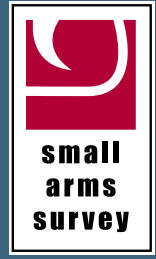


Briefing Paper

November 2024



Security Assessment
in North Africa



TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY IN LIBYA

Geopolitical Interests and Fragile Peace

Buğra Süsler



Credits and contributors

Series editor:

Matthew Johnson

Production and communications coordinators:

Olivia Denonville and Katie Lazaro

Fact-checker:

Darine Atwa

Copy-editor:

Erin J. Brewer

Design and layout:

Rick Jones

Proofreader:

Stephanie Huitson

Cartography:

Jillian Luff, MAPgrafix

The Small Arms Survey takes no position regarding the status, names, or borders of countries or territories mentioned in this publication.

About the author

Dr Buğra Süsler is an associate professor in International Relations and programme director of Global Governance and Ethics at University College London's Department of Political Science. He is also the head of the Turkey and the World programme at LSE IDEAS, the foreign policy think-tank of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). His research focuses on international conflict, foreign policy analysis, and emerging powers. He holds a PhD in International Relations and an MSc in Politics and Government in the European Union (EU) from LSE, and a BSc in Politics from the University of Bristol. He is the author of *Turkey, the EU, and the Middle East: Foreign Policy Cooperation and the Arab Uprisings* (2020).

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Belgin San-Akca, Emadeddin Badi, Matthew Johnson, and Doaa' Elnakhala for their constructive feedback on earlier drafts of this paper and Darine Atwa for her comments in the initial stages.

Front cover photo

Libyan military graduates loyal to the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) take part in a parade marking their graduation, a result of a military training agreement with Türkiye, in Tajoura, November 2020. Source: Mahmud Turkia/AFP

Overview

This Briefing Paper examines Türkiye's strategy in Libya, focusing on Ankara's objectives in the country and the wider region, and its foreign policy instruments, including its military engagement. Libya's troubled and divided political landscape makes peace among its actors fragile, with political uncertainty and the risk of violent escalation rendering the region one of the most volatile in the world. Türkiye has been one of these actors, seeking influence through various interventions. The paper shows that Türkiye's policy reflects geopolitical and domestic drivers, as well as overall trends towards a more muscular approach in Ankara's foreign policy formulation. It also provides insights into Türkiye's role in Libya, contributing to the broader understanding of the political stalemate in the country.

Key findings

- There are three key drivers of Türkiye's engagement with Libya:
 - economic—particularly re-securing previous deals between Turkish businesses and the government of Libya;
 - geopolitical—as a counterbalance to the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, among others; and
 - the ruling government's Justice and Development Party (AKP) policy preferences in the wider region—shoring up domestic political support with a more muscular foreign policy, including direct sales of military equipment.
- Turkish efforts directly influenced the direction of the conflict in line with its preferences. Turkish military equipment and expertise allowed the UN-recognized, Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) to successfully counter General Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan Arab Armed Forces' (LAAF) campaign to capture Tripoli in 2020.
- Ankara has continued to back the Tripoli government, and that support was instrumental in allowing Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dabaiba and his Government of National Unity (GNU) to maintain power.
- Türkiye has increased engagement with Libya's eastern actors to secure its geopolitical and economic interests in the east of the country. Ankara is positioning itself as a bridge-builder between the eastern and western factions in Libya, seeking a central role as a mediator between the two.

Introduction

Libya has been in turmoil since the toppling of its long-term leader, Muammar Qaddafi, following the mass uprising in Libya in February 2011, which was part of the wider wave of protests and revolts in the Middle East and North Africa known as the 'Arab Spring'. The power vacuum in the aftermath of the uprising eventually led to an internationalized civil war where foreign actors provided support in the form of money, weapons, and boots on the ground for opposing sides of the conflict. This support turned Libya into a battleground for geopolitical rivalries and competition for influence.¹ The political uncertainty that persists today makes peace among Libya's actors fragile, and the risk of violent escalation makes the region one of the most volatile in the world.

The preferences and aims of international stakeholders who have actively sought to shape the outcome of the conflict require close examination to explain conflict dynamics fully. Türkiye has been one of the actors involved in the conflict and has impacted conflict dynamics through its various interventions. Ankara's military involvement has attracted wide international attention on the strategies and goals the Turkish government has pursued in Libya and the broader region.²

This Briefing Paper examines Turkish foreign policy in Libya. The paper begins by establishing the political rationale behind Ankara's Libya policy, identifying key foreign policy drivers, and examining the role of Libya in Ankara's foreign policy formulations in the wider region. It then investigates Türkiye's involvement in the Libyan conflict, identifying ways in which Ankara engaged with Libyan actors and with a particular focus on Turkish military engagement, as well as international reactions. The paper concludes by highlighting the potential future trajectory regarding Ankara's policies in Libya and reiterates the significance of dialogue and national reconciliation efforts towards sustainable peace in the country.

It draws on extensive document analysis and desk research, including a review of relevant literature, news articles, and other written sources. Interviews with key political and government figures further inform the paper.

Türkiye's policy in Libya: key drivers and actors

Historically, Libya has been strategically important for Turkish influence in the

Mediterranean and North Africa. Most notably, the Ottoman Turks expanded their dominance in North Africa in the 16th century by establishing the Eyalet of Tripolitania,³ which encompasses today's Tripoli region. Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were the last North African lands to remain in Ottoman possession. They were ceded to Italy in the Treaty of Ouchy in 1912, the peace treaty that ended the Turco-Italian war of 1911 to 1912 (Kinross, 1977, pp. 588–89). That history and the geostrategic importance of Libya for the expansion and maintenance of the Turkish area of influence in the Mediterranean and North Africa remain important factors in the modern-day Turkish policy towards Libya.

The role of Libya in the post-cold-war re-assessments of Turkish foreign policy

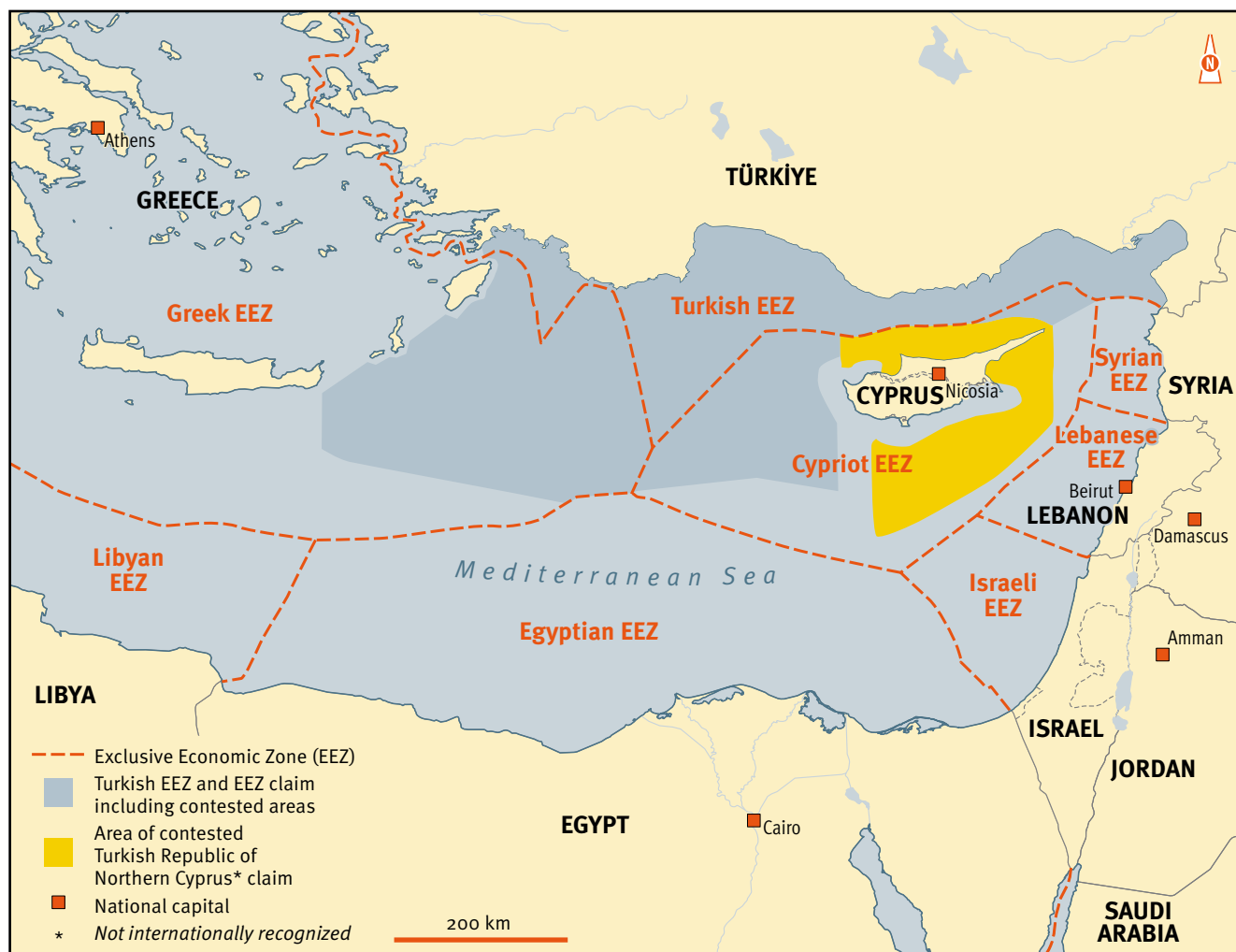
There was significant momentum in the 1980s when Turkish policymakers began

actively engaging with Libya to develop bilateral ties after Libya gained independence. Most notably, Prime Minister Turgut Özal visited Libya in 1984 to develop economic relations (Ataman, 2002, p. 137; Ertosun, 2016, pp. 59–60).⁴ This policy was consistent with broader trends in Turkish political economy and foreign policy in the 1980s and was a precursor to Türkiye's increasing engagement with the African continent. It later led to the development of the 'opening to Africa' policy in the late 1990s and the early 2000s (İpek, 2014, pp. 416–22; Özkan and Akgün, 2010, pp. 532–33). Türkiye's interest in Africa, and the prominent role of Libya in this context, had a dominant economic drive related to Türkiye's transformation into a 'trading state'.⁵ Specifically, changes in the Turkish political economy—starting in the 1980s with President Özal's liberal economic programme and a shift toward export-oriented growth—eventually made Africa an attractive destination for Türkiye's search for new markets abroad and Libya a strategic gateway to sub-Saharan Africa

(İpek, 2014, pp. 415–16, 419–21; Kaya, 2022, pp. 37–38; Özkan, 2012, p. 118; Tziarras, 2022, pp. 72–78).

In the 1990s, successive Turkish governments sought to develop bilateral relations with Libya in line with their foreign policy agendas. A notable example was Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's policy to build closer ties with the Islamic world. This led Prime Minister Erbakan to include Libya as a part of his Africa tour in 1996, aiming to develop economic and political relations (Hale, 2013, p. 228). Erbakan's visit did not go as expected after Libya's President Qaddafi fiercely criticized Turkish policies, including Türkiye's ties to NATO and the United States, and openly called for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state (Çakır, 2020; Kinzer, 1996).⁶ Despite diplomatic tensions, Libya continued to play an important role in the post-cold-war re-assessments of Turkish foreign policy that envisaged Türkiye as an inter-civilizational powerhouse.⁷ In the early 2000s, for example, Foreign Minister İsmail Cem visited Libya to

Map 1 Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Republic of Türkiye DoC (2020). Base map data source: OpenStreetMap

revitalize bilateral relations, including strengthening mechanisms for economic cooperation and developing political cooperation in regional matters of mutual concern (*Hürriyet*, 2001). It was reported that during the meeting, there was a mutual emphasis on ‘deep historical ties that bring together peoples of Türkiye and Libya’ and that his Libyan counterparts suggested Türkiye obtain the status of observer in the African Union, a proposal which was welcomed by the Turkish side for being in line with Türkiye’s newly developed ‘opening to Africa’ policy (*Hürriyet*, 2001; Kavas, 2011, p. 52).

The development of Türkiye’s Africa policy and Libya’s role in that policy provide a good case to see post-cold-war re-formulations of the Turkish foreign policy agenda. Turks have long-standing historical ties to Africa, particularly in the northern and eastern regions, which were important parts of the transcontinental Ottoman Empire and were governed from Istanbul for centuries.⁸ In the foreign policy agenda of modern Türkiye, however, a clear policy towards Africa was only developed in the 1990s. This agenda was marked by the declaration of the Africa Action Plan of 1998, and the ‘Year of Africa in Turkey’ in 2005, which initiated Türkiye’s ‘opening to Africa’ and aimed to strengthen Türkiye’s political and economic ties with the continent (Süsler and Alden, 2022, p. 602).⁹

By the end of the 1990s and into the early 2000s, Turkish foreign policy-makers often emphasized capitalizing on Türkiye’s potential to emerge as a regional leader and a global actor. There was also a strong emphasis on using ‘civilizational’ assets available to Türkiye to generate influence in Türkiye’s neighbourhood. For example, Foreign Minister İsmail Cem—who was foreign minister from 1997 to 2002 and the main figure in the development of the Africa Action Plan of 1998—argued that Turkish foreign policy lacked attention to Turkish ‘historical geography’ encompassing ‘North Africa and going all the way to Sudan’ as among the regions where Turks had cultural and historical connections (Dündar, 2008, p. 206). As a result, Cem argued, Türkiye had been ‘alienated from its [historical] roots’ and unable to use ‘civilizational’ assets available to it to exercise effective foreign policy, consequently aiming to broaden the scope of Turkish foreign policy to include a diplomatic offensive on the African continent (Cem, 2001, p. 3; Kinzer, 1998).

Writing as an academic before he became a key figure within the AKP, Ahmet Davutoğlu¹⁰ took these points further, claiming that establishing or re-establishing close relations with Africa

was ‘inevitable’ (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 208). He argued that, in the context of the post-cold-war re-orientation of Turkish foreign policy, having friends in Africa could translate into greater political influence in international forums such as the UN General Assembly, where ‘the presence of African states is felt’ significantly (Davutoğlu, 2001, p. 208). According to the diplomat whom Ankara tasked to draft the 1998 Africa Action Plan, that plan was born out of a desire to explain Turkish policies to African states better and mobilize international support in favour of the Turkish positions such as on the Cyprus dispute (Hazar, 2016, pp. 10–12). Within this context, the Turkish foreign policymaking elite saw establishing closer relations with Libya as driven by economic interests and geopolitical motivations related to the post-cold-war re-assessments of Türkiye’s role in the region.

Türkiye–Libya relations in the pre-Arab Spring AKP era and the policy of ‘zero problems with neighbours’

In the Turkish domestic arena, the AKP’s rise to power as a party with conservative and Islamist roots going back to Erbakan’s *milli görüş* (national outlook) movement sparked debates on the role of religion in Turkish foreign policy agenda, as the AKP elite emphasized identity and history as key components of Türkiye’s new and pragmatic approach to foreign policy (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009, pp. 8–13). Specifically, the AKP’s framing of a ‘new Türkiye’ attracted popular and academic attention as to whether the changes in Ankara’s approach could be characterized as having ‘neo-Ottoman’ tendencies—defined as a desire to portray Türkiye as the natural leader of the people who share a common Ottoman cultural and historical heritage (Özkan, 2014, p. 128; Sözen, 2010, pp. 104, 106–08; Yavuz, 2016). This approach is reflected in Türkiye’s policy towards Libya, as foreign policymakers within the AKP pursued closer relations with the Middle East and North Africa in line with the AKP’s formulation of the ‘zero-problems-with-neighbours’ policy (Özkan, 2014, p. 132).¹¹

The Turkish policy towards the Middle East and North Africa in the pre-Arab Spring AKP era had two prominent dimensions. First, there was an economic dimension, with policy aimed at fostering transnational trade and economic interdependence. Second, there was a cultural dimension based on cultural affinity and Muslim fraternity, with policy

designed to promote closer political ties (Öniş, 2012, p. 46). Libya ticked both boxes. It shares common Ottoman history and ties based on identity and is a strategic ally in North Africa for Türkiye to develop its newly formed Africa policy, as well as an important trade partner in the Mediterranean (see Map 1).

Following the AKP’s rise to power in Türkiye in the 2000s—corresponding with Libya normalizing its relations with the West and discontinuing its weapons of mass destruction programme—bilateral relations between Türkiye and Libya significantly improved (Gaub, 2014, p. 42). In Tripoli in 2009, then Prime Minister Erdoğan, accompanied by a large group of business leaders and government ministers, highlighted that the Turkish government saw Libya as a vital partner in Türkiye’s ‘opening to Africa’ policy (Sabah, 2009). He underlined the importance of enhancing political and economic cooperation in the Mediterranean, signing bilateral agreements covering various sectors (Sabah, 2009). Reportedly, Qaddafi praised Prime Minister Erdoğan for storming out of a heated debate with Israel’s President Shimon Peres at the Davos forum earlier that year regarding Israel’s actions in Gaza (Sabah, 2009). Consequently, the trade volume between Türkiye and Libya steadily increased, with Turkish exports to Libya rising from USD 95.5 million in 2000 to more than USD 1.9 billion by 2010, before the Arab Spring (WITS, n.d.a; n.d.b).

Türkiye’s reaction to the 2011 uprising in Libya and the geopolitical and economic drivers of Turkish policy in the post-Arab Spring period

When the uprising began in Libya in February 2011, it presented Ankara with a dilemma: whether to express support for the protesters at the risk of antagonizing Qaddafi or to avoid vocal criticism if he managed to restore order (Öniş, 2012, pp. 46, 52; Tocci et al., 2011, p. 30). Initially, Ankara was hesitant to criticize Qaddafi, and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan publicly opposed a potential NATO intervention, asking ‘What business does NATO have in Libya?’ (*Hürriyet*, 2011). The reluctance of Turkish policymakers to criticize the Libyan regime was related to concerns about the safe evacuation of Turkish citizens from Libya and the adverse political consequences the Turkish government would potentially have faced in the domestic arena if harm to Turkish nationals had occurred there.¹²

Turkish policymakers were also cautious about jeopardizing the mutually beneficial relationship they had built with Qaddafi before the Arab Spring, which allowed trade to flourish. It soon became clear, however, that Qaddafi would no longer be able to restore power. In particular, the adoption of the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1973 (2011) authorizing all necessary measures to protect civilians (UNSC, 2011a; 2011c) became the first instance of a UN-approved military intervention based on the Responsibility to Protect. The increasing possibility of intervention—with or without Turkish participation—consequently led Prime Minister Erdoğan to quickly change his position in favour of a NATO intervention in Libya to ensure that ‘Libya belongs to Libyans’ (*Cumhuriyet*, 2011).

Since the uprising, the policies followed by Ankara have aimed to maintain and strengthen Turkish influence in Libya and in the wider region. Strong economic interests drove Ankara’s engagement with Libya in the post-Arab Spring

period, as the Turkish government was, and remains, particularly interested in re-securing the pre-Arab Spring deals with the Qaddafi regime. Those deals were in a variety of sectors, including security, energy, and construction (Assad, 2022; 2024; *Daily Sabah*, 2020). As was the case before Qaddafi’s fall, the support of Libya remains strategically important for Türkiye’s aspirations of boosting its influence, not only in the eastern Mediterranean but also in sub-Saharan Africa, where Türkiye has been an increasingly prominent actor in recent years.¹³ Major Turkish firms have sought to benefit from Ankara’s close relations with Tripoli. On numerous occasions, Turkish business leaders have emphasized the importance of Libya, underlining that Libya is Türkiye’s gateway to Africa and welcoming the development of Ankara’s ties with Tripoli (TRT, 2021b). Large private firms in Türkiye, supported by Ankara, have sought to expand their operations in Libya, taking advantage of the favourable conditions created by close relations with Tripoli (TRT, 2021b).

There are signs that this engagement is paying off. Turkish firms now represent potential challengers to the influence and presence of rival Western firms operating in Libya. They are particularly interested in developing and investing in strategic transport hubs, such as in the Libyan port city of Misrata, where their European counterparts—major French firms, for instance—have also had active engagement.¹⁴ Re-securing pre-Arab Spring deals Türkiye had with the Qaddafi regime, and striking new deals to maximize mutual economic gains with Libya’s new political leadership, are key economic drivers of Ankara’s Libya policy.

The geopolitics of the eastern Mediterranean and Ankara’s projection of hard power

Turkish foreign policy towards Libya also illustrates broader trends in Turkish

Map 2 Türkiye’s ‘Blue Homeland’ claims



Source: Yaycı (2022). Base map data source: OpenStreetMap

foreign policy behaviour. In recent years, there has arguably been a shift from an emphasis on soft power and multilateralism in the early days of the AKP government to a more hawkish approach based on the use of military instruments to achieve foreign policy aims—unilaterally, if necessary (Kutlay and Öniş, 2021, p. 1101; Mehmetcik and Çelik, 2021; Süssler, 2022). Observers have identified various drivers, such as pursuing strategic autonomy and developing and increasing the impact of a military–industrial complex in the Turkish domestic arena (Mehmetcik and Çelik, 2021). Observable indicators in terms of foreign policy behaviour include Türkiye’s use of military instruments to shape conflicts in its neighbourhood, such as the civil wars in Libya and Syria and the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh (Fahim, 2020). This behaviour represents a change from the ‘zero-problems-with-neighbours’ foreign policy approach of the AKP’s earlier years when policymakers emphasized generating influence by non-coercive means through soft power. Many scholars described Türkiye in that era as a benign actor interested in raising its attractiveness in its neighbourhood.¹⁵

Libya is a good case for seeing these changes in Turkish foreign policy and how Ankara has formulated security-oriented policies in the eastern Mediterranean. Most notably, the Turkish government has followed policies with reference to ‘*Mavi Vatan*’ (Blue Homeland), a concept developed by naval commanders and associated with Turkish arguments regarding overlapping territorial claims in the eastern Mediterranean (Yaycı, 2022). It is framed as a defensive strategy calling for Ankara to pursue a muscular and assertive approach to secure its geopolitical interests within its expansive maritime borders—its *Mavi Vatan* (see Map 2). The key figures involved in the development of this naval strategy, Cihat Yaycı and Cem Gürdeniz, have described Libya as a crucial partner for Türkiye to secure its geopolitical interests—including control over hydrocarbon resources in the eastern Mediterranean—and argued that a maritime jurisdictional agreement between Türkiye and Libya would greatly serve the interests of both countries (Gürdeniz, 2020, p. 86; Yaycı, 2011, pp. 38–39).

The clearest sign of the influence of the concept of *Mavi Vatan* in Turkish military strategy and foreign policy was the ‘Blue Homeland 2019’ military exercise. The exercise was a major display of Turkish military capabilities in the Aegean, Black Sea, and eastern Mediterranean (*Daily Sabah*, 2019). It also foreshadowed

the subsequent maritime demarcation and military cooperation agreements Türkiye signed with Libya and its Tripoli-based GNA in 2019, which aimed, in significant part, to expand Türkiye’s area of influence in the eastern Mediterranean and strengthen its presence in Libya. Arguably, the 2019 maritime deal¹⁶ was more about solidifying Turkish claims in the eastern Mediterranean than it was about Türkiye’s presence in the Libyan conflict. The agreement, which triggered protests from Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece, showed that Türkiye viewed Libya as a crucial strategic partner who could support Turkish positions in the dispute over continental shelf entitlements and overlapping claims over exclusive economic zones in the eastern Mediterranean (Dalay, 2021; Reuters, 2020a; 2020b; Aydıntaşbaş and Ülgen, 2020).

Türkiye’s military involvement in Libya in the context of competition for influence in the Middle East and North Africa

Türkiye’s involvement in Libya can also be seen in the context of regional rivalries and the policy preferences of the AKP government in the Middle East and North Africa. The Turkish government provided military support for the GNA when the GNA faced a threat from General Haftar, who had launched a military offensive with the aim to capture Tripoli in 2019 (Lacher, 2019, pp. 10, 14). For the Turkish government, supporting the GNA also meant countering the influence of other external powers backing General Haftar, notably Russia and Egypt.¹⁷

How Türkiye and Egypt supported and armed opposing sides in Libya is an illustrative example. The maritime agreement signed between Egypt and Greece on 6 August 2020, designating an exclusive economic zone between the two countries, directly responded to the 2019 agreement between Türkiye and the GNA (Mourad, 2020). As such, it should be read as an indicator of regional rivalry, in Libya and the eastern Mediterranean. The tensions between Cairo and Ankara can be traced back to the aftermath of the July 2013 coup d’état in Egypt, when Ankara sided with Islamists aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and cut all diplomatic ties with Cairo (Aydın-Düzgüt, 2014). To a significant extent, this had to do with ideological affinity and was in line with the broader trends in the AKP’s policy preference for connecting

with Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which had increased its prominence following the uprisings in 2011 (Dalacoura, 2021, p. 1134).

It also had to do with how a military coup d’état toppled Mohammed Morsi’s government in Egypt. Given Türkiye’s political history with military coups, it was not difficult to draw parallels between the two countries’ experiences with military coups overthrowing popularly elected governments.¹⁸ Arguably, a part of the AKP’s strategy was about ‘coup-proofing’ the Turkish political landscape.¹⁹ Following the Egyptian coup, the Turkish government refused to recognize Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as the legitimate leader of the country and showed support for ousted Morsi.²⁰ This support was evident in the Rabaa hand gesture,²¹ which was popularized by Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and used to show solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood supporters killed in the Egyptian security forces’ raids on camps in Cairo’s Rabaa Square on 14 August 2013 (Zelinsky, 2013). Tensions were raised to the point that the new government in Cairo expelled Türkiye’s ambassador in November 2013. Normalization started only in 2021, and it was not until 2023 that Türkiye and Egypt sent ambassadors to each other’s capitals for the first time within a decade (Daragahi, 2024; Hayatsever and Awadalla, 2023).

As in the case of Turkish policy in Egypt, the Turkish government also sided with actors with a shared political and ideological affinity in Libya. Specifically, one can point to the prominence of political Islam in both the GNA and the AKP as one of the factors that could potentially explain the Turkish government’s strong preference for the GNA over rival actors. In addition to ideological reasons, the GNA was the UN-recognized government and therefore had international legitimacy. In contrast, other actors were proxies of several countries trying to capture power due to the vacuum created during the Libyan civil war. In the context of geopolitical rivalries, the success of the GNA meant that Ankara’s interests would prevail over the interests of Cairo, who provided arms to General Haftar in his pursuit of dominance in Libya.

Indeed, the Turkish government has explicitly referenced that its interventions were designed to counter the influence of other actors involved in the Libyan conflict. Speaking at a memorial prayer in Istanbul held after the death of Morsi in June 2019, Turkish President Erdoğan referred to Morsi as ‘our martyr’ and condemned Egyptian President el-Sisi as a ‘tyrant’ (*Sabah*, 2019). In a subsequent

press conference, President Erdoğan explained that Türkiye was providing arms to the GNA because the GNA lacked defensive capabilities to defend itself against its rivals, implicitly referring to foreign powers backing forces associated with General Haftar, including Egypt. He said that the arms Türkiye provided helped establish a balance of power in the conflict (Daragahi, 2019).

Consequently, the rivalry in the eastern Mediterranean between Türkiye and Egypt was transformed into a power struggle where Ankara and Cairo supported opposing actors in Libya. It should also be noted that the rapprochement between Türkiye and Egypt after a decade of tension showed some signs of mutual commitment to working on differences and achieving more cooperation regarding their Libya policies (Reuters, 2023b).

