNMISS 18 police UNMIT 17 police UNOCI 12 police	ISAF: 1,840 Serbia: 357 Bosnia-Herzegovina: 288 Cyprus: 36,000
Defense spending / troop: US\$12,025 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000) ²					

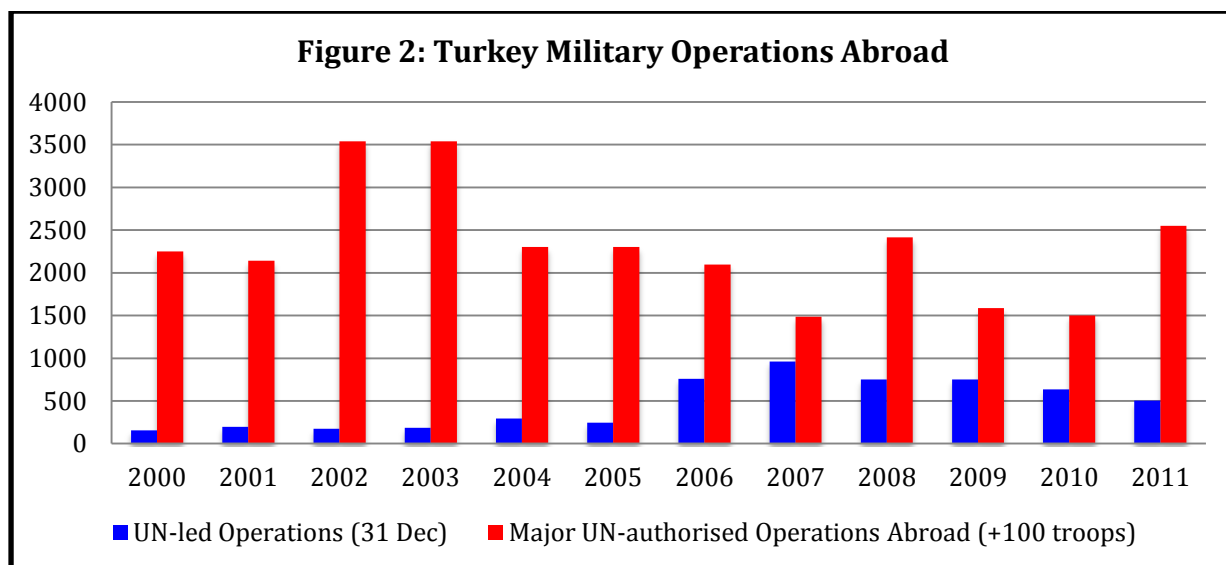
Part 1: Recent Trends

The number of Turkish uniformed personnel in UN-led peacekeeping operations surged in October 2006 with the expansion of UNIFIL in Lebanon (see figure 1). The Turkish mission was extended in June 2012 for the sixth time with 286 troops and contribution of a warship in the Maritime Task Force, which a Turkish admiral had commanded for six months. Apart from UNIFIL, Turkish participation in UN-led peacekeeping remained limited to token contributions in Haiti, East Timor and a few African states. In UN-led missions small Turkish police units are utilized while the Turkish military is actively involved in other non-UN-led operations such as NATO and the EU. The Turkish leadership believes that contributing to UN-led missions is prestigious and helps Turkey achieve its political goals as an emerging regional and global player.



While the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have been gradually downsizing, they have also become more capable and mobile in line with NATO obligations.³ Turkey gives priority to NATO missions, viewing them as more central to its strategic interests, though it also cooperates in other regional (EU, OSCE) and global (UN) peacekeeping operations. As Figure 2 shows, Turkey’s contributions to UN-authorized peace missions have been

significantly more extensive than its contributions to UN-led operations. This is mostly due to NATO operations such as SFOR II (later EUFOR II) in Bosnia, KFOR in Serbia and ISAF in Afghanistan. In 2006, Turkey reduced the number of its troops in EUFOR II and deployed troops to UNIFIL in Lebanon.



Turkey has relied exclusively on multilateral bodies to deal with the developments in Syria. A limited public debate on a possible intervention in Syria was inconclusive when UNSMIS was deployed in April 2012. Since then, the Turkish government has been criticized by the opposition for being too passive in its response to the crisis in Syria. The government responded by saying Turkey will not be an aggressive country and will take part in multilateral efforts to end the civil conflict in Syria.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

Turkish civil-military relations experienced significant transformation in the 2000s, in part because of Turkey's candidacy for EU membership. Until this recent (and ongoing) transformation, Turkey's peacekeeping decisions were dominated by the military despite the occasional presence of strong civilian governments after 1983. The 2000s saw firmer civilian control of the military and thus control over decisions on UN peacekeeping.

Two major documents determine Turkey's official UN peacekeeping policy. The first is the [1982 Constitution, Article 92](#) which rules that upon the UN's request for peacekeepers the National Security Council (NSC) will advise the government and the Council of Ministers will send the proposal to Parliament, which is responsible for the final decision to send troops. Consequently, the parliament discusses the proposal and specifies the number of troops that will be deployed, and sets other conditions to govern Turkey's contribution to that particular operation. On the other hand, Turkish police officers are contracted in UN and non-UN missions under Article 77 of Law No. 657.⁴

The second document is the *Concept on Turkey's Contribution to Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Operations*, which was issued by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan on 15 March 2005. This sets out principles to guide Turkish decision-making on peacekeeping. It insists that the peacekeeping operation in question have international legitimacy, which means that it should have authorization from the UN Security Council. It also emphasizes that the government should prioritize missions in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle

East. Moreover, NATO, EU, UN and OSCE missions are prioritized in that order (although Turkey's EU-relations have deteriorated somewhat of late). This document shows that UN peacekeeping is not a priority focus for Turkey, which values service in NATO and European Union missions more than UN peace operations. Finally, mission objectives must be clearly defined to enable the government to evaluate the costs and the benefits of deploying Turkish troops. A good example is the UNIFIL mission, which Turkey agreed to participate in only after receiving a guarantee that Turkish forces would not be required to engage in attempts to disarm Hezbollah.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Political Rationales: These have become the most important factors especially after the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) came to power in 2002. While Turkish foreign policy became more dynamic in the mid-1990s before the AKP's reign, the country could not steer clear of economic and political instability in the late 1990s, which constrained Turkey's aspirations for a more active foreign policy in the post-Cold War international environment. Turkey's flourishing economy after the 2001 economic crisis changed this. In the 2000s, Turkish foreign policy became more active, replacing a largely status quo-focused and security-driven policy. The foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu – whose political principles are laid out in his book, *Strategic Depth* (*Stratejik Derinlik*) – aims to make Turkey a major regional power in the Middle East and a global player in the world. Thus, a more proactive and multi-dimensional foreign policy requires Turkey's participation in UN and other peace operations to construct an emerging power identity. This rationale explains Turkey's rather large contribution to UNIFIL in 2006 as the Turkish prime minister has occasionally used Turkey's participation in UNIFIL as a sign of its growing soft power and a tool for increasing Turkey's visibility and prestige in the international arena.⁵ Still, UN peacekeeping is not a priority in Davutoğlu's vision; he prioritizes Turkey's active participation in NATO and EU missions, limiting participation in UN peace operations.

Turkey's election as a non-permanent UN Security Council member for 2009-10 was perhaps partly due to the perception of policymakers that its contributions to UN peacekeeping missions in Sudan and Lebanon would increase votes. Sending UN peacekeepers to Lebanon despite the concerns of opposition political parties and public opinion was intended to enhance the country's international prestige and fulfil political goals.

Ethnic and religious ties are also used to expand Turkey's sphere of political influence. Turkey's Muslim identity and its membership at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation are at times seen as assets by international organizations and Western countries for missions in countries such as Lebanon and Sudan. Consequently, the Turkish government tries to take advantage of this perception to pursue its political goals.

Economic Rationales: The explanatory power of economic rationales is weak in the Turkish case. Since UN reimbursements are given directly to the troops, Turkey does not use such payments to support its national budget. Turkey's financial contribution to UN peacekeeping operations has also significantly increased since 2006. The security sector does not depend on UN compensation either; the Turkish defense budget is relatively large and NATO resources have readily been used for modernization of the military. Individuals do benefit from UN peacekeeping deployments in the form of additional allowances. Economic factors are more significant in relation to policing, mainly due to the lower salaries allocated to police officers compared to military officers.

