

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF TURKEY'S MILITARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract. This article examines the distinctive characteristics of Turkey's military education system, analyzing its historical development, structural organization, and contemporary reforms. The research demonstrates that Turkey's military educational system contains its complex Ottoman military heritage which combines Western teaching methods and modern security needs while undergoing major changes since 2016.

Keywords: military education, Turkey, NATO, military academies, defense studies, educational reform, Turkish Armed Forces

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola Turkiyaning harbiy ta'lim tizimiga xos o'ziga xos jihatlarni o'rganadi hamda uning tarixiy rivojlanishi, tarkibiy tashkil etilishi va zamonaviy islohotlarini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, Turkiya harbiy ta'lim tizimi Usmoniylar davridagi harbiy an'analar, G'arb ta'lim modellari va zamonaviy xavfsizlik talablarining murakkab uyg'unlashuvidan iborat bo'lib, 2016-yildan keyingi davrda sezilarli o'zgarishlarni boshdan kechirmoqda.

Kalit so'zlar: harbiy ta'lim, Turkiya, NATO, harbiy akademiyalar, mudofaa tadqiqotlari, ta'lim islohoti, Turkiya Qurolli Kuchlari

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются отличительные особенности системы военного образования Турции, анализируются её историческое развитие, структурная организация и современные реформы. Результаты исследования показывают, что система военного образования Турции представляет собой сложный синтез османских военных традиций, западных образовательных моделей и современных требований безопасности, при этом она претерпевает значительные преобразования в пост-2016 период.

Ключевые слова: военное образование, Турция, НАТО, военные академии, оборонные исследования, образовательная реформа, Вооружённые силы Турции

Introduction. The military education systems establish basic training grounds which produce national defense experts and develop officer training programs and create military strategic doctrines for their armed forces. Turkey, which lies between Europe and Asia, has created a unique military education system which combines its Ottoman military traditions with its desire to become a western nation [1]. The Turkish Armed Forces have historical ties to the secular republic that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established because they have operated educational centers which develop battle skills and teach soldiers to defend republic values [2]. The understanding of Turkish military education develops essential importance because NATO operates its southeastern security system and Turkey changes its regional power position and implements major changes after the July 2016 coup attempt.

Methodology and Literature Analysis. The research study uses a research methodology that depends on the analytical assessment of academic literature and official documents and expert publications which focus on Turkish military education. The educational system of Turkish military training has existed since the 19th century when Ottoman modernization efforts began to establish military high schools and military academies and war colleges as its three



main educational components which underwent major changes during the early republican period [3]. The Turkish model establishes a fundamental difference from most Western systems because it initiates recruitment at military high schools when students reach fourteen years old which results in extended time for military personnel to acquire institutional socialization skills [4]. Turkish military education shows elements of both continental European traditions and American models which NATO standardized after Turkey joined the alliance in 1952 according to Russian defense analysts who studied the system [5].

The literature reveals considerable attention to the ideological dimension of Turkish military education which provides cadets with extensive instruction about Kemalist principles that establish armed forces as defenders of secularism and modernization against perceived internal threats [6]. International comparative studies indicate that Turkish military academies have traditionally maintained higher academic standards than many regional counterparts which offer engineering programs and social sciences programs and strategic studies programs and military studies programs [7]. The post-2016 transformation marks the most extensive transformation of the republic's military structure because existing military academies closed their doors while National Defense University took their place under enhanced civilian administrative control which has led to significant scholarly research about its effects on military education and relationships between military and civilian authorities [8].

Results and Discussion. The literary analysis shows that Turkey's military education system has unique characteristics which separate it from similar educational systems found in other countries. The first distinctive feature concerns the historical depth and institutional continuity of Turkish military education which traces its origins to the Ottoman Military Engineering School established in 1734 and subsequently developed through continuous reform efforts spanning nearly three centuries. The long history of the institution has established deep-rooted traditions which include both professional standards and organizational customs that continue to exist despite the institution's periodic changes thus creating a distinct educational system for Turkish military training which newer countries cannot match due to their lack of historical development. The second distinctive characteristic involves the comprehensive nature of military socialization which begins at secondary education and continues through advanced military education programs to create an institutional system that shapes officers' social networks and professional identities according to scholarly research.

The third distinctive element describes military education through its dedicated ideological mission which includes teaching Kemalist principles and secular republican values as essential elements of the curriculum, which military personnel must learn for their professional development [6]. Military education functions as an ideological tool that perpetuates a specific Turkish national identity and state organization model, which Western military educational systems demonstrate through their focus on technical skills and their requirement for political neutrality. The fourth distinctive feature shows how Turkey's special geopolitical location has created military education programs which now teach students to handle three different areas of defense at the same time, including European defense needs, Middle Eastern security threats, and national counterinsurgency operations, which require officers to develop skills that other countries with limited geographic bases do not need to match [9].

The post-2016 reforms constitute a fifth distinctive characteristic, which introduced a new form of civilian control over military training programs that changed fundamental military ties to educational organizations. The National Defense University was established under the Ministry of National Defense which created a new system that combined military cadets with civilian students and introduced civilian faculty members to Turkish military training programs. The reforms produced academic discussions about their effects on military operations because analysts predicted they would harm combat skills and military unity, while others found value in the stronger civilian authority that might lead to more democratic civil-military connections.



Conclusion. This analytical review has identified the distinctive features characterizing Turkey's military education system, including its deep historical roots, comprehensive socialization practices, explicit ideological mission, geopolitically-driven curricular diversity, and unprecedented contemporary reforms. The Turkish case demonstrates how military education systems reflect broader national characteristics while simultaneously shaping the professional cultures and strategic orientations of armed forces. The post-2016 transformations represent a critical juncture whose long-term consequences for Turkish military professionalism and civil-military relations remain subjects for continued scholarly investigation.

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