



Turkey's Security Cooperation in Central Asia

OE Watch Commentary: The governments of Central Asia still consider Russia to be an important security cooperation partner even as China has increased its security cooperation with the region in recent years. While other security cooperation partnerships in the region do not receive as much attention, the accompanying excerpted articles report on a few of Turkey's recent efforts in the region and there are a couple of things worth noting.

The article from *Kloop*, a Russian-language independent news website in Kyrgyzstan, reports that in early November "Kyrgyzstan received military vehicles, medical equipment and mountain gear" from Turkey. Kyrgyzstan's General Staff mentioned in the article how "the first batch of military-technical equipment was delivered from Turkey to Kyrgyzstan in September of this year under an agreement on military-financial cooperation between the two governments." The Kyrgyz General Staff posted on social media that the equipment included a couple of fuel tankers and various field gear.

The article from *Eurasia Daily*, a Russian-language website based in Russia covering news on the region, reports on how the "Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited Tashkent and Nur-Sultan" and talked with the two governments about "prospects for military and military-technical cooperation." The article notes how the Turkish defense minister "met with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev" and "his Kazakh counterpart Nurlan Yermekbayev." While Turkey's meeting with Uzbekistan included the "status and prospects of military and military-technical cooperation," the meeting with the Kazakh defense minister noted that cooperation would involve "training and military education, combat training and participating in exercises." This appears to be similar to past security cooperation between Kazakhstan and Turkey, but cooperation with Uzbekistan could pave new ground. Overall, Turkey's security cooperation offers the governments in the region an alternative partner, including another source of some equipment, but it remains to be seen how far Central Asian states will take it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**



Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hulusi_Akar_\(cropped,_2019\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hulusi_Akar_(cropped,_2019).jpg), Public domain

“Against the background of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited Tashkent and Nur-Sultan and discussed the “prospects for military and military-technical cooperation.”

Source: “Кыргызстан получил от Турции военную технику и снаряжение (Kyrgyzstan received military equipment and gear from Turkey),” *Kloop*, 4 November 2020. <https://kloop.kg/blog/2020/11/04/kyrgyzstan-poluchil-ot-turtsii-voennuyu-tehniku-i-snaryazhenie/>

...Kyrgyzstan received military vehicles, medical equipment and mountain gear. The Turkish Ambassador Cengiz Kamil Firat and the Head of the General Staff Taalaibek Omuraliev participated in the ceremony...

The General Staff added that the first batch of military-technical equipment was delivered from Turkey to Kyrgyzstan in September of this year under an agreement on military-financial cooperation between the two governments.

Source: “Министр обороны Турции обсудил сотрудничество с Узбекистаном и Казахстаном (The defense minister of Turkey discussed cooperation with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan),” *Eurasia Daily*, 28 October 2020. <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2020/10/28/ministr-oborony-turcii-obsudil-sotrudnichestvo-s-uzbekistanom-i-kazahstanom>

Against the background of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, the Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited Tashkent and Nur-Sultan and discussed the “prospects for military and military-technical cooperation.”

...on 27 October, Akar met with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent... According to the press service of the President of Uzbekistan, the two sides looked at the “status and prospects of military and military-technical cooperation” and also discussed “joint actions against modern challenges and threats to security in the region.”

The day prior, the head of the Turkish defense ministry visited Nur-Sultan, where he met his Kazakh counterpart Nurlan Yermekbayev. They also talked about “regional security, military and military-technical cooperation, including training and military education, combat training and participating in exercises.”