Domestic political contestation in Türkiye regarding Türkiye's military engagement in Libya

Ankara's military engagement also sparked debates in Turkish domestic politics. In parliamentary debates, opposition parties in Türkiye expressed concerns about making Türkiye a party to the civil war and the consequences of direct military involvement. They criticized the government for pursuing adventurist policies and for picking sides in the conflict, questioned whether military involvement was justified, and highlighted potential adverse consequences, including prolonging war and violence in Libya.²² At the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, members of the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), opposed the military cooperation agreement with the GNA (TBMM, 2019, pp. 11–15). They highlighted the ideological undertones of the AKP's support for the GNA and argued that Ankara's military support was an attempt to help the AKP's political ally in the region rather than being necessary for Turkish national security.²³ In January 2020, all major opposition parties voted against the bill that authorized the government to deploy troops in Libya (Reuters, 2020b).

When asked about the Turkish government's policies in Libya in 2023, Ünal Çeviköz, the CHP's deputy chair and principal advisor on foreign affairs, said that the Turkish government did not pursue a consistent policy and picked sides rather than gaining the trust of all parties involved in the conflict. He also stated

that a consistent policy would involve an approach that is not ideologically driven and would allow Türkiye to gain the trust of all sides of the conflict as a successful mediator.²⁴ The CHP raised similar points in the parliamentary discussion regarding President Erdoğan's motion in November 2023 to extend the mandate of Turkish troops in Libya for a further 24 months from 2 January 2024. Specifically, voting against the motion, the main opposition party questioned the basis and necessity of the deployment of Turkish troops in Libya. It criticized the government for adventurism and lack of transparency in formulating the Libya policy (TBMM, 2023, pp. 21–23). This motion to extend the mandate of troops passed despite opposition. It again showed clear differences of views about Türkiye's Libya policy, especially regarding the deployment of Turkish troops in the country (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2023).

Development of Turkish policy in response to political fragmentation and continued divisions in Libya since 2021

After General Haftar's failed advance on Tripoli in 2019, the Berlin International Conference on Libya occurred on 19 January 2020. The UN and the German government co-chaired the conference and brought together representatives of Algeria, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, and high-level representatives of the African Union, Arab League, European Union (EU), and UN (UNSMIL, 2020a, para. 1). The Conference had the objective to reach a consensus among concerned parties regarding the resolution of the Libyan conflict. It underscored that only a 'Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process can end the conflict and bring lasting peace' (UNSMIL, 2020a, paras. 3, 5). The participants recognized the central role of the UN in facilitating the political process, in line with the Libyan Political Agreement of 2015, and made commitments to refrain from interference in the armed conflict (UNSMIL, 2020a, paras. 6–7).

On 23 October 2020, Libya's rival forces in the five-plus-five joint military committee, comprised of representatives from the Libyan Army of the GNA and the general command of the LAAF,²⁵ agreed on a ceasefire (UNSMIL, 2020b). Subsequently, in November 2020, based

on the UNSC Resolution 2510 (2020), which endorsed the conclusions of the Berlin International Conference on Libya, the UN facilitated the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), which brought together a diverse group of representatives from the social and political spectrum of the Libyan society (UNSMIL, 2024). The LPDF agreed on a political roadmap to democratic national elections to be held on 24 December 2021, which was the date chosen to mark the 70th anniversary of Libya's declaration of independence (UNSMIL, 2024).

In March 2021, Libya's unity government, the GNU, was formed out of the UN-backed LPDF, and Dabaiba was sworn in as the interim prime minister (UNSC, 2021b, paras. 2, 5–6). His task was to prepare the country for general elections at the end of the year; however, the elections did not materialize for various reasons, including a failure to agree on the framework for electoral rules. As explained by a former political and constitutional advisor to the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), '[t]he process was beleaguered by two interrelated issues: differences over the idea of holding a presidential election in the current context, and the resulting failure to reach the required consensus on a framework for elections' (Hammady, 2022).

In early 2022, the Libyan House of Representatives (HOR), the eastern-based parliament, appointed Fathi Bashagha as prime minister to lead the newly formed Government of National Stability (GNS). They argued that Prime Minister Dabaiba's mandate had ended in December 2021. In response, Prime Minister Dabaiba refused to step down, saying he would only hand over power after a national election (*The Guardian*, 2022).

While an in-depth analysis of Libyan politics, actors, and processes is beyond the scope of this Briefing Paper, it is important to understand that Libya remains deeply divided politically. The political instability which has endured for an extended period has been fuelled by the emergence of two rival governments in the east and the west, each claiming power and legitimacy and supported by armed militias and different foreign governments.

Regarding Ankara's reactions to ongoing divisions in the country, the Turkish government has continued to back the government in Tripoli. They regard Prime Minister Dabaiba as a strategic ally who can help secure key Turkish economic and geopolitical interests in the eastern Mediterranean (TRT, 2024). Prime Minister Dabaiba, in turn, has described Türkiye as a 'friend and ally'

(Aydemir, 2021). In addition to political affinity with the AKP, the Dabaiba family has a rapport with Ankara. Prime Minister Dabaiba and his cousin once held leading positions in Libyan state-owned institutions and companies involved in infrastructure development—the Libyan Investment and Development Holding Company (LIDCO) and the Organization for Development of Administrative Centres, respectively. They held these positions at a time when major construction deals were awarded to Turkish state-backed companies during the Qaddafi era (Al Jazeera, 2021; Harchaoui, 2021).

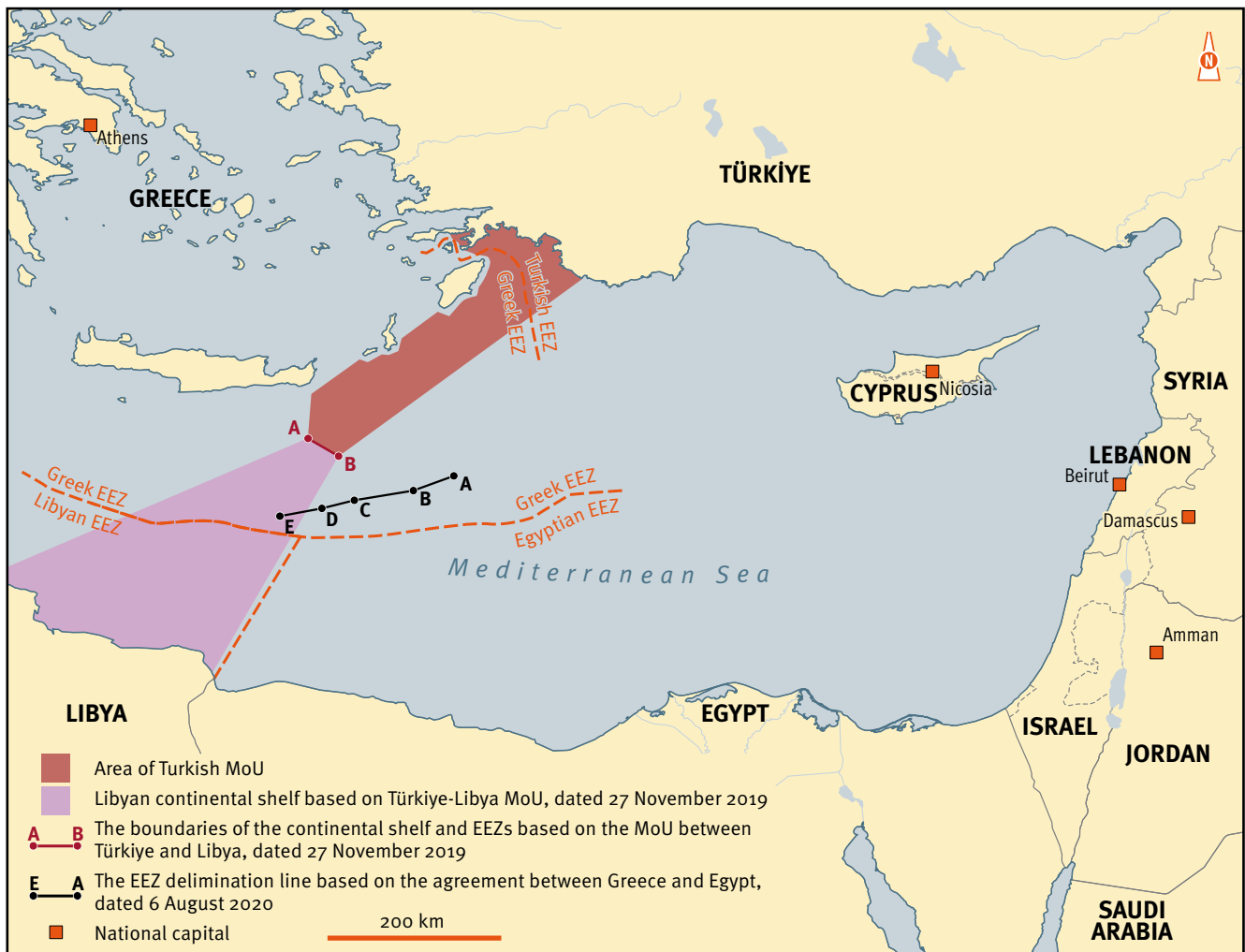
Ankara’s support for Prime Minister Dabaiba serves its economic interests and goals of re-securing pre-Arab Spring deals and geopolitical interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Shortly after assuming power, Prime Minister Dabaiba announced the ‘Reviving Life’ development plan, which prioritized reviving stalled LIDCO projects implemented by construction companies with close connections to the Turkish government.²⁶ Another notable example is the Memo-

randum of Understanding (MoU) between Türkiye and Libya’s GNU on oil and gas, or hydrocarbon, exploration signed in October 2022, based on the 2019 maritime agreement between Türkiye and Libya’s GNA (see Map 3). This agreement was signed despite contestation by some EU states, such as Greece and France (France 24, 2022). There was domestic opposition in Libya as well by those who dispute the ability of the GNU to sign international agreements, again demonstrating the extent of political divisions in Libya (Assad, 2023a).

Prime Minister Dabaiba has also benefited from a close relationship with Ankara as Turkish support—especially military support—has helped secure his government against his rivals. For example, the defence deal signed between Türkiye and Libya’s GNU in October 2022 has the stated aim to ‘boost the capacity of Libya’s air force using Turkish expertise’ (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 2022). This included the sale of Turkish combat drones to improve the GNU’s military capabilities against its rivals (Tastekin, 2022a).

At the same time, the Turkish government also had strong ties with the eastern parliament’s former Prime Minister Bashagha (Çavuşoğlu, 2022). With Türkiye’s military support, Prime Minister Bashagha played a central role in defending Tripoli against General Haftar’s offensive when he was the GNA’s interior minister (Çavuşoğlu, 2022; Lewis, 2020). After a falling out with the GNA, he cut a deal with Aguila Saleh Issa, the speaker of the pro-Haftar HOR, to secure his position as the GNS prime minister in February 2022 (Bourhrous, 2022; Winer, 2022). Prime Minister Bashagha publicly argued that the GNU Prime Minister Dabaiba lacked legitimacy and referred to the suspicions of corruption during the closed vote under the UN-led election process in Geneva (UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 2022, Q1). He also pointed to the inquiry of the UN Panel of Experts on Libya (the Panel), which found some evidence of bribery but kept the details of the findings confidential (UNSC, 2021a, Annex 13). After Prime Minister Bashagha and his

Map 3 Türkiye and Libyan claims under MoU



Source: Republic of Türkiye and GNA (2019). Base map data source: OpenStreetMap

“The foreign policy instruments used by Ankara in Libya reflect wider trends and changes in Turkish foreign policy and domestic politics in the post-Arab Spring period.”

allies failed to challenge Prime Minister Dabaiba successfully, Bashagha was removed from his position by the eastern-based parliament in May 2023 (Al Jazeera, 2023).

For the Turkish government, in addition to the mutually beneficial relationship Ankara built with Prime Minister Dabaiba, one of the main drivers for the preference of the Tripoli government is the international legitimacy of the GNU. Answering a question on Turkish preferences in Libya in a media interview, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said that Bashagha was close to their heart due to his role in the defence of Tripoli. Political legitimacy, however, rested in the hands of Prime Minister Dabaiba and the GNU. He then challenged those who questioned Prime Minister Dabaiba's ability to sign international agreements, underlining that the GNU held legitimate power under the UN process and that Prime Minister Dabaiba was invited to international meetings to represent Libya (Çavuşoğlu, 2022). Unsurprisingly, the Turkish government has strongly emphasized the legitimacy of the GNU since Ankara has signed multiple agreements with the Tripoli government that favour Turkish economic and geopolitical interests. Prime Minister Dabaiba has allowed Türkiye to expand its influence in Libya over the years.

On the other hand, Turkish leadership recognizes that Prime Minister Dabaiba's ability to control the rest of Libya is limited, and it cannot ignore Turkish interests in the east of the country, especially economic interests. Consequently, Ankara has established dialogue with Prime Minister Dabaiba's rivals in the east. Most notably, positioning itself as a mediator, the Turkish government invited the two rival prime ministers to Ankara to unite the two sides of the conflict (Özer, 2022). In a meeting

with the speaker of the HOR, the Turkish parliament said that Türkiye did not discriminate between regions in Libya and saw Libya as an inseparable whole (Ekiz, 2022). Türkiye's move has an important economic drive as there are new economic opportunities in the east, as well as unfinished construction projects interrupted by the war (Tastekin, 2022b).

Overall, while navigating the complex political landscape in Libya, the Turkish government has sought to maintain its influence in Libya and relationships with actors who have the prospects to lead Libya's post-war reconstruction. The idea of a negotiated political solution in Libya could serve Ankara's interests, especially if Ankara manages to play a bridging role while also securing its interests in both regions. So far, this has proven to be a difficult task.

Implementing Türkiye's foreign policy towards Libya: military involvement and assistance to the Tripoli government

It is useful to highlight that the foreign policy instruments used by Ankara in Libya reflect wider trends and changes in Turkish foreign policy and domestic politics in the post-Arab Spring period. As reflected in Ankara's Libya policy, a shift from an emphasis on soft power and multilateralism in the early days of the AKP to a more muscular approach based on the projection of hard power is a broader trend. At the same time, in the domestic arena, the AKP's consolidation of power and emphasis on strategic autonomy, its alliance with nationalists who formulate security-oriented policies, and a booming defence industry with close ties to the government have contributed

to Ankara's increasing military engagement with the Libyan conflict over the years.²⁷ Consequently, the use of hard power has eventually become a key foreign policy instrument for the implementation of Türkiye's Libya policy.

It is necessary to highlight that Türkiye's involvement in the Libyan conflict can be seen as a broader trend of cases in the world on third-party interventions in civil wars. There is an extant body of literature on how support for warring parties to a conflict has been used as a foreign policy instrument. Scholars have examined different aspects of the implications of third-party interventions, including their impact on the duration of civil wars (Aydin and Regan, 2011; Regan, 1996; 2002). They have also looked at conflict delegation through the relationship between states and armed non-state groups used as proxies, which has emerged as a significant trend in modern warfare—especially since the cold war (Karlén et al., 2021; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, 2011; San-Akca, 2016). It is useful to contextualize Turkish interventions within the broader debates about internationalized civil wars where external actors can shape conflict dynamics.

Türkiye's military involvement in the Libyan conflict from 2011 to 2019

The Turkish government has been at odds with General Haftar since the beginning of the conflict. In terms of direct military involvement in countering General Haftar's influence, however, Ankara's interventions in the conflict in the early years were much more limited compared to the period after 2019.

Türkiye was militarily involved in the civil war in late 2013 and early 2014 as a participant in the multilateral plan to create and train a Libyan General Purpose Force (GPF) (Nickels, 2013). This plan also included Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It was endorsed at the G8 summit in 2013, following the request of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan, leader of the General National Congress (Westcott, 2013). Its objective was to improve the Libyan government's military capabilities and offer it the ability to extend its authority in the country (al-Shadeedi, van Veen, and Harchaoui, 2020, p. 26). The first Libyan soldiers arrived in Türkiye in December 2013, completing a 14-week military training at the commando school in Eğirdir, Isparta (Çetinkaya, 2014).

The plan of creating a GPF failed quickly for various reasons, including operational complications (al-Shadeedi, van Veen, and Harchaoui, 2020, pp. 25–26; Stephen and MacAskill, 2014); however, the Turkish government continued to back the Tripoli-based GNS on a bilateral basis based on mutual pledges to strengthen ties, including military cooperation. In early 2014, for example, GNS Prime Minister Zeidan requested weapons and equipment from Türkiye, such as helicopters and assault boats, while also emphasizing that Turkish companies could start oil exploration in Libya (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2014).

The flow of weapons and ammunition into Libya during this period was much more limited than after 2019, although it did occur to a certain extent. Most notably, the Panel found that a significant portion of the materiel in the civilian black market—such as shotguns and handguns—originated and was procured from Türkiye because of low prices and was transferred from the ports of Khoms, Misrata, and Tripoli (UNSC, 2014, pp. 18–19; 2015, p. 35). In November 2014, for example, the Panel inspected a cargo vessel called *Nour M*, which was seized on its way to Tripoli carrying 1,103 tons of ammunition for assault rifles and machine guns (UNSC, 2015, p. 33). The shipper was a Ukrainian state company, and the consignee was the Ministry of Defence of Libya, while a Turkish company brokered the deal, and the vessel belonged to a second Turkish company (UNSC, 2015, pp. 33–35). The Panel noted that the sanctions regime did not exempt this materiel (UNSC, 2015, p. 34). Another notable case that the Panel investigated in December 2015 was for the *Haddad 1* vessel, which was headed to Misrata when it was discovered to be carrying two containers of weapons—including shotguns—and ammunition produced by Turkish companies (UNSC, 2016, pp. 32–33). The Panel’s investigation found that the materiel was concealed behind ordinary goods and that there was no need to conceal the shipment if the transfer complied with the Libya sanctions regime (UNSC, 2016, p. 34). It is conceivable that the materiel, particularly any flowing through the ports of Tripoli and Misrata, was used against General Haftar’s forces in the conflict.

By the end of the decade, the Turkish government emerged as one of the key supporters of the Tripoli government. High-level state visits highlighted military cooperation between Türkiye and the GNA. Most notably, Türkiye’s Minister of National Defence, Hulusi Akar, met the GNA leader Fayez al-Sarraj as well as the

Box 1 Turkish materiel in Libya: small arms, blank-firing weapons, and armoured vehicles

Reports from the Panel have pointed to different types of Turkish materiel found in Libya since the beginning of the arms embargo. Most notably, the Panel identified the ‘transfer of weapons, ammunition, or armoured vehicles using the maritime supply route’ (UNSC, 2019, p. 20). They found multiple cases of vessels carrying arms and armoured vehicles from Türkiye to Libya. Panel reports detailed two specific cases involving a vessel carrying BMC Kirpi 4×4 mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles in May 2019 and a vessel carrying Atak Zoraki 2918 and Ekol P29 blank-firing pistols, found by customs authorities in Libya in December 2018 and January 2019 (UNSC, 2019, pp. 21, 258).²⁸ The BBC’s ‘Africa Eye’ also investigated reports about ‘Turkey’s ghost ships’ allegedly carrying armoured vehicles to Libya’s GNA (BBC, n.d.). The GNA openly admitted in July 2019 that they were receiving weapons from Türkiye. Then GNA Interior Minister Bashagha also acknowledged the transfer of armoured vehicles for the use of the ministry through the ports of Khoms on 6 February 2019 and Tripoli on 18 May 2019 (UNSC, 2019, p. 20).

Non-lethal military equipment typically falls under the non-lethal exception under paragraph 10 of UNSC Resolution 2095 (2013) (UNSC, 2013, pp. 4–5). The Panel, however, found that for some of the ‘non-lethal’ arms imported into Libya, it was ‘not a difficult engineering task’ to convert allegedly non-sanctioned goods into the type of goods subject to sanction after they arrive in Libya (UNSC, 2019, p. 25). The Panel noted that ‘during a period of conflict, the ease with which these vehicles can be modified with weapons makes such vehicles a “force multiplier” and removes them from “non-lethal” status’ (UNSC, 2019, p. 20, footnote 54). A similar argument was raised about blank-firing handguns of Turkish manufacture. These ‘alarm pistols’ are known to be prevalent in Europe and Libya, with incidences reported of their conversion into live-firing weapons (Florquin and King, 2018, pp. 27–30).

GNA Interior Minister Bashagha in Tripoli in 2018. It was reported that they discussed cooperation in the areas of defence and security and improving coordination between defence ministries of Türkiye and Libya (Assad, 2018; Göktaş, 2018).

Türkiye’s military involvement in the Libyan conflict from 2019 to 2021

General Haftar’s offensive against Tripoli in April 2019 paved the way for greater Turkish military engagement. The most notable impact of Türkiye on the conflict was how it changed the balance of power on the ground by strengthening the defensive capabilities of the GNA. Through its military backing of the GNA, the Turkish government was effectively able to counter the influence of General Haftar, who could not accomplish what he described as a ‘decisive battle’ to capture the capital, Tripoli (Al Jazeera, 2019).

Türkiye’s use of military instruments played a significant role in supporting its GNA allies in Libya. In July 2019, the Panel noted that the head of the GNA, Fayez al-Sarraj, admitted that the GNA had been receiving weapons from Türkiye (UNSC, 2019, p. 20). The Panel found Türkiye and the GNA non-compliant with

the arms embargo adopted in paragraph 9 of UNSC Resolution 1970 (2011) (UNSC, 2011b; 2019, p. 20).²⁹ With the signing of a security and military cooperation agreement between Tripoli and Ankara in November 2019, Türkiye’s military support for the GNA became more apparent (Reuters, 2020a). This agreement became a reference point for the Turkish government to argue that its military support for the GNA was based on its bilateral agreement with the Libyan government.

Türkiye’s use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and unmanned aerial combat vehicles, or drones, deserves special attention not only because they were instrumental for the GNA’s defence of Tripoli but also because they reflect changes in Turkish domestic and foreign policy. Many international media outlets have reported on Türkiye’s growing drone industry and how Türkiye has used drones instrumentally in Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Syria to reshape battlefields (Marson and Forrest, 2021).³⁰ In foreign policy, they are used as instruments of hard power projection and for forging mutually beneficial relationships with Ankara’s allies. In the domestic arena, they reflect changes related to the rise of a defence industry specialized in niche areas such as drone warfare. People with strong connections to the AKP elite often lead these companies, such as Erdoğan’s

son-in-law, Selçuk Bayraktar, who leads Baykar—the company which notably produces Bayraktar TB2 drones (see Box 2). Recent literature has highlighted how the use of drones has not only external impact—for example, on external conflict dynamics—but also implications in domestic politics where it can promote ‘techno-nationalism’ and produce regime-boosting effects (Soyaltın-Collela and Demiryol, 2023, pp. 724–26).³¹

In the Libyan conflict, air superiority was a significant determinant. As the Panel noted, a tactical stalemate was on the ground by the end of 2019. The LAAF controlled access routes into Tripoli, had air superiority for most of the country, and could take down the GNA’s Türkiye-supplied Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles using the United Arab Emirates-supplied Russian Pantsir-S1 air defence system (UNSC, 2021a, pp. 15–16). The balance of power on the ground changed, however, after a military cooperation agreement between Türkiye and the GNA, when Ankara intensified its support and implemented an air defence ‘umbrella’ along the coast of western Libya using a combination of military hardware—including Gabya-class frigates and Korkut short-range air defence systems (UNSC, 2021a, p. 16). As the Panel pointed out, ‘The introduction by Türkiye of advanced military technology into the conflict was a decisive element in the often unseen, and certainly uneven, war of attrition that resulted in the defeat of [the LAAF] in western Libya during 2020’ (UNSC, 2021a, p. 17). Türkiye’s implementation of an air defence umbrella, supported by frigates and air defence, boosted the effectiveness of the combat drones in countering the LAAF offensive.

The UN’s Special Representative for Libya claimed that drones were used intensely in the Libyan conflict to carry out air strikes, ‘600 times on one side, 200 to 300 times on the other side’, and described the conflict as ‘possibly the largest drone war theatre now in the world’ (UNPPA, 2019).³² The Panel on Libya similarly referred to a ‘drone war’ in Libya (UNSC, 2019, pp. 31, 297), detailing lethal exchanges carried out by different types of drones and noted various foreign powers who provided weapons technology to fighting groups (see Box 3). Having the upper hand in air power arguably resulted in gains on the ground. These gains were most evident when General Haftar’s campaign to capture Tripoli abruptly ended after Türkiye intensified its military presence on the side of the GNA, and the provision of sophisticated weapons—including combat drones with precision air strike capabilities—turned the tide in the conflict.³³

Following the military cooperation agreement between the Turkish government and the GNA in November 2019, a bill was passed in the Turkish parliament in January 2020—despite contestation by opposition parties—that authorized the Turkish government to deploy troops in Libya (Sayin, 2020). The Turkish government stated that the troops were deployed ‘not to fight’ but to support the Tripoli government and that the Libyan government requested the deployment based on the bilateral military cooperation agreement (BBC, 2020a).

The military cooperation agreement with the GNA is key for understanding the perception of the Turkish government in terms of how it views its military presence in Libya. On numerous occasions, Turkish foreign policymakers argued that Turkish forces should not be classified as ‘foreign forces’ (TRT, 2021a; Polat, 2021, p. 5). Most notably, for this reason, the Turkish government introduced a reser-

vation at the Second Berlin Conference when discussing the issue of foreign forces. The fifth paragraph of the conclusions of the Second Berlin Conference on Libya on 21 June 2021 said that ‘all foreign forces and mercenaries need to be withdrawn from Libya without delay’, after which there was a footnote stating that ‘Turkey introduced a reservation’ (UNSMIL, 2021, p. 1). This conclusion was because the Turkish government considered its forces to be legitimate, differentiating them from the forces of other powers and foreign fighters and basing its argument on the bilateral agreement between Ankara and the GNA (Reuters, 2021a; Yılmaz, 2021). Considering the reiterations by the UNSC regarding the call for the withdrawal of ‘all foreign forces’ from Libya,³⁴ it is likely that Türkiye’s presence in the country will continue to be subject to debate.

Notably, there are different types of foreign presence in Libya. The presence of

Box 2 Türkiye’s use of drones as a foreign policy instrument

The use of drones in warfare is not something new, as the United States most notably used drones in its Global War on Terror to carry out lethal strikes or surveillance in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. What is arguably different now is that more governments and others have access to such technology—not just major powers but also middle powers such as Türkiye. These new players invest in their own drone programmes and use these drones for military purposes both at home, in counter-insurgency, and abroad. Ankara’s use of drones can be viewed as part of its emerging middle-power strategy, aimed at developing material capabilities through home-grown military technologies to leverage influence in regional and global politics in line with its geostrategic interests.

Turkish-made drones have attracted wider international attention after their deployment in Libya and Syria and their effective use against the advances of Russian-backed forces in those countries. Poland, for example, purchased Bayraktar TB2 drones, becoming the first NATO country to purchase drones from Ankara (Reuters, 2021b). Zbigniew Rau, Poland’s minister of foreign affairs, referred to these drones as ‘battle-proven and effective’, highlighting that the use of the drones would be to ‘strengthen capabilities of the Polish Army and contribute to the reinforcement of NATO’s eastern flank’ (Yüzbaşıoğlu, Çetinkaya, and Turan, 2021). The United Kingdom’s Minister of Defence similarly referred to the effectiveness of Turkish drones, saying, ‘We need to look at the lessons of others. Look how Türkiye has been operating in Libya, where it has used Bayraktar TB2 UAVs since mid-2019 [...] Even if only half of these claims are true, the implications are game changing’ (Wallace, 2020).

More recently, Ukraine actively used Turkish-made drones against Russian forces in the ongoing war, which started in February 2022 (BBC, 2023). When asked about military cooperation between Türkiye and Ukraine, Ukraine’s ambassador in Ankara also highlighted the effectiveness of the Bayraktar TB2 drones to counter Russian advances.³⁵ He said military cooperation between Türkiye and Ukraine was well-developed and included drones and other military tools such as corvettes³⁶ and logistics vehicles. The ambassador also noted the plan to open a Baykar Makina factory in Ukraine, which would allow Bayraktar TB2 drones to be manufactured, used, and sold from Ukrainian territory.³⁷

It is possible that the interest in Turkish drones may boost Ankara’s leverage in bilateral relations, especially in parts of the world where it aims to have a greater presence, such as in sub-Saharan Africa. In his African tour in October 2021, President Erdoğan stated, ‘Everywhere I go in Africa, everyone asks about UAVs’ (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 2021). Turkish drones have been deployed and used by a diverse group of states around the world, including Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, and Morocco (Coşkun, Spiker, and Toksabay, 2021; Walsh, 2021). It is also possible that Ankara may generate influence not only from drone exports but also from providing drone training and maintenance to countries that aim to improve their air capabilities, including Libya.

foreign fighters and mercenaries remains an issue of contention. The Panel on Libya identified mercenaries and foreign fighters from various countries such as Chad, Sudan, and Syria (UNSC, 2021a). They found, for example, that Syrian mercenaries were seen on both sides of the conflict and stated that ‘the Government of National Accord-affiliated Syrians train in Libyan camps [...] [LAAF-affiliated] Syrians operate alongside ChVK Wagner’, the Russian private military company (UNSC, 2021a, pp. 7–8).³⁸ The Panel found evidence that Turkish-backed Syrian combatants were present in Tripoli based on a video interview published online featuring an official of the ‘Syrian National Army’, which has roots in the Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (UNSC, 2022, p. 87). In 2021, the Turkish foreign minister called on all foreign mercenaries in Libya to leave (Reuters, 2021a), including Syrian mercenaries from Turkish-backed groups. As documented by the Panel, however, their continued presence in GNA and GNU camps raised questions about their role as a proxy force (UNSC, 2021a; 2022; 2023a).³⁹

Overall, during this period, the Turkish government provided significant military support to the Tripoli government, which changed the power balance on the ground. The readiness of the Turkish government to dispatch Turkish troops to Libya showed the lengths to which Ankara was willing to go to shore up its ally in Tripoli.

Evolution of Turkish military involvement since 2021

The Turkish government has continued to support the Tripoli government in the aftermath of the withdrawal of the LAAF, and its military support for the GNU has been instrumental in boosting the GNU’s military capabilities. Ankara’s military presence and capabilities have arguably helped the incumbent GNU Prime Minister Dabaiba stay in power, even after the expiration of his mandate.

The Turkish government has signed further agreements with Tripoli’s GNU to strengthen military cooperation and presence in Libya. The military cooperation agreement signed in October 2022 is one such agreement, allowing the Turkish Armed Forces to train Libyan pilots. Following the agreement, there were reports that GNU Prime Minister Dabaiba was interested in buying more Turkish drones, including the newer model Bayraktar Akıncı (Abdul, 2022; Tastekin, 2022a).⁴⁰ The agreement showed again that the Turkish

Box 3 Turkish lethal autonomous drones in the Libyan conflict

The drone war in Libya also reflects broader changes in modern warfare and raises a series of political and ethical questions about the use of lethal autonomous weapons (LAWS). The level of autonomy in LAWS, broadly speaking, refers to the degree of human control over the actions or specific tasks weapons systems undertake. Fully autonomous weapons systems—colloquially known as ‘killer robots’—can select targets and make kill decisions without human intervention. These are closely related to the advancements and developments in artificially intelligent weapons systems (Docherty, Fitzpatrick, and Keck, 2012). In the case of Libya, what is worthy of attention is that some drones reportedly displayed a high level of autonomous capabilities.

According to the findings of the Panel, logistics convoys and forces affiliated with General Haftar and the LAAF were ‘hunted down and remotely engaged by the unmanned combat aerial vehicles or the lethal autonomous weapons systems such as the STM Kargu-2’ (UNSC, 2021a, p. 17). The Panel noted, ‘The lethal autonomous weapons systems were programmed to attack targets without requiring data connectivity between the operator and the munition: in effect, a true “fire, forget, and find” capability’ (UNSC, 2021a, p. 17). If accurate, this implies that the kill decision did not necessarily require the operator’s involvement. The media picked up this possibility as it may be the first documented case of an autonomous drone attack on humans (Cramer, 2021; Hambling, 2021; Wadhwa and Salkever, 2021).

One of the drones used in Libya and detailed in the Panel’s 2018 report was the Kargu UAV, developed by a Turkish company called Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş. (Defence Technologies Engineering and Trade Inc.) (STM) (UNSC, 2021a, p. 148). According to the company, the Kargu UAV is a ‘combat proven rotary wing loitering munition system [...] capable of performing fully autonomous navigation’. It is designed to ‘provide tactical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and precision strike capabilities for ground troops’ (STM, 2024). The company’s promotional videos state that the drone features ‘automatic target detection and tracking’ (STM, n.d.b). It can ‘autonomously fire and forget’, implying an ability to hunt down targets without human intervention (STM, n.d.a). The Kargu is a loitering munition, or a ‘kamikaze drone’; it is a drone that can blow itself up to take out targets. It is a low-cost drone that can be launched in large numbers to carry out swarm attacks. When used that way, the ‘swarm’ of drones can easily overwhelm enemy defences, delivering significant damage to targets. The production cost of a single such drone is typically lower than that of a surface-to-air missile needed to take it down (Eser, 2019). As the head of Türkiye’s state body overseeing the defence industry said, it does not matter ‘if you lose one, two, three’ if others find the target (Marson and Forrest, 2021).

STM’s Chief Executive Officer, Murat İkinci, explained that the company was developing the Kargu drone’s artificial intelligence and computer vision capabilities to enable autonomous swarm attacks in environments without GPS coverage and without being affected by enemy jammers (DHA, n.d.). Development of these capabilities occurred under the project ‘KERKES’, which President Erdoğan referred to as an important achievement in Türkiye’s defence industry investments (Republic of Türkiye DoC, 2023).⁴⁰ Describing the final product after project completion, an STM executive said, ‘When there is no communication, location estimation is achieved by processing the data and images received from the sensors, allowing strikes against targets detected by artificial intelligence and deep learning techniques’. The executive added that the technology could be integrated into land and naval platforms (STM, 2022).

The development of autonomous capabilities in weapons systems raises a series of challenging questions about the political and ethical implications of using artificially intelligent systems for military purposes. An important aspect of this debate concerns regulation and international law. Advocacy groups and non-governmental organizations, such as the Stop Killer Robots coalition, have long been campaigning for new international laws regulating autonomy in weapons systems. These groups argue that life-and-death decisions should not be delegated to a ‘machine’ and warn of the dangers of digital dehumanization in modern warfare (Stop Killer Robots, 2021). Recent developments in this area notably include diplomatic talks on reviewing the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the international debate on banning autonomous weapons.

To date, this has been a challenging area for international regulation (Farge, 2021), but there have also been some developments. Most notably, on 21 October 2022, 70 states delivered a joint statement on LAWS at the UN General Assembly, recognizing that LAWS ‘raise serious concerns from humanitarian, legal, security, technological, and ethical perspectives’. The group urged the international community to work towards the adoption of ‘appropriate rules and measures, such as principles, good practices, limitations, and constraints [...] [emphasizing that] maintaining human responsibility and accountability in the use of force [is crucial]’ (UN Journal, 2022). Türkiye was not among these 70 states.

government was a political and military backer of the GNU under Prime Minister Dabaiba's leadership.

With the understanding that Ankara feels the need to secure its vested interests in the east and west of the country, the Turkish government approached Prime Minister Dabaiba's eastern rivals in 2022. It sought to position itself as a mediator, emphasizing the maintenance of longer-term stability in the country. At the same time, Ankara continued to back the GNU militarily and provide military training under the existing military cooperation agreements.

It is plausible that Türkiye's continuous military support—including weapons and training—for the Dabaiba government helped the GNU and its affiliate forces to become better organized and mobilized against their opponents in the country. For example, the GNU-affiliated forces were able to repulse Bashagha-aligned factions when violence erupted in Tripoli in August 2022 (Reuters, 2022).⁴¹ It is also likely that the Turkish military support for the GNU has helped Prime Minister Dabaiba to demonstrate military prowess. For instance, in May 2023, GNU forces carried out drone strikes against what it said were smuggling gangs in western regions, such as in the city of Zawiya (Reuters, 2023a). The eastern-based HOR criticized these strikes, accusing Prime Minister Dabaiba of trying to target political opponents under the pretext of fighting crime (UNSC, 2023a, pp. 7–8, 65–66; Reuters, 2023a). The Turkish ambassador to Libya denied the involvement of Türkiye in that operation, and Prime Minister Dabaiba also stated that those who operated drones were Libyans (Reuters, 2023a; *The Arab Weekly*, 2023). Despite Turkish protestations, incidents like the drone strikes in Zawiya demonstrate the strategic importance of Turkish support in boosting the GNU's military capabilities, including the deployment of drones. Even absent direct Turkish involvement, the military cooperation agreements signed between Ankara and the GNU—under which Türkiye provided drones and pilot training—and the specific cases of UAV training provided by the Turkish Armed Forces in December 2022 and June 2023 (UNSC, 2023a, pp. 176, 178) are likely instrumental in such incidents.

While Türkiye's military engagement has been integral to its pursuit of greater influence in Libya, there is also an understanding that Turkish strategic interests—in both the west and east of the country—can be secured by playing a role in the Libyan political process. This strategic interest has been evident in Ankara's

willingness for rapprochement with the east, especially since mid-2022, and its effort to frame Türkiye as a bridge-builder. It was also the case when a devastating flood hit Derna in the aftermath of Storm Daniel in September 2023, when Ankara promptly cooperated with the eastern government, sending disaster relief assistance. Türkiye reiterated its readiness to help rebuild Libya's flood-hit areas (Assad, 2023b; Gazzini, 2023, pp. 3–4).

International reactions and the Libya sanctions regime

By UNSC Resolution 1970 (2011), the UNSC imposed specific measures, including an arms embargo related to arms and associated materiel of all types—such as weapons and ammunition, and the provision of armed personnel (UNSC, 2011b). The Panel has periodically published findings monitoring compliance with the Libya sanctions regime, concluding that the arms embargo has been 'totally ineffective' (UNSC, 2021a, p. 2). In the 2021 report, the Panel said that:

[F]or those Member States directly supporting the parties to the conflict, the violations are extensive, blatant and with complete disregard for the sanctions measures. Their control of the entire supply chain complicates detection, disruption, or interdiction. These two factors make any implementation of the arms embargo more difficult (UNSC, 2021a, p. 2).

The Panel found that non-compliance occurred in various ways, such as the provision of military materiel and failure to inspect suspicious commercial vessels heading to Libya. It referred to the actions of UN member states in violation of the embargo, including Egypt, the Russian Federation, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates, among others (UNSC, 2021a, pp. 14–15, 21–27).⁴²

In various reports, the Panel found that Türkiye's military assistance to the Tripoli government—including weapons, training, and materiel (see Box 1)—did not comply with the embargo provisions. Although the Turkish government responded by claiming that its bilateral agreements with Libya provide the appropriate framework for its military support, the Panel—which has formal standing in international law through the UN mandate—has detailed different ways

violations have occurred. One Panel report, for example, detailed different types of training provided by Türkiye and concluded that most of them violated paragraph 9 of UNSC Resolution 1970 (2011) while some were covered by exemptions (UNSC, 2023a, pp. 174–76).

The Panel noted that 'some specialized training provided by Türkiye, for example, in explosive ordnance disposal, falls under the humanitarian training exemption provided for in paragraph 9 of UNSC Resolution 2095 (2013)' (UNSC, 2023a, p. 27). It stated, however, that 'the remainder, and the majority, of the military training provided by Türkiye to the Government of National Unity Armed Forces is a clear violation of paragraph 9 of UNSC Resolution 1970 (2011)' (UNSC, 2023a, p. 27). Specifically, they concluded that the small boat training in August 2022, UAV training in December 2022, sniper training in June 2023, and small UAV training in June 2023 all violated the provisions of the embargo resolution (UNSC, 2023a, pp. 174–78).⁴³ By including the example of the training provided to the Libyan Coast Guard, the Panel acknowledged that, although the training was all provided under the same 2019 military cooperation agreement between Türkiye and Libya, some types of training did not violate the sanctions regime.

It is also useful to note that Türkiye's military support for the Tripoli government has been a source of diplomatic tension beyond the UN. Most notably, in June 2020, there was a diplomatic crisis between France and Türkiye after a French frigate participating in a NATO mission to interdict arms shipments to Libya intercepted a cargo vessel (BBC, 2020b; Irish and Emmott, 2020). The freighter, which was escorted by Turkish frigates in the eastern Mediterranean, was suspected of carrying arms to Libya in violation of the embargo. The French vessel wanted to inspect the freighter but was refused permission to do so (BBC, 2020b; UNSC, 2021a, pp. 18–20, 153, 171–73). The incident caused friction within NATO and in EU–Türkiye relations, as the EU sanctioned the company operating the vessel for breaking the arms embargo (Brzozowski, 2020; Council of the EU, 2020; Reuters, 2020c). The incident also compounded existing tensions, as Türkiye and France were already at odds with each other in Libya, especially before the withdrawal of the LAAF from Tripoli. Türkiye openly backed the GNA at that time, while France was suspected of supporting General Haftar (BBC, 2019; France 24, 2019). Heightened tensions occurred between France and Türkiye after the incident, and French President

Emmanuel Macron criticized Türkiye, saying Ankara breached the commitments of the Berlin conference (Daventry, 2020). The incident also showed how external involvement in Libya could spark international diplomatic crises quickly.

Overall, the implementation of Türkiye's Libya policy using military instruments has attracted considerable international attention, including criticism regarding its involvement in the conflict. While the military assistance provided to the Tripoli government has been instrumental in the Turkish government maintaining and expanding its influence in Libya, the presence of Turkish troops in the country is likely to remain an issue of contention. Considering the involvement of external actors, including Türkiye, the case of Libya also speaks to broader questions about the challenges regarding the enforcement and implementation of UN arms embargoes.

Conclusion

There are three key points to highlight when examining Turkish foreign policy in Libya and why and how Ankara is involved in the Libyan conflict. First, Ankara's Libya policy has strong economic and geopolitical drivers. Pursuing economic and geopolitical interests and the AKP's regional policy preferences have shaped Turkish policies. Türkiye's policy in Libya represents certain changes in Turkish foreign policy behaviour, characterized by a shift from an emphasis on generating soft power in the early days of the AKP era to a more assertive and hawkish approach based on hard power projection through military instruments. Ankara has used military tools to shape conflicts in its neighbourhood in line with its interests not only in Libya but also in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Second, Türkiye's policy in Libya is a good example of the domestic drivers of Turkish foreign policy. Specifically, Türkiye's investments in the defence industry—specialized in niche areas such as combat drones and formulating security-oriented policies in the eastern Mediterranean—have contributed to the pursuit of more assertive policies in Libya and the wider region. At the same time, Ankara's military engagement in Libya, particularly the deployment of troops, has been the subject of debate in both the domestic and international arenas.

Third, regarding Türkiye's influence on conflict dynamics in Libya, Ankara has clearly impacted the power balance on the ground. Most notably, in 2020, Türkiye's interventions on the side of the

GNA and the introduction of advanced military capabilities helped the GNA to successfully counter General Haftar's campaign to capture Tripoli. After the ceasefire, Ankara continued to provide military support for the GNU, such as materiel and military training, which has been instrumental in Prime Minister Dabaiba staying in power even after the expiration of his mandate.

Ultimately, the Turkish government aims to maintain its influence in the country and sees Libya as an important strategic partner in the eastern Mediterranean. It seeks to establish mutually beneficial relations with Libyan actors who will lead Libya's post-war reconstruction; however, it also faces challenges to its influence in the country. With internal political contestation among actors in Libya and the risk of further instability that may arise, it is reasonable to expect Ankara to be cautious of potential domestic changes of power in Libya that may impact Turkish policies.

In recent years, there has been a shift in Turkish policy in Libya, characterized by an increased diplomatic engagement with Libya's eastern leaders. With the understanding that Türkiye also needs to secure its interests in the east, Ankara has sought greater cooperation with Prime Minister Dabaiba's eastern rivals and positioned itself as a mediator to secure its interests in the long run.

There are broader implications of Türkiye's Libya policy for regional dynamics and Türkiye's influence in the eastern Mediterranean as Ankara has pursued a more assertive foreign policy approach through the projection of hard power. Türkiye's involvement in Libya can also be seen within the context of Türkiye's foreign policy objectives in sub-Saharan Africa, where Türkiye has been an increasingly prominent actor in recent years. At the same time, Ankara's use of military technology—particularly combat drones—to pursue foreign policy objectives in various settings around the world has emerged as a prominent feature of Turkish foreign policy strategy.

For the potential future trajectory in Libya, it is reasonable to expect Ankara to continue to position itself as a mediator between Libya's rival actors while cooperating with the Tripoli government on key areas such as military and economic cooperation. The Tripoli government is strategically important for Ankara to secure its economic and geopolitical interests and various bilateral agreements, such as the demarcation of maritime borders in the eastern Mediterranean or the resumption of work by Turkish companies on projects interrupted by war. At

the same time, Ankara cannot ignore its interests in the east of the country, which are mainly economic. New infrastructure opportunities or the resumption of projects undertaken by Turkish companies in that region that were also interrupted by the fall of Qaddafi's government are prime examples of such interests.

It is, therefore, reasonable to expect the Turkish government to continue to emphasize the importance of cooperation with actors in the east and express commitment to the reconstruction of Libya both in the west and in the east as it did in the aftermath of the Derna catastrophe. It would be important for Ankara to establish effective dialogue with all actors, complement efforts of dialogue and national reconciliation towards stabilizing and reconstructing the country, and contribute to the stability of the political process. ●

Abbreviations and acronyms

AKP Justice and Development Party in Türkiye

CHP Republican People's Party in Türkiye

EU European Union

GNA Government of National Accord in Libya

GNS Government of National Stability in Libya

GNU Government of National Unity in Libya

GPF General Purpose Force in Libya

HDP Peoples' Democratic Party in Türkiye

HOR House of Representatives in Libya

KERKES Global Positioning System Independent Autonomous Navigation System Development Project

LAAF Libyan Arab Armed Forces

LAWS Lethal autonomous weapons

LIDCO Libyan Investment and Development Holding Company

LPDF Libyan Political Dialogue Forum

MILGEM Milli gemi (national ship)

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

STM Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret A.Ş. (Defence Technologies Engineering and Trade Inc.)

The Panel UN Panel of Experts on Libya

UAV Unmanned aerial vehicle

UN United Nations

UNSC United Nations Security Council

UNSMIL United Nations Support Mission in Libya

USD United States dollar

Notes

- 1 For a summary of the positions of foreign actors in Libya, see Council on Foreign Relations (2024).
- 2 Türkiye's support for the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) against General Haftar's offensive in 2020 received international attention about Türkiye's hard power capabilities. See Chorin (2020); *The Economist* (2020); and Walsh (2020).
- 3 An *eyalet*—province or governorate—was the largest administrative unit in the Ottoman political system until the 19th century (Abun-Nasr, 1987, pp. 191–93; Koloğlu, 2008, pp. 275–76).
- 4 Turgut Özal was deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs in the government established after the September 1980 coup d'état in Türkiye, prime minister from 1983 to 1989, and president from 1989 to 1993. See also *Cumhuriyet* (1980, p. 1).
- 5 For a fuller discussion of this transformation, see Kirişçi (2009) and Öniş (2004).
- 6 According to a Turkish journalist, Ruşen Çakır, who was on the trip, Muammar Qaddafi's criticism was so harsh that Abdullah Gül—who was a minister of state in the Refahiyol government before becoming a prominent figure in the AKP era as a foreign minister, deputy prime minister, prime minister, and president—left Qaddafi's tent in protest (Çakır, 2020). See also Kirişçi (1997).
- 7 See, for example, İsmail Cem's depiction of Türkiye as a 'multi-civilizational' actor which should capitalize on its 'historical geography', including North Africa (Cem, 2001, pp. 5, 49) or Ahmet Davutoğlu's argument that Türkiye can expand its area of influence if it can successfully 'synthesize the virtue of the East, the rationality of the West, the quest for justice of the South in the face of inequality, and the economic productivity and efficiency of the North' (Davutoğlu, 2011, p. 51).
- 8 The Eyalets of Tripolitania, Tunisia, and Egypt in the north represented significant Ottoman polities. In the east, it was the Eyalet of Habesh.
- 9 See also Hazar (2016); İpek (2014); Özkan (2010); Özkan and Akgün (2010); and Tepeciklioğlu and Tepeciklioğlu (2021).
- 10 Ahmet Davutoğlu was the prime minister of Türkiye and the leader of the AKP from 2014 to 2016, minister of foreign affairs from 2009 to 2014, and chief foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from 2002 to 2009.
- 11 The term 'zero problems with neighbours' was popularized by Davutoğlu when he was Türkiye's minister of foreign affairs and was framed as a policy of pursuing closer relations with Türkiye's neighbours, especially in the Middle East and North Africa. See Davutoğlu's book, *Strategic Depth* (2001), which forms the basis of his foreign policy assessment. See also Davutoğlu (2013) for a self-assessment of his zero problems with neighbours policy.
- 12 For a more detailed discussion of the Turkish government's reactions to the uprising, see Süsler (2020, pp. 73–105).
- 13 See Süsler and Alden (2022) for Türkiye's engagement with sub-Saharan Africa and African responses.
- 14 See *Africa Intelligence* (2021a); Alharathy (2021); Bal (2021); and *Milliyet* (2021).
- 15 See Kirişçi (2009, pp. 34–38) for a review of the literature on foreign policy trends in the early years of the AKP.
- 16 See Republic of Türkiye (2020).
- 17 See, for example, the findings of the UN Panel of Experts on Libya on the transfer of military materiel from Egypt and Russia to General Haftar's affiliated forces (UNSC, 2021a, p. 24).
- 18 For more on Türkiye's history with coups d'états and civil–military relations, see Gürsoy (2011, pp. 192–95; 2012, pp. 741–42). See Daragahi (2024) for potential parallels relevant to understanding President Erdoğan's reaction to the coup d'état in Egypt.
- 19 See, for example, Cagaptay (2013); Jones (2013); and Süsler (2020, p. 146).
- 20 President Erdoğan described el-Sisi as an 'illegitimate tyrant', for example (Reuters, 2014).
- 21 Raising four fingers because Rabaa means 'fourth' in Arabic.
- 22 See, for example, the statement of Çeviköz, where he warns that Türkiye is potentially violating the UNSC Resolution 1973 (2011) (UNSC, 2011a) prohibiting arms exports to Libya (TBMM, 2019, pp. 10–13). In December 2020, Çeviköz restated his party's opposition in another speech to the General Assembly of Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye) (CHP, 2020).
- 23 The CHP was not alone in its opposition. Other parties, including the İyi Parti (Good Party) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), for example, expressed dissenting opinions about the military cooperation agreement between Türkiye and Libya's GNA signed on 27 November 2019 (TBMM, 2019, pp. 13–17).
- 24 Author interview with Çeviköz in Ankara, Türkiye, 11 April 2023.
- 25 General Haftar's Libyan National Army was later restyled as Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), see UNSC (2021a, p. 7, footnote 6).
- 26 See *Africa Intelligence* (2021b); Dorda, Crowley, and Moshashai (2021, pp. 6, 12–13); and Zaptia (2021a; 2021b).
- 27 See Coşkun and Ülgen (2022) for an overview of the changes in Turkish foreign policy shaped by external and domestic factors.
- 28 See also Alharathy (2019).
- 29 See also Box 1.
- 30 See also *The Economist* (2022) and Witt (2022).
- 31 See also Kutlay and Öniş (2021).
- 32 See also UNPPA (2019).
- 33 See Pack and Pusztai (2020) and Ioannou and Tziarras (2020).
- 34 See, for example, UNSC (2023b, p. 4).
- 35 Author interview with Vasily Bodnar, Ambassador of Ukraine to Türkiye, Ankara, Türkiye, 11 April 2023.
- 36 For example, the MILGEM corvette project and the 'Hetman Ivan Mazepa Corvette' were built for the Ukrainian navy. MILGEM stands for *milli gemi* (national ship) and is Türkiye's national warship programme. See Serbest (2022).
- 37 See also Sezer (2022) and Reuters (2023c).
- 38 The Panel also referred to multiple reports about a Turkish private defence company called SADAT. They said it was probable that SADAT had some role in providing military training in Libya; however, the company wrote to the Panel to deny all claims about activities in Libya (UNSC, 2021a, p. 33).
- 39 In their 2022 report, the Panel noted the 'continuous presence of Turkish-backed Syrian fighters in GNU–Affiliated Forces' military camps in Tripoli' and that '[o]fficials affiliated to the GNU–Affiliated forces confirmed the presence of Syrians in Tripoli but denied their involvement in any military or civilian activities' (UNSC, 2022, p. 12). Similarly, in their 2023 report, the Panel noted that 'Turkish-backed Syrian fighters remained consistently present in different GNU Armed Forces' military camps in the Tripoli region'. They 'alternated between Libya and Syria' and 'remained in military camps while in Libya and did not engage in any military activities on the ground' (UNSC, 2023a, p. 14).
- 40 KERKES stands for 'Global Positioning System Independent Autonomous Navigation System Development Project'.
- 41 See Baykar (n.d.) for more information about this drone.
- 42 See also Harchaoui (2023).
- 43 See also Ryan (2021).
- 44 In contrast, the diver training for the Libyan Coast Guard in November 2022 was considered compliant since it was provided to a civilian body (UNSC, 2023a, p. 175).

References

- Abdul, Kazim. 2022. 'Libya Eyes Turkish Akinci, Bayraktar TB2 Drones, Signs Military Cooperation Agreement.' *Military Africa*. 31 October.
- Abun-Nasr, Jamil M. 1987. *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Africa Intelligence*. 2021a. 'With Bolloré Out of the Picture, Turkey's Albayrak Eager for Misrata Port Concession.' 5 March.
- . 2021b. 'Turkish Construction Firm Sembol Back in Business in Tripoli.' 5 November.
- Alharathy, Safa. 2019. 'Customs Authority Seize More Than 20,000 Pistols in Misurata Port.' *The Libya Observer*. 9 January.
- . 2021. 'Misrata Free Zone Inks MoU With Turkish Giant Yildirim.' *The Libya Observer*. 28 June.
- Al Jazeera. 2019. 'Libya's Haftar Announces "Decisive Battle" to Capture Tripoli.' 12 December.
- . 2021. 'Abdul Hamid Dbeibah: Who is Libya's New Prime Minister?' 6 February.
- . 2023. 'Libya Parliament Suspends Rival Eastern-based PM Bashagha.' 16 May.
- Al-Shadeedi, Hamzeh, Erwin van Veen, and Jalel Harchaoui. 2020. *One Thousand and One Failings: Security Sector Stabilisation and Development in Libya*. Report. The Hague: The Clingendael Institute. April.

- Assad, Abdulkader. 2018. 'Libya and Turkey Talk Military Cooperation.' *The Libya Observer*. 5 November.
- . 2022. 'Libya and Turkey Sign MoU in Energy and Gas.' *The Libya Observer*. 3 October.
- . 2023a. 'Tripoli Appeals Court Suspends Implementation of Libya-Turkey Hydrocarbons MoU.' *The Libya Observer*. 10 January.
- . 2023b. 'Turkish Deputy FM Confirms to Menfi Ankara's Readiness to Help in Rebuilding Libyan Floods-hit Area.' *The Libya Observer*. 30 October.
- . 2024. 'Haftar's Son Signs Contracts with Turkish Companies to Implement Projects in Benghazi.' *The Libya Observer*. 3 April.
- Ataman, Muhittin. 2002. 'Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy.' *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 120–53.
- Aydemir, Mucahit. 2021. 'Exclusive: Turkey "Friend and Ally" to Libya: Interim PM.' Anadolu Agency. 7 February.
- Aydin, Aysegul and Patrick M. Regan. 2011. 'Networks of Third-party Interveners and Civil War Duration.' *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 573–97. 1 September.
- Aydin-Düzgüt, Senem. 2014. 'The Seesaw Friendship Between Turkey's AKP and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.' The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 24 July.
- Aydıntaşbaş, Asli and Sinan Ülgen. 2020. 'A Conflict Could Be Brewing in the Eastern Mediterranean. Here's How to Stop It.' *The Washington Post*. 17 September.
- Bal, Ayse Betül. 2021. 'Turkey's Planned Logistics Base in Libya to Revitalize Region.' *Daily Sabah* (Istanbul). 25 May.
- Baykar. n.d. 'Bayraktar AKINCI.' Accessed 25 September 2024.
- BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). 2019. 'Libya Conflict: French Missiles Found on Pro-Haftar Base.' 10 July.
- . 2020a. 'Libya Conflict: Turkey Sends Troops to Shore up UN-backed Government.' 6 January.
- . 2020b. 'Libya Crisis: France Suspends NATO Mission Role Amid Turkey Row.' 2 July.
- . 2023. 'How Are "Kamikaze" Drones Being Used by Russia and Ukraine?' 29 December.
- . n.d. 'Turkey's Ghost Ships – BBC Africa Eye Documentary.' YouTube. Posted 26 March 2020.
- Bourhous, Amal. 2022. 'Libya's Electoral Limbo: The Crisis of Legitimacy.' SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) WritePeace Blog. 29 April.
- Brzozowski, Alexandra. 2020. 'NATO Opens Probe into France-Turkey Naval Incident in Mediterranean.' Euractiv. 19 June.
- Cagaptay, Soner. 2013. 'Erdogan's Empathy for Morsi.' The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. 14 September.
- Çakır, Ruşen. 2020. 'Gomaşinen (1): Çöl çadırında Erbakan-Kaddafi görüşmesi.' Medyascope. 6 October.
- Çavuşoğlu, Mevlüt. 2022. 'Dışişleri Bakanı Sayın Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu'nun TV Net'e Verdiği Özel Röportaj.' Interview by Net Bakış Özel. Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 11 October.
- Cem, İsmail. 2001. *Turkey in the New Century*, 2nd edn. Mersin: Rüstem.
- Çetinkaya, Tuncer. 2014. 'Libya askerleri Türkiye'deki eğitimlerini tamamladı.' Anadolu Agency. 25 March.
- Chorin, Ethan. 2020. 'Libya's Split Brings Turkish Delight and Russian Revenge.' *Newsweek*. 31 January.
- CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi). 2020. 'CHP'nin Dışişleri Komisyonu Sözcüsü Çeviköz, Libya Tezkeresi üzerine CHP Gurubu adına konuştu.' 22 December.
- Coşkun, Alper and Sinan Ülgen. 2022. *Political Change and Turkey's Foreign Policy*. Paper. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 14 November.
- Coşkun, Orhan, Jonathan Spicer, and Ece Toksabay. 2021. 'Turkey Expands Armed Drone Sales to Ethiopia and Morocco – Sources.' Reuters. 14 October.
- Council of the EU (European Union). 2020. Council Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1309 of 21 September 2020 Implementing Article 21(2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/44 Concerning Restrictive Measures in View of the Situation in Libya. *Official Journal*, L 305l. 21 September.
- Council on Foreign Relations. 2024. 'Civil Conflict in Libya.' Global Conflict Tracker by Center for Preventative Action. 15 July. Accessed 25 September 2024.
- Cramer, Maria. 2021. 'A.I. Drone May Have Acted on its Own in Attacking Fighters, U.N. Says.' *The New York Times*. 3 June.
- Cumhuriyet*. 1980. 'Türk ve Libya Ekonomik Görüşmeleri Başladı.' Page 1. 12 December.
- . 2011. 'Erdoğan: Operasyon işgale dönüşmemeli.' 21 March.
- Daily Sabah* (Istanbul). 2019. 'Turkish Navy Kicks Off Largest Drill in its History.' 28 February.
- . 2020. 'Turkey-Libya Deal to Complete Unfinished Construction Projects Enters Into Force.' 16 October.
- Dalacoura, Katerina. 2021. 'Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Power Projection and Post-ideological Politics.' *International Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 4, pp. 1125–42.
- Dalay, Galip. 2021. 'Turkey, Europe, and the Eastern Mediterranean: Charting a Way Out of the Current Deadlock.' Brookings Doha Center. 28 January.
- Daragahi, Borzou. 2019. 'US is "Disturbing Peace and Quiet of Middle East," Erdogan Says.' *Independent* (Istanbul). 21 June.
- . 2024. 'Turkey and Egypt Bury the Hatchet, Marking an End to Emerging Third Axis in the Middle East.' Atlantic Council. 15 March.
- Daventry, Michael. 2020. 'Emmanuel Macron: "Turkey is playing a Dangerous Game in Libya."' Euronews. 23 June.
- Davutoğlu, Ahmet. 2001. *Strategic Depth*. Istanbul: Küre.
- . 2011. 'AB, İslam Dünyası ve Türkiye.' In Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*. Istanbul: Küre, pp. 43–51.
- . 2013. 'Speech Delivered by Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, London School of Economics and Political Science.' Speech transcript provided by the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. London, 7 March.
- DHA. n.d. 'Terörle mücadelede 'kamikaze drone'lar kullanılıyor.' YouTube. Posted 5 March 2020.
- Docherty, Bonnie, Julie Fitzpatrick and Trevor Keck. 2012. *Losing Humanity: The Case Against Killer Robots*. Report. HRW (Human Rights Watch). 19 November.
- Dorda, Mohamed, Oliver Crowley, and Daniel Moshashai. 2021. *Inside Libya*. Report. Tunis: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. October.
- Dündar, Can. 2008. *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim: İsmail Cem Kitabı*. Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Ekiz, Aynur. 2022. 'TBMM Başkanı Şentop, Libya Temsilciler Meclisi Başkanı Salih ile görüştü.' Anadolu Agency. 2 August.
- Ertosun, Erkan. 2016. 'Change and Leadership in Foreign Policy: The Case of Turgut Ozal's Premiership in Turkey, 1983–1989.' *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 47–66.
- Eser, Emre. 2019. 'İlk drone gücü 2020'de.' *Hürriyet*. 12 September.
- Fahim, Kareem. 2020. 'Turkey's Military Campaign Beyond its Borders is Powered by Homemade Armed Drones.' *The Washington Post*. 29 November.
- Farge, Emma. 2021. 'UN Talks Adjourn Without Deal to Regulate "Killer Robots".' Reuters. 17 December.
- Florquin, Nicolas and Benjamin King. 2018. *From Legal to Lethal: Converted Firearms in Europe*. Report. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. April.
- France 24. 2019. 'Libya's UN-backed Govt Accuses France of Supporting Haftar, Ends Cooperation.' 18 April.
- . 2022. 'Turkey and Libya Sign Maritime Hydrocarbons Deal.' 3 October.
- Gaub, Florence. 2014. 'The EU and Libya and the Art of the Possible.' *The International Spectator*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 40–53.
- Gazzini, Claudia. 2023. *Against Seeming Odds, Assistance Comes to Derna*. Visual Explainer. International Crisis Group. 26 September.
- Göktaş, Meryem. 2018. 'Turkish Defense Minister Holds Official Visits in Libya.' Anadolu Agency. 6 November.
- Gürdeniz, Cem. 2020. 'Turkey in the Century of the Sea and Asia.' *BRIQ Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 81–22.
- Gürsoy, Yaprak. 2011. 'The Changing Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: Democratization Through Coup Plots?' *Democratization*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 735–60.
- . 2012. 'The Final Curtain for the Turkish Armed Forces? Civil–Military Relations in View of the 2011 General Elections.' *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 191–211.
- Hale, William. 2013. *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 3rd edn. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hambling, David. 2021. 'Drones May Have Attacked Humans Fully Autonomously for the First Time.' *New Scientist*. 27 May.
- Hammady, Omar. 2022. 'What Went Wrong with Libya's Failed Elections.' *Foreign Policy*. 18 February.
- Harchaoui, Jalel. 2021. 'Who Are Libya's New Leaders?' *OrientXXI*. 20 February.
- . 2023. 'Libya's Fragile Deadlock.' *War on the Rocks*. 6 March.

- Hayatsever, Huseyin and Nadine Awadalla. 2023. 'Egypt, Turkey Appoint Ambassadors to Upgrade Diplomatic Relations.' Reuters. 4 July.
- Hazar, Numan. 2016. *Türkiye Afrika İlişkileri: Türkiye'nin Dost Kitaya Açılım Stratejisi*. Ankara: AKçağ Yayınları.
- Hürriyet. 2001. 'Libya ile yeni dönem.' 21 January.
- . 2011. 'NATO'nun Libya'da ne işi var.' 1 March.
- Hürriyet Daily News. 2014. 'Turkey, Libya Pledge to Boost Energy Alliance.' 5 January.
- . 2021. 'Armed with Drones, Turkey Explores African Arms Sales.' 15 December.
- . 2022. 'Türkiye, Libya Sign Defense Deals.' 26 October.
- . 2023. 'Parliament Extends Mandate for Troops in Libya.' 1 December.
- Ioannou, Ioannis Sotirios and Zenonas Tziarras. 2020. *Turning the Tide in Libya: Rival Administrations in a New Round of Conflict*. Policy Brief. Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.
- İpek, Volkan. 2014. 'The 2011 Landing of Turkey on Somalia: The "State to People" Aspect of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa.' *European Scientific Journal*, Special Edition, pp. 412–28. May.
- Irish, John and Robin Emmott. 2020. 'France-Turkey Tensions Mount After NATO Naval Incident.' Reuters. 7 July.
- Jones, Dorian. 2013. 'Parallels Drawn Between Turkey and Egypt's Political Turmoil.' Voice of America. 12 July.
- Karlén, Niklas, Vladimir Rauta, Idean Salehyan, Andrew Mumford, Belgin San-Akca, Alexandra Stark, Michel Wyss, Assaf Moghadam, Allard Duursma, Henning Tamm, Erin K. Jenne, Milos Popovic, David S. Siroky, Vanessa Meier, Alexandra Chinchilla, Kit Rickard, and Giuseppe Spatafora. 2021. 'Forum: Conflict Delegation in Civil Wars.' *International Studies Review*, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 2048–78.
- Kavas, Ahmet. 2011. 'Türkiye - Libya.' TASAM (Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies). 21 June.
- Kaya, Sümbül. 2022. *Turkey's Multi-sectorial Strategy in Libya: A Gateway to the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa*. Report, No. 100. Paris: IRSEM (Institute de Reserche Strategique de L'ecole Militaire). November.
- Kinross, Patrick Balfour. 1977. *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc.
- Kinzer, Stephen. 1996. 'Tirade by Qaddafi Stuns Turkey.' *The New York Times*. 9 October.
- . 1998. 'A Dynamo Redefines Turks' Role in the World.' *The New York Times*. 2 August.
- Kirişçi, Kemal. 1997. 'Post Cold-war Turkish Security and the Middle East.' *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2.
- . 2009. 'The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State.' *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 40, pp. 29–57.
- Koloğlu, Orhan. 2008. 'Libya, From the Ottoman Perspective (1835–1918).' *Africa: Rivista Trimestrale Di Studi e Documentazione Dell'Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente*, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 275–82.
- Kutlay, Mustafa and Ziya Öniş. 2021. 'Turkish Foreign Policy in a Post-western Order: Strategic Autonomy or New Forms of Dependence?' *International Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 4, pp. 1085–104.
- Lacher, Wolfram. 2019. *Who is Fighting Whom in Tripoli? How the 2019 Civil War is Transforming Libya's Military Landscape*. Briefing Paper. Geneva: Small Arms Survey. August.
- Lewis, Aidan. 2020. 'Turkish Support for Tripoli Could "Rebalance Forces" in Libya.' Reuters. 7 January.
- Marson, James and Brett Forrest. 2021. 'Armed Low-cost Drones, Made by Turkey, Reshape Battlefields and Geopolitics.' *The Wall Street Journal*. 3 June.
- Mehmetcik, Hakan and Arda Can Çelik. 2021. 'The Militarization of Turkish Foreign Policy.' *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 24–41.
- Milliyet. 2021. 'Süveyş kanalındaki kaza Libya'nın Türkiye için önemini ortaya koydu.' 30 March.
- Mourad, Mahmoud. 2020. 'Egypt and Greece Sign Agreement on Exclusive Economic Zone.' Reuters. 6 August.
- Nickels, Benjamin. 2013. 'Pitfalls for Libya's General Purpose Force.' *Sada*. 10 October.
- Öniş, Ziya. 2004. 'Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-liberalism in Critical Perspective.' *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 113–34.
- . 2012. 'Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-interest.' *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 45–63.
- and Şuğnaz Yılmaz. 2009. 'Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey During the AKP Era.' *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 7–24.
- Özer, Dilara Aslan. 2022. 'Türkiye Hosts Libya's 2021 Prime Ministers on Same Dates.' *Daily Sabah*. 4 September.
- Özkan, Behlül. 2014. 'Turkey, Davutoglu, and the Idea of Pan-Islamism.' *Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 56, No. 4, pp. 119–40.
- Özkan, Mehmet. 2010. 'What Drives Turkey's Involvement in Africa?' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 37, No. 126, pp. 533–40.
- . 2012. 'A New Actor or Passer-by? The Political Economy of Turkey's Engagement With Africa.' *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 113–33.
- and Birol Akgün. 2010. 'Turkey's Opening to Africa.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. 525–46.
- Pack, Jason and Wolfgang Puzsai. 2020. *Turning the Tide: How Turkey Won the War for Tripoli*. Policy Paper. Washington DC: The Middle East Institute. November.
- Polat, Ferhat. 2021. *Mercenaries in Libya and the Threat to Regional Peace*. Policy Outlook. Istanbul: TRT World Research Centre. 28 June.
- Regan, Patrick M. 1996. 'Conditions of Successful Third-party Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts.' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 342–44.
- . 2002. 'Third-party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts.' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 46, No. 1, pp. 55–73. February.
- Republic of Türkiye. 2020. 'Letter dated 18 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.' 18 March.
- Republic of Türkiye and GNA (Government of National Accord, Libya). 2019. 'Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of National Accord, State of Libya, on the Delimitation of the Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean.' 27 November.
- Republic of Türkiye DoC (Directorate of Communications). 2020. 'A Strategic Step in the Eastern Mediterranean Equation: the Türkiye-Libya Agreement.' 2020. Ankara: Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye.
- . 2023. *President Erdoğan's Assessment of 2022*. Ankara: Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. 1 January.
- Reuters. 2014. 'Egypt Summons Turkish Diplomat Over Erdogan's Criticism of Sisi.' 20 July.
- . 2020a. 'U.N. Registers Turkey-Libya Maritime Deal – Turkish Ministry.' 2 October.
- . 2020b. 'Turkish Parliament Passes Libya Deployment Bill, but Troops Unlikely for Now.' 2 January.
- . 2020c. 'Turkey Says EU Sanctions on Turkish Firm Over Libya Embargo Show Bias.' 22 September.
- . 2021a. 'Turkey Says Mercenaries Should Leave Libya, but it Has Military Pact with Government.' 6 May.
- . 2021b. 'Poland to Become First NATO Country to Buy Turkish Drones.' 22 May.
- . 2022. 'Clashes Rock Outskirts of Libyan Capital.' 3 September.
- . 2023a. 'Libya's Tripoli Government Targets More Western Towns With Drone Strikes.' 2 June.
- . 2023b. 'Turkey, Egypt Say They Will Cooperate More Closely on Libya.' 13 April.
- . 2023c. 'Ukraine Signs Agreement with Turkish Company on Drones Repair.' 31 July.
- Ryan, Missy. 2021. 'UN Slams "Extensive, Blatant" Violations of Libya Arms Embargo.' *The Washington Post*. 16 March.
- Sabah. 2009. 'Libya'ya tarihi ziyaret.' 24 November.
- . 2019. 'İstanbul'da Mursi için kılınan gıyabi cenaze namazında Başkan Erdoğan da saf tuttu.' 18 June.
- Salehyan, Idean, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham. 2011. 'Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups.' *International Organization*, Vol. 65, No. 4, pp. 709–44.
- San-Akca, Belgin. 2016. *States in Disguise: Causes of State Support for Rebel Groups*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sayin, Ayse. 2020. 'Libya tezkeresi Meclis'ten geçti, Genel Kurul'da neler yaşandı?' *BBC News*, 2 January.
- Serbest, Eyüp. 2022. 'Ukrayna'nın MİLGEM'i denize indil Zelenska "geminin annesi" oldu.' *Hürriyet*. 4 October.
- Sezer, Can. 2022. 'Turkey's Baykar to Complete Plant in Ukraine in Two Years – CEO.' Reuters. 28 October.
- Soyaltın-Collela, Digidem and Tolga Demiryol. 2023. 'Unusual Middle Power Activism and Regime Survival: Turkey's Drone Warfare and Its Regime-boosting Effects.' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 724–43.

- Sözen, Ahmet. 2010. 'A Paradigm Shift In Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges.' *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 103–23.
- Stephen, Chris and Ewen MacAskill. 2014. 'Cameron's Plan to Train Libyan Soldiers Had Makings of Disaster From the Start.' *The Guardian*. 4 November.
- STM. 2022. 'STM Delivers KERKES Project.' 10 October.
- . 2024. 'Kargu.' Accessed 25 September 2024.
- . n.d.a. 'KARGU - Autonomous Tactical Multi-Rotor Attack UAV.' YouTube. Posted 28 April 2018.
- . n.d.b. 'STM | KARGU - Rotary Wing Attack Drone Loitering Munition System.' YouTube. Posted 26 August 2020.
- Stop Killer Robots. 2021. 'Less Autonomy, More Humanity.' Accessed 25 September 2024.
- Süslser, Buğra. 2020. *Turkey, the EU, and the Middle East: Foreign Policy Cooperation and the Arab Uprisings*. London: Routledge.
- . 2022. *Turkey's Involvement in the Libyan Conflict, the Geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean and Drone Warfare*. Report. London: LSE IDEAS. 01 August.
- and Chris Alden. 2022. 'Turkey and African Agency: The Role of Islam and Commercialism in Turkey's Africa Policy.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp. 597–617.
- Tastekin, Fehim. 2022a. 'Turkey Looks to Sell Armed Drones to Libya.' *Al-Monitor*. 29 October.
- . 2022b. 'After Years of Hostility, Turkey Forges Ties With Eastern Libya.' *Al-Monitor*. 4 August.
- TBMM (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi). 2019. *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Dışişleri Komisyonu Raporu*, No. 155. Report. Ankara: TBMM. 16 December.
- . 2023. *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Genel Kurul Tutanağı, 28 Dönem, 2 Yasama Yılı, 28 Birleşim*. Ankara: TBMM. 30 November.
- Tepeciklioğlu, Elem Eyrice and Ali Onur Tepeciklioğlu. 2021. 'Introduction: Contextualizing Turkey's Africa Policy.' In Elem Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu and Ali Onur Tepeciklioğlu, eds. *Turkey in Africa: A New Emerging Power?* London: Routledge, pp. 1–16.
- The Arab Weekly*. 2023. 'GNU-led Military Operation in Zawiya Risks Sparking Wider Violence in Western Libya.' 31 May.
- The Economist*. 2020. 'Turkey is Wielding Influence All Over the Arab World.' 1 August.
- . 2022. 'Turkey is the Arms Industry's New Upstart.' 12 February.
- The Guardian*. 2022. 'Libya Has Two Prime Ministers as Political Divisions Deepen.' 10 February.
- Tocci, Nathalie, Ömer Taşpınar, Henri J. Barkey, Eduard Soler i Lecha, and Hassan Nafaa. 2011. *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy From a Transatlantic Perspective*. Mediterranean Paper Series. Washington, DC: The German Marshall Fund of the United States.
- TRT. 2021a. 'Milli Savunma Bakanı Akar: Libya'da yabancı güç değiliz.' 16 November.
- . 2021b. 'Türkiye'nin Libya'ya ihracatı 826 milyon dolara yükseldi.' 15 May.
- . 2024. 'Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Libya Başbakanı Dibeybe'yi kabul etti.' 31 May.
- Tziarras, Zenonas. 2022. *Turkish Foreign Policy: The Lausanne Syndrome in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.
- UK (United Kingdom) Foreign Affairs Committee. 2022. *Oral Evidence: UK-Libya Relations*, HC 609. 12 July. London: House of Commons.
- UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2020. Letter Dated 18 March 2020 From the Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General. A/74/757 of 18 March.
- UN (United Nations) Journal. 2022. Joint Statement on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems First Committee, 77th United Nations General Assembly Thematic Debate – Conventional Weapons. 21 October.
- UNPPA (United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs). 2019. 'Interview with UN Special Representative for Libya Ghassan Salamé.' YouTube. 25 September.
- UNSC (United Nations Security Council). 2011a. Resolution 1973 (2011). Adopted 17 March. S/RES/1973 (2011) of 17 March.
- . 2011b. Resolution 1970 (2011). Adopted 26 February. S/RES/1970 (2011) of 26 February.
- . 2011c. 'Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" Over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians, By Vote of 10 in Favour with 5 Abstentions.' SC/10200 of 17 March 2011.
- . 2013. Resolution 2095 (2013). Adopted 14 March. S/RES/2095 (2013) of 14 March.
- . 2014. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2014/106 of 19 February.
- . 2015. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2015/128 of 23 February.
- . 2016. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2016/209 of 9 March.
- . 2019. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2019/914 of 09 December.
- . 2020. 'Special Representative Expresses Outrage Over Actors Talking Peace While Fuelling Conflict in Libya, as Security Council Hears Calls for End to Foreign Meddling.' SC/14092 of 30 January.
- . 2021a. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2021/229 of 8 March.
- . 2021b. Report of the Secretary-General. S/2021/451 of 11 May.
- . 2022. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2022/427 of 27 May.
- . 2023a. Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011). S/2023/673 of 15 September.
- . 2023b. Resolution 2701 (2023). Adopted 19 October. S/RES/2701 (2023) of 19 October.
- UNSMIL (United Nations Support Mission in Libya). 2020a. The Berlin Conference on Libya. Conference Conclusions. No. 31/20 of 19 January.
- . 2020b. Agreement for a Complete and Permanent Ceasefire in Libya. Unofficial Translation. Geneva, 23 October.
- . 2021. The Second Berlin Conference on Libya. Conference Conclusions. 23 June.
- . 2024. 'Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.' 7–15 November 2020. Accessed 25 September 2024.
- Wadhwa, Vivek and Alex Salkever. 2021. 'Killer Flying Robots Are Here. What Do We Do Now?' *Foreign Policy*. 5 July.
- Wallace, Ben. 2020. 'Defence Secretary Keynote Speech at the Air and Space Power Conference 2020.' Speech transcript provided by the UK Ministry of Defence. 15 July.
- Walsh, Declan. 2020. 'In Stunning Reversal, Turkey Emerges as Libya Kingmaker.' *The New York Times*. 21 May.
- . 2021. 'Foreign Drones Tip the Balance in Ethiopia's Civil War.' *The New York Times*. 20 December.
- Westcott, Thom. 2013. 'Libyan Soldiers Start Military Training in Turkey.' *Libya Herald*. 7 December.
- Winer, Jonathan M. 2022. 'Struggle Over Legitimacy in Libya Begins Third Period of Dueling Governments.' Middle East Institute. 14 February.
- WITS (World Integrated Trade Solution database). n.d.a. 'Turkey Product Exports and Imports to Libya in 2000.' Accessed 1 August 2024.
- . n.d.b. 'Turkey Product Exports and Imports to Libya in 2010.' Accessed 1 August 2024.
- Witt, Stephen. 2022. 'The Turkish Drone That Changed the Nature of Warfare.' *The New Yorker*. 9 May.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan. 2016. 'Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-national Vision.' *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 56, No. 3, pp. 438–65.
- Yaycı, Cihat. 2011. 'Doğu Akdeniz'de Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Sınırlandırılmasında Libya'nın Rolü ve Etkisi.' *Güvenlik Stratejileri Dergisi*, Vol. 7, No. 14, pp. 17–41.
- . 2022. *Blue Homeland: A Book of a Land and a Doctrine*. Istanbul: Istanbul University Press.
- Yılmaz, Mehmet Şah. 2021. 'Turkey Reiterates its Continued Support to Libyan Government.' Anadolu Agency. 13 November.
- Yüzbaşıoğlu, Nazlı, Behlül Çetinkaya, and İclal Turan. 2021. 'Turkish Drones to Strengthen Capabilities of the Polish Army.' Anadolu Agency. 19 June.
- Zaptia, Sami. 2021a. 'LIA Invests in Stalled LIDCO Tripoli Gate Project – Restarting Construction Sector Projects.' *Libya Herald*. 9 September.
- . 2021b. 'After a Ten-year Halt: LIDCO's Zumurrud Tripoli Gate Project Resumes Work – Foreign Contractors Will be Watching Closely.' *Libya Herald*. 27 March.
- Zelinsky, Nathaniel. 2013. 'What This Hand Gesture Means for Egypt's Future.' *The Atlantic*. 17 September.

About the SANA project

The **Security Assessment in North Africa** is a multi-year project of the Small Arms Survey that supports those engaged in building a more secure environment in North Africa and the Sahel-Saharan region. The project produces timely, evidence-based research and analysis on the availability and circulation of small arms, the dynamics of emerging armed groups, and related insecurity. The research stresses the effects of uprisings and armed conflicts in the region on security-related issues.

The Security Assessment in North Africa receives ongoing funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. It has previously received grants from Global Affairs Canada, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Foreign Office, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the US State Department.

For more information, please visit: www.smallarmssurvey.org/sana.

The **Small Arms Survey** is a centre for applied knowledge dedicated to preventing and reducing illicit small arms proliferation and armed violence. The Survey informs policy and practice through a combination of data, evidence-based knowledge, authoritative resources and tools, and tailored expert advice and training, and by bringing together practitioners and policymakers.

The Survey is an associated programme of the Geneva Graduate Institute, located in Switzerland, and has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, criminology, and database and programme management. It collaborates with a network of researchers, practitioners, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

The Survey's activities and outputs are made possible through core support as well as project funding. A full list of current donors and projects can be accessed via the Small Arms Survey website.

For more information, please visit: www.smallarmssurvey.org.

Contact details

Small Arms Survey
Maison de la Paix, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2E
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

t +41 22 908 5777

e info@smallarmssurvey.org

A publication of the Small Arms Survey's Security Assessment in North Africa (SANA), with support from the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Follow the
Small Arms Survey



@SmallArmsSurvey



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands