

TURKEY

Historical Background:

Modern Turkey was founded in 1923 from the Anatolian remnants of the defeated Ottoman Empire by national hero Mustafa KEMAL, who was later honored with the title Atatürk or "Father of the Turks." Under his leadership, the country adopted wide-ranging social, legal, and political reforms. After a period of one-party rule, an experiment with multi-party politics led to the 1950 election victory of the opposition Democratic Party and the peaceful transfer of power. Since then, Turkish political parties have multiplied, but democracy has been fractured by periods of instability and intermittent military coups (1960, 1971, 1980), which in each case eventually resulted in a return of political power to civilians. In 1997, the military again helped engineer the ouster - popularly dubbed a "post-modern coup" - of the then Islamic-oriented government. A separatist insurgency begun in 1984 by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - now known as the Kurdistan People's Congress or Kongra-Gel (KGK) - has dominated the Turkish military's attention and claimed more than 30,000 lives. In 2013, KGK and the Turkish Government agreed to a ceasefire that continues despite slow progress in ongoing peace talks. Turkey joined the UN in 1945 and in 1952 it became a member of NATO. In 1964, Turkey became an associate member of the European Community. Over the past decade, it has undertaken many reforms to strengthen its democracy and economy; it began accession membership talks with the European Union in 2005.

Turkey-NATO Relations:

Ever since it became a NATO member in 1952, the North Atlantic Alliance has played a central role in Turkey's security and contributed to its integration with the Euro-Atlantic community. Turkey, in return, has successfully assumed its responsibilities in defending the common values of the Alliance. Turkey attaches the utmost importance to NATO's role in maintaining security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in providing a forum for political-military consultations on topics of interest to its members.

Turkey supports NATO's transformation efforts, which are crucial for NATO's success. It is therefore making substantial contributions to the NATO Response Force. A Force Command at high readiness level is established in Istanbul. Within the new NATO command structure, the air command in Izmir was replaced by a land command. The "Partnership for Peace Training Center" was created in 1998 within the Turkish General Staff in an effort to contribute to the training and interoperability efforts of NATO's partner nations. The Center provides strategic and tactical level training to military and civilian personnel from partner countries.

Turkey welcomes the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU in accordance with the agreed framework between the two organizations. Turkey's approach to NATO-EU cooperation is a natural result of its NATO membership and EU membership perspective.

Turkey also strongly supports NATO's partnerships. Turkey also believes that a constructive relationship based on mutual understanding, transparency and cooperation between NATO and Russia is important for Euro-Atlantic peace and stability and that the NATO-Russia Council provides the necessary forum for such a relationship.

