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#14 September 2022



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TURKISH TRIUMPH

The massive Efes-2022 military exercise was the perfect way to showcase the best of Turkey's defence industry as well as its military might, writes **Marco Dijkshoorn**

Turkey's military concluded its largest exercise of the year, with 11,000 troops from 37 countries participating on June 9. The Efes-2022 Combined Joint Live Fire Exercise took place for a month at the Doganbey live-firing exercise area in the Seferihisar district of Izmir.

A biennial exercise, named after the famous archeological

site of Ephesus 40km south of Izmir, it has taken place since the 1980s and this year's version saw the largest ever participation of foreign allies and Turkish units.

Efes is known for its large-scale amphibious warfare scenarios, where naval ships project ground and air power on to the exercise area. There are several landing beaches where troops

are inserted, and with more than 50 helicopters and aircraft participating there is a large aerial component to the exercise.

The first phase of the exercise, focusing on computer-aided scenarios, had lasted until May 20 when the actual live-firing exercise kicked off.

Over the years, the drills have grown along with foreign

The hosts

Traditionally, Efes is organised by the Aegean Army Command (Ege Ordusu Komutanlığı) headquartered in Izmir. The Turkish Army Aviation Command (Türk Kara Havacılık Komutanlığı) assets were hosted by the 3rd Army Aviation Regiment Command (3ncü Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı) stationed at nearby Izmir-Gazimir airport, adjacent to the international airport of Izmir Adnan Menderes. Several Army Aviation Command units provide assets and troops to the exercise.



participation: in 2016, eight countries participated, swelling to 20 in 2018 and 37 in 2022.

With the participation of more than 10.000 Turkish troops, mainly supplied by the Turkish Ground Forces Command and Turkish Navy, the exercise included two Distinguished Observer Days. On June 8, the observers watched a very impressive “total blackout” night operation to capture a high-value target (HVT). In pitch darkness, ground-based and ship-borne artillery supported the amphibious landing, while helicopters inserted special forces that conducted a raid on the pre-designated HVT.

The author, standing just a few hundred metres away, could only hear what was going on, then the occasional exploding shell, rocket or tracer round would light up the area. Very impressive.

The day after the night raid was the closing day of the exercise, attended by Turkish President



Above: Between all the hyper-modern warfare technology, the Turkish Army used some of its oldest M48 tanks in the ground assault. They were brought to shore with four Turkish Navy LCT C-150 class landing craft

Right: In a first for the Efes-2020 exercise, a 105mm air transportable light towed howitzer was carried by an S-70A. The CH-47F Chinook carried a sea container with supplies, all under the watchful eye of two T129B Atak helicopters that provided close-air support



So far, four ATR72-600MPA (locally designated as the P-72A) have been added to the inventory of Turkish Navy Aviation Command. Delivered under the MELTEM III Program, covering the procurement of a total of six ATR72-600 aircraft and their modification into anti-submarine warfare configuration for the Turkish Navy was signed between Alenia Aermacchi S.p.A and Turkish Aerospace as far back as July 2012. The two aircraft that are pending delivery are undergoing modifications at the TAI facilities. One participated in the Efes-2022 exercise

Recep Tayyip Erdogan and many other dignitaries who flew in VIP versions of the AS532UL Cougar to the exercise grounds. The high-value target scenario would once again play out, but now in broad daylight. An amphibious assault bringing tanks and troops ashore, supported by naval and ground-based artillery, areal bombing and strafing runs were followed by Special Forces insertions from helicopters.

The Efes-2022 doctrines were organised and conducted with lessons learned from combatting terrorists in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Libya. According to the Turkish Ministry of National Defence (Milli Savunma Bakanlığı), the manoeuvres were based on scenarios that were acted out

in Operations Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Peace Spring and Spring Shield (all Syria), and Claw, Claw-Eagle, Claw-Lightning, Claw-Tiger and Claw-Thunderbolt (all Northern Iraq).

The main objectives of the exercise were to train and improve the interoperability of personnel in planning and co-ordination in combined and joint operations, including electronic warfare tactics and to test the co-operation, tactics, logistics and management in joint warfare scenarios where army, navy and air force assets are involved to respond to asymmetric and hybrid threats.

The most prominent foreign participant of Efes-2022 was the United States – the last time it



During the Distinguished Visitors Day, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was treated with some very impressive formations and manoeuvres. A rotating platform with seats ensured that the president and his entourage had the best view at all times. All photos, author

Air order of battle during the Efes-2022 exercise

Turkish Army (Türk Kara Havacılık Komutanlığı)

3ncü Ordu İnsansız Hava Araçları Sistemleri Tabur Komutanlığı, 1 x Akıncı A UCAS from Batman

Hava Ulaştırma Grup Komutanlığı, 4 x AS532UL Cougar from Ankara-Güvercinlik

1nci Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı, 1 x T129B Atak from Isparta

2nci Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı, 1 x T129B Atak from Malatya

3ncü Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı 6x AS532UL Cougar, 5 x S-70A-28D Black Hawk, 2 x T129B Atak from Izmir-Gaziemir

4nci Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı, 4 x T129B Atak from Samandıra

Özel Hava Grup Komutanlığı (Special Operations Group Command) SOF insertion: 3 x S-70A-28D from Ankara-Etimesgut

1nci Kara Havacılık Alayı Komutanlığı, Yük Helikopter Tabur Komutanlığı, 5 x CH-47F heavy transport helicopters from Ankara-Güvercinlik

Turkish Gendarmerie (Türk Jandarma Havacılık Baskanlığı)

Aydın Jandarma Helikopter Filo Komutanlığı, 1 x S-70A-28D for search and rescue

Turkish Coast Guard (Türk Sahil Güvenlik Hava Komutanlığı)

Sahil Güvenlik Izmir Hava Grup Komutanlığı, 1 x AB412EP from Izmir-Gaziemir

Turkish Navy (Türk Deniz Hava Komutanlığı)

352 Deniz Helikopter Filosu, 3 x S-70B from Dalaman

301 Deniz Hava Filosu, 1 x ATR72-600TMPA (P-72) from Dalaman

Turkish Air Force (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri)

1nci Ana Jet Üs Komutanlığı, 111 Filo, 4 x F-4E-2020 from Eskisehir

2nci Ana Jet Üssü Uçuş Eğitim Merkez Komutanlığı, 125 Filo, 1x AS532UL VIP transport, 2 x CN235M-100 for para dropping

6nci Ana Jet Üs Komutanlığı, 6 x F-16C/D of different units (132 Filo, 152 Filo, 162 Filo, 181 Filo, 191 Filo and 193 Filo) from Bandırma

12nci Hava Ulaştırma Ana Üs Komutanlığı, 222 Filo, 1 x C-130B from Kayseri

US Marine Corps (USMC)

22nd MEU operating out of the USS 'Arlington' (LPD-24) with 4 x CH-53C of VMM-263

had participated was in 2016. One US Navy San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock, the USS *Arlington* (LPD-24) with four US Marine Corps CH-53E Sea Stallions of the 22nd MEU, VMM-263 (Rein) took part. The US Navy also supplied two

Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) hovercrafts, which were used as landing craft by the United States Navy Assault Craft units.

With the large foreign participation and many observers from across the globe, it was the perfect opportunity to



No fewer than five CH-47F Chinooks were provided by Yük Helikopter Tabur Komutanlığı (Cargo Helicopter Battalion Command). Together with the US Marine Corps CH-53C Sea Stallion, they provided the heavy-lift capability to the exercise



111 Filo F-4E-2020 Terminators flew in from Eskisehir to execute target strafing runs. Their 20mm Gatling gun aimed at pre-designated ground targets and their impressive fire hit each one every time

showcase the capabilities of the Turkish defence industry. One of the most significant events of the exercise was when a Turkish Baykar Makina Akıncı A Unmanned Combat Aerial System (Taarruz İnsansız Hava Araçları or TIHA) operated by the 3rd Army Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System Battalion Command (3ncü Ordu İnsansız Hava Araçları Sistemleri Tabur Komutanlığı) dropped a Roketsan MAM-L lightweight Smart Micro Munition on one of the targets at the range.