A caveat to the economic rationales may distinguish Turkey from other cases. The Turkish government perceives UN peacekeeping missions as useful instruments to strengthen trade relations with particular African states. Parliamentary documents, for instance, show that the continuation of Turkish contributions to MONUC/MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is directly connected to the goal of increasing trade relations with African countries.⁶

Security Rationales: A fear of the potential spillover effects of conflicts in its neighbourhood was a driving force for Turkey's involvement in the peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and the Middle East in the 1990s, and its extensive contribution to UNIFIL II in Lebanon since 2006. Nevertheless, NATO is considered a better partner for Turkey's security concerns in part because the UN is seen as less efficient due to the veto powers of the permanent five members of the Security Council.

Institutional Rationales: Peacekeeping decision-making was traditionally a military dominated area until the 2000s, when civilian control was established. One consequence of this shift has been a more active UN policy. While the military as a whole has typically not seen UN peacekeeping as a defense priority, some individual officers appreciate the experience they gain overseas in UN missions. Moreover, peacekeeping operations are deemed useful for building a body of experienced personnel for the ongoing counter-insurgency campaign against the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). Furthermore, the officers practice their language skills in UN missions, which is a rare opportunity for many who do not get a chance to go abroad through a NATO mission.

Normative Rationales: Yearning to be accepted as a Western/European state since 1923, in the 2000s Turkey cultivated a self-image as a peacekeeper and mediator between West and East (as part of its emerging global power role). Lately this image has become one of an emerging power. UN peacekeeping and the national prestige that it brings in the eyes of less developed countries is used to establish Turkey as a [central country](#) that assists less fortunate states in times of need.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Turkey could significantly increase its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations both in terms of quantity and quality. However, this seems rather unlikely in the near future. While the police force seems to be enthusiastic about contributing to UN peace missions, the military is less so. There are political and operational constraints that present serious limitations to Turkey's contribution to UN peacekeeping.

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: The Turkish military prefers to work through NATO since it deems this alliance more important for Turkey's security than the UN. Moreover, NATO missions are perceived to be more professional and efficient. Souring relations with the EU in the last few years has made the UN relatively more attractive for Turkey to work through in order to realize its foreign policy goals of becoming a regional hegemon and a global player.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: UN peacekeeping is not a strategic priority for Turkey. The fight against domestic terrorism is the overriding priority for the TAF and has been for several decades. This perception plays a powerful role in limiting the TAF's willingness to commit more troops to UN peacekeeping operations in the near future. As a result, its police forces are more active than the TAF in UN peacekeeping.

Financial costs: Not an important factor.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: There is no significant public debate on this as the Turkish government, military and people have always supported international missions abroad as long as they do not generate many Turkish casualties. Turkish participation in UNIFIL was an issue for a while given domestic concerns that the mission would strengthen Israel's hand; however, the public debate waned soon after the troops were deployed. This is mostly due to the nature of civil-military relations in Turkey. The Turkish public is quite supportive of the military; consequently, once troops are deployed in a mission, Turkish people are unlikely to support any cause that may detract from the morale of the troops.

Exceptionalism: Turkey is perceived as a rising power by its policymakers and peacekeeping is seen as a vehicle for advancing Turkish regional and global interests in the political and economic domains. Consequently, Turkey picks NATO missions over UN missions since the former is deemed more effective. In other words, the international organizations that are deemed more useful to pursue political goals gain priority over others. Moreover, due to the AKP's Islamist-conservative background, peacekeeping missions to Muslim countries are portrayed as a unique responsibility and are prioritized over others (i.e. Bosnia, Kosovo, Sudan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan).

Absence of pressure to contribute: Turkey has often been pressured by the United States to take part in NATO missions such as ISAF in Afghanistan. Similarly, the U.S. was keen on Turkey's participation in UNIFIL as well, which might be the reason why Turkey contributed heavily to that mission in 2006 and kept extending its troop deployment despite a decline in the number of troops.

Difficult domestic politics: The AKP has been in government since 2002. The rather weak opposition parties, especially nationalist ones such as the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) are critical of participation in peacekeeping operations, arguing that they are a distraction from the struggle against the PKK. It is therefore quite difficult to build a consensus about UN missions, although the AKP has been very good at either justifying the mission (Sudan) or passing legislation despite objections (Lebanon).

Damage to national reputation: No perceptible impact.

Resistance in the Military: Turkish military officers sent to UN missions are not efficiently utilized once they return from their tours. In particular, the TAF does not fully assess the value of UN missions and the experience that its officers gain in these missions. In line with the perception held by the country's leaders, NATO and EU missions are deemed more important. Thus, some military officers see UN tours as a waste of their time because they do not improve their career paths. Nevertheless, the officers see some value in developing their language skills through UN missions, which is only a minor motivation compared to potential benefits such as salary raises and promotions.

Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines: Not applicable to Turkey.

Legal obstacles: Not applicable to Turkey.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

NATO and EU peace missions are the key reasons why Turkey does not engage in more UN peacekeeping efforts. This has stretched Turkey's forces thin considering its internal problems, which also require considerable numbers of troops. In particular, the last six months has seen a major escalation in the counter-insurgency effort against the PKK. Prime Minister Erdoğan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu are in favor of deploying troops to UN peace missions. However, the opposition parties, especially the Nationalist Action Party, are against sending troops to peace missions abroad unless national interests are significantly at stake. The General Staff officially [states](#) that it supports all peacekeeping missions; however, the military clearly prioritizes NATO operations over UN missions. Since the Turkish public has low tolerance of human losses in peacekeeping operations abroad, the government is at times limited by the opposition and public opinion.⁷ Still, the public debate and the opposition hardly change the government's key foreign policy decisions including peacekeeping.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There is limited public debate on UN peacekeeping in Turkey. None of the main Turkish think tanks on international affairs – [Centre for Strategic Studies \(SAM\)](#), [Centre for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies \(ORSAM\)](#), [Wise Men Centre for Strategic Studies \(BILGESAM\)](#) – have programs on peacekeeping issues. The opposition of major political parties such as the MHP or columnists in newspapers is hardly consequential in affecting peacekeeping decisions. With its majority in the parliament and as a one-party government, the AKP is decisive in peacekeeping policymaking. With its recent control of the military, the government is able to easily pass decisions through parliament. Moreover, the [International Relations department](#) of the Turkish National Police force headed by Fatih İnalcaç is very motivated to serve in UN peace missions.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The Turkish military includes a large conscripted body of soldiers who are well equipped and trained. Thus, capability is less of an issue than how UN peacekeeping is politically perceived and utilized as a tool to advance Turkish national interests. Turkey's consistent but rather limited contributions to UN peacekeeping operations show that there is political will to participate. Turkey also has significant potential to contribute more to UN missions with its large military and police base and its growing economy.

One significant caveat is that the Turkish military prefers low risk UN peacekeeping missions. There is little tolerance for casualties in the Turkish public as more than 30,000 people have died since 1984 in the struggle against the PKK. As long as this remains a significant domestic issue in Turkey, the security forces will see it as their priority. Another caveat is that the Turkish government often agrees to participate in UN missions under certain conditions i.e. parliament ratified the UNIFIL operation under the condition that Turkish security forces would not be deployed in active combat areas and would not help Israel by participating in disarmament of Hezbollah.

Part 8: Further Reading

- H. Bağcı & Ş. Kardaş, "Exploring Turkey's Role in Peace Operations" in Foreign Policy Institute (FPI) (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in International Politics* (Ankara: FPI, 2004).
- A. Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Status] (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2010), pp.45-65.

- G.E. Gruen, "Turkey's Role in Peacekeeping Missions," *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 28:6 (2006), pp.435-49.
- U. Güngör, *Why States Contribute to Peace Operations: Motivations Behind Turkey's Involvement* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011).
- U. Güngör, "Türk Dış Politikası ve Barışı Koruma" [Turkish Foreign Policy and Peacekeeping] in Y. Demirağ and Ö. Çelebi (eds.), *Türk Dış Politikasının Son On Yılı* (Ankara: Palme Yayınları, 2011).
- T. Wheeler, "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005," *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 18:1 (2011), pp.43-62.

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/ Routledge, 2012).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Using figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012*.

³ See IISS, *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/ Routledge, 2012).

⁴ See official website of the [Turkish National Police](#).

⁵ 'Türk askerinin görev süresi uzatıldı' [Term of office extended for Turkish soldiers], *Bugün*, 9 July 2011.

⁶ [Genel Kurul Tutanağı, 22. Dönem 4. Yasama Yılı 120. Birleşim 27 Haziran 2006 Salı](#) [General Assembly Minutes, 22nd Period, 4th. Legislative Year, 120th Convention, 27 June 2006].

⁷ [To date](#), 14 Turkish personnel have been killed in ISAF.