



Ukraine to Buy Combat Drones from Turkey

OE Watch Commentary: In mid-January, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announced over a tweet that his government had signed a deal to purchase a dozen Turkish combat drones (the Bayraktar TB2- a medium altitude and long-range tactical UAV system) for \$69 million. The drones are expected to be delivered within a year, and will come with ground control stations and equipment. Given Ukraine's problems with Russia, and Turkey's status as the second largest army in NATO, the deal is significant in many ways. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss its significance.

The first accompanying passage is by Burak Çalışkan, an expert on the Black Sea region. Çalışkan discusses how with this deal, Ukraine becomes the second country (after Qatar) to procure the Turkish combat drones. The deal signals growing bilateral defense cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine, and comes after a previous purchase for Turkish communication systems for the Ukrainian Army and National Police. The passage also notes that the deal brings the Ukrainian military closer to NATO standards in its drone technology. The passage discusses that Turkey-Ukraine military cooperation took off after 2014, when the two countries agreed to cooperate on warplanes, missile systems, UAVs, radar production, armored tanks, and research in space. Since then, cooperation in these areas has developed and culminated in the July 2018 meeting of "Turkey-Ukraine Defense Industry Cooperation" during which a number of important deals were signed. This is the background upon which the current drone deal is taking place.

The passage also highlights that the deal is a result of both countries' problems with Russia. It notes that Russia's involvement in the Syrian crisis as of 2015 led to problems in the Turkey-Russia relationship. The author suggests that while the two countries are now working together to bring a resolution to the Syrian crisis, "the fact remains that the two countries have disagreements and conflicts of interest in the Caucasus, Middle East and the Black Sea. In this framework, considering that Turkey and Ukraine are the south and north corners of the Black Sea, the geopolitical importance of the Ankara-Kiev relationship becomes more clear." The author points out that Russia now has influence and presence in Turkey's southern border (due to its presence in Syria) and that this poses a threat to Turkey. He argues that Turkey's defense cooperation with Ukraine has the potential to balance this threat and reduce Russia's ability to maneuver in the region.

The second and third passages discuss some of the technical aspects of the drone system. They point out that the Bayraktar TB2 UAV operates as a platform for aerial intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition, with the ability to simultaneously deliver information to operation centers. The second passage, which is from the producer's own website, notes that the Bayraktar TB2 has a flight control system that allows autonomous taxi, take-off, navigation, landing and parking operations without assistance from any external sensor, or reliance on GPS systems. This is a particularly useful feature given the ongoing advances in technologies that can jam GPS signals, such as Russian Electronic Warfare (EW) systems. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: Burak Çalışkan, "Türkiye ve Ukrayna İlişkilerinde Savunma Sanayii İşbirliği (Defense Industry Cooperation in Turkey-Ukraine Relations)," *Dunyabulteni.net*, 15 January 2019. <https://www.dunyabulteni.net/analiz/turkiye-ve-ukrayna-iliskilerinde-savunma-sanayii-isbirligi-burak-h436332.html>

The rapidly developing relations between Ankara and Kiev in the last few years, has become apparent in the defense industry too. In fact, in the last few days, the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko declared over social media that Ukraine has signed a deal with Turkey to procure the Bayraktar TB2 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), produced by Baykar.

Per the agreement, Baykar will produce 6 Bayraktar TB2 UAVs within a year, and deliver them to the Ukrainian Army. In addition, they will deliver three ground control station systems to Ukraine. It is being reported that Ukraine has made this decision over a 3-year period, becoming the second country (after Qatar), to prefer the Bayraktar TB2. Ukrainian delegations that attended the test flights for Bayraktar TB2, say they were impressed with its combat success and flight performance.

It is also noteworthy that Poroshenko noted that he came to the agreement with Turkish President Erdogan, and that it is part of an effort to equip the Ukrainian military with NATO-standard modern equipment and weapons. Following the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea, Ukraine had stepped up efforts to strengthen its military against its strong neighbor. At this point, Turkey-- with the second largest army in NATO and as a littoral state to the Black Sea-- had come up as an important actor.

Ankara and Kiev had agreed in 2014 to pursue a number of joint projects in the defense industry. They signed agreements to co-produce warplanes, missile systems, UAVs, radars, armored tanks, and work together in navigation and space projects...

In July 2018, Turkey and Ukraine conducted the First Turkey-Ukraine Defense Industry Cooperation meeting, to accelerate defense cooperation. This resulted in a cooperation agreement between Ukrainian Ukrobonoprom and Turkish Aselsan, whereby Aselsan would provide the Ukrainian army with high tech wireless communication systems...

It can be said that the development of Turkey-Ukraine relations are a product of both countries' problems with Russia. In particular, Russia's engagement into the Syrian crisis in 2015 and its initiatives which concern Turkey, had been a problem for Turkey for a long time...

Despite the fact that Turkey and Russia are now in a normalization phase and are working together in Syria, the fact remains that the two countries have disagreements and conflicts of interest in the Caucasus, Middle East and the Black Sea. In this framework, considering that Turkey and Ukraine are the south and north corners of the Black Sea, the geopolitical importance of the Ankara-Kiev relationship becomes more clear. Regardless of how much Turkey and Russia have to cooperate within certain areas in Syria, Russia's influence in southern Turkey (via its presence in Syria) can become a threat to Turkey for many years to come. As such, a strategic partnership that Turkey will develop with Ukraine, has the potential to break the threat that Russia poses for Turkey (via its influence on Damascus) and reduce Russia's ability to maneuver in the region.

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Continued: Ukraine to Buy Combat Drones from Turkey

“...Turkey-Ukraine relations are a product of both countries’ problems with Russia. Despite the fact that Turkey and Russia are now... working together in Syria, the fact remains that the two countries have disagreements and conflicts of interest in the Caucasus, Middle East and the Black Sea. In this framework, considering that Turkey and Ukraine are the south and north corners of the Black Sea, the geopolitical importance of the Ankara-Kiev relationship becomes more clear.”

Source: “Bayraktar Tactical UAS,” Bayraktarmakina.com, Undated. <http://baykarmakina.com/en/sistemler-2/bayraktar-taktik-ihha/#1458637130929-195f09d3-ff5a>

Bayraktar Tactical UAS is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance class system developed for tactical reconnaissance and surveillance missions. Prototype Development Phase started within 2007 based on a competition model. Bayraktar Tactical UAS, with its critical all subsystems including Flight Control, INS-GPS, Automatic Take Off-Landing systems [was] developed in house [and] demonstrated fully automatic taxi, take off, landing and parking phases in 2009...

Source: ““Son dakika: Anlaşma imzalandı! Ukrayna, Türkiye’den İHA alacak (Breaking news: Deal signed! Ukraine will buy UAVs from Turkey),” Hurriyet.com.tr, 12 January 2019. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/dunya/son-dakika-anlasma-imzalandi-turkiye-ukraynaya-ihha-satacak-41081039>

The Bayraktar TB2 UAV system attracts attention as the world’s most advanced UAV system in its class, with its electronic, software, aerodynamic, design and systems. The Bayraktar TB2 can conduct aerial intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and intelligence flights, with the ability to simultaneously deliver information to operation centers. It also has a the capability to attack targets with its own equipment. The Bayraktar TB2 UAV system can also conduct laser targeting for friendly war planes.



Bayraktar TB2 Runway.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bayraktar_TB2_Runway.jpg, by Bayhaluk [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.