It took off from Batman at 0320hrs and, after dropping its explosive cargo at 1200hrs, returned to its home base in

Batman, completing a round-trip of 2.600km.

Another first was that the assault helicopter support was fully provided by the TAI T129B Atak. In previous years, the AH-1P Cobra and AH-1W Super Cobra assault helicopters were still playing a role, but this year this vital close air support role was fulfilled solely by the Turkish-developed T129B Atak.

The Turkish Air Force (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri) also participated in the exercise and assigned four 111 Filo F-4E-2020 Terminators and several F-16C/D Fighting Falcons. The Terminators were operated from their home base of Eskisehir, whereas the F-16s were all gathered at Bandırma. Vipers from 132 Filo, 152 Filo, 162 Filo, 181 Filo, 191 Filo and 193 Filo were also taking part. The Phantoms and Fighting Falcons performed strafing runs at targets on the range.

During the final day, two Phantoms participated while three F-16s dropped several 2,000lb GBU-31 Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) on the range. Cargo drops were performed with a C-130B Hercules from 222 Filo and para jumps were conducted with CN235M-100 of 125 Filo operating from Izmir-Kakliç, which is nearby.

The main Turkish military contributor was the Turkish Army. Its helicopters were operating



Dipping sonar buoys dropped from three Turkish Navy S-70B Seahawk helicopters provided anti-submarine warfare capabilities to the mix

Showcase for Turkish defence industries

The Defense Industry Days exhibition was held between May 31 and June 9 when 43 Turkish defence companies displayed their products and all visitors to the Efes exercise were invited to view them.

Major corporations were present, such as Turkish Aerospace (Türk Havacılık Uzay Sanayi), Baykar Defense (Baykar Savunma) and ASELSAN, HAVELSAN. One surprising showcase was the new Kargı Loitering Munition Drone developed by Lentatek (former Vestel – manufacturer of the Karayel UCAS). The Kargı can suppress and destroy the radar of the enemy's integrated air defence and surface-to-air weapon systems. The ground systems, navigation and automatic flight control systems and software were all developed domestically.

out of Izmir-Gazimirmir army air base – also nearby – the home of the hosting 3rd Army Aviation Regiment Command. Additional Turkish Army assets consisted of S-70A-28D Black Hawk helicopters with auxiliary fuel tanks, operated by Special Air Group Command (Özel Hava Grup Komutanlığı), visiting from Ankara-Etimesgut. CH-47F Chinooks from Ankara-Güvercinlik provided the heavy-lift capability. All visiting dignitaries were flown in and out of the exercise area by AS532UL Cougar VIP helicopters operated

by Air Transport Group Command (Hava Ulaştırma Grup Komutanlığı). The Turkish Coast Guard and Gendarmerie each provided a search and rescue asset – the Bell 412EP Griffon and an S-70A Black Hawk, respectively.

During the massive amphibious assaults, the Maritime Patrol Aircraft/Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) was provided by three Turkish Navy S-70B Seahawks and one ATR-72MPA/ASW (P-72A in Türkiye).

These were operating out of Dalaman Naval Air Station; the

helicopters and the P-72 deployed dipping sonar buoys and detecting enemy submarines.

Minister of National Defence Hulusi Akar, who closed the exercise in the afternoon of June 9, said: "The harmony displayed between the armed forces of 37 friendly and allied countries and the Turkish Armed Forces, the high performance and the skill of the personnel to use high-tech weapon systems effectively were observed with great satisfaction.

"We congratulate our friends and allies who contributed significantly

to the success of the exercise, and for their participation. I thank you. At the same time, we had the opportunity to see once again the effectiveness of our weapon systems and ammunition produced by our domestic and national defense industry on the occasion of the exercise.

"I would like to express my gratitude to their respective states for your leadership, support and encouragement in helping our defense industry reach these levels that we are proud of as a nation." **AFM**



Four T129B Atak helicopters fire their indigenously developed Roketsan Long-Range Anti-Tank Missile System (UMTAS) laser-guided missiles at the range

F-16s dropped multiple 2,000lb Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) GBU-31 ammunitions on the range. For the onlookers this was a very impressive sight and sound. Despite being 1.5km away from the impact area, the flash and blast from the explosion gave a real punch