

I. Addressing New Security Challenges to the Readiness Action Plan

As one of the first members of NATO, with membership dating to 1952, Turkey has always been a staunch, contributing member of the alliance. During the Cold War, Turkey had the longest land border of any alliance member with the USSR, and constituted the bulwark of the West against Soviet expansionism in the Middle East, along NATO's South-eastern flank. As such, Turkey has expressed the position that NATO must present a vigorous, unified front against external aggression, whether it comes in the form of state or non-state actors, and supports the expansion of the alliance in the Baltic and Balkan regions. Turkey is deeply alarmed by the aggressive, expansionist, destabilising actions taken by the Russian Federation since the dissolution of the USSR in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and while still emphasising the constructive potential of NATO-Russian partnership, must register its strong disapproval of such actions. Turkey reiterates General Assembly Resolution 68/262¹, and the Wales Summit Declaration of 2014², to which Turkey was a party, that Russia's actions in military intervention in Ukraine is contrary to international law, that the 2013 annexation of Crimea was illegal and is illegitimate, and that Russia's actions in Ukraine furthermore have engendered a humanitarian crisis. In addition, Russia's disregard for international law vis-à-vis Georgia and the Republic of Moldova is deeply concerning. Consequently, Turkey reiterates its previous statements, and those of its allies, that Russia must withdraw from Ukraine, cease its support for the separatists in the Donbass region, and cease to act in a manner inconsistent with international law and Russia's international obligations. Turkey therefore advocates a series of adjustments to the Readiness Action Plan for the purpose of countering Russian aggression, both potential and actual. First, Turkey recognises the apprehension with which Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia view Russia's actions in Ukraine, given their ethnic Russian populations, their close geographical proximity to Russia, and the history of Russian aggression against them, especially in the form of the USSR's 1940 annexation of these states. Therefore, Turkey advises that the NATO Response Force (NRF) be expanded to account for potential threats in the Baltic region. Turkey recommends that a sub-unit of the NRF be established with the specific purpose of the protection of NATO members in the Baltic region. Such a unit would be primarily composed of air and naval forces contributed on a voluntary basis and based at appropriate facilities of a NATO member state on the Baltic littoral; Non-NATO states such as Sweden and Finland would be encouraged, if willing, to act in a partnership role as regards this force. Air forces would perform routine air policing, and would be called on in case of aggression. Naval forces, especially submarines, would be employed likewise. In a similar manner, Turkey recommends that another, analogous sub-unit be established in the Black Sea. Russia has acted aggressively in several states bordering or near the Black Sea, especially in Ukraine and in Georgia. Turkey recommends that another naval and air sub-unit of the NRF be formed and deployed in the Black Sea; in this case, Turkey would be willing to host such a force at its own facilities. Non-States in the area would, in the same way, be encouraged to act in a partnership role with this Black Sea Force. More generally, Turkey views with alarm the

1: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/262

2: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

dramatic rise in number of violations of NATO member states' air space committed by Russian Air Force aircraft. Turkey condemns these violations, and therefore recommends that NATO members together establish a more unified, organised framework for the air policing of Europe and North America, in response to the alarming increase in Russian Air Force incursions. Finally, Turkey views with approval Montenegro's process of accession to NATO, which has now proceeded to final accession talks, and encourages other states in the Balkans and Baltic to consider applying for accession to NATO.

Turkey views with the highest degree of alarm the humanitarian crisis which has been created by the ongoing Civil War in Syria, and the rise in terrorist attacks against NATO member states in recent years. In this light, Turkey views as an imperative that the RAP and the NRF be diversified to have the capability of responding to non-state threats and crises. A third sub-unit of the RAP should, in Turkey's view, be established to respond to such non-state threats. This unit would not necessarily consist of a military formation, but rather would take the form of an agency which would coordinate preventative steps against non-state threats and, should they occur, NATO responses to such crises. In times of major humanitarian crisis, creation of temporary military formations for the purposes of humanitarian relief could be decided upon by the North Atlantic Council as appropriate. In preventing humanitarian and terrorism-induced crises, it is especially imperative that there exist easily accessible channels for coordination and liaison between individual national police forces and intelligence agencies, and establishing an RAP agency for this purpose would render preventing and responding to non-state crises and threats far more efficient and effective. Turkey believes that these additions constitute the most pressing, needed revisions to the RAP. It is the position of Turkey that while certain supplements to the RAP should be enacted to increase NATO's readiness to respond to potential Russian aggression, it is even more imperative that the RAP be expanded to encompass an additional dimension of agency to respond to non-state threats and humanitarian crises.

II. Exploring the Gender Gap Within the Armed Forces

Turkey has always prided itself on its commitment to women's rights, which dates to the foundation of the Republic by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk; the first President of the Republic carried out a series of reforms designed to afford women equal rights and opportunities. However, Turkey takes a more moderate position as regards the role of women in the armed forces. Turkey permits women to serve in its armed forces as officers in any branch of the armed forces except infantry, armour, and the submarine branch of the Navy. Turkey endorses the efforts taken by NATO and the EAPC to implement UN Security Council Resolutions concerning the role of women in the armed forces and especially in conflict resolution processes and negotiations. Turkey endorses fully UN Security Council Resolution 1325's statements³ concerning the need to include women in all levels of decision-making in institutions for the prevention and resolution of armed conflict, Resolution 1820⁴, especially its clauses urging female participation in peace processes, and Resolution 1889's similar passages⁵. While Turkey does not support the inclusion of women at all levels of the armed forces in combat roles, it does acknowledge the capability of women to serve as fully competent and effective officers, and consequently supports the inclusion of women in the armed forces in such a manner. Turkey also fully and enthusiastically promotes the active

3: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>

4: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201820.pdf>

5: <http://womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-scr1889.pdf>

6: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_04/20150414_20120808_NU_Bi-SCD_40-11.pdf

participation of women in peace processes, and in non-combat roles in the armed forces; as articulated in NATO Bi-Strategic Command Directive 40-1⁶, modern conflicts require military forces to possess more effective, more extensive public relations, situational awareness, and intelligence gathering capabilities, which would be enhanced by the participation of women. Thus, it is the position of Turkey to support the inclusion of women in nearly all aspects of the armed forces and peace processes, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions and the expressed policies of NATO.

1: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/262
2: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm