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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN STATES AIR FORCE AND THEIR GEOPOLITICAL POSITIONS

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**Abstract:** In today's establishing European air forces; gross national income, populations, connected groups like NATO or former Warsaw pact and their geopolitical position are main factors. In this study, the geopolitical positions and the air forces of European Countries are discussed. Additionally, army aviation forces police aviation forces are added to discussion.

**Keywords:** World Air Forces, Geopolitic, Globalizations

### 1. INTRODUCTION

European Countries Armed Forces have restricted your expenditures recently because of increasing the effect of the European Union and in comparison with the recent years, it has been pronounced by lowest numbers indeed. This situation has also affected the structure of the armed forces. For example; according to the research made in 1996, While Romanian Air Forces have total 894 air vehicles including 646 aircrafts, 28 transport aircrafts and 220 helicopters, this number has dropped to 742 3 years later in 1999. As a result of this trend that has been continuing each year, nowadays, the inventory of Romanian Air Forces has totally 167 vehicles including 82 aircrafts, 16 transport aircrafts, 63 helicopters and 7 UAV (see Fig. 1). [1, 2, 3]

In most European countries, particularly in EU countries, it has been observed that number of vehicles has been decreasing and on the other hand, in some countries, the inventory numbers have been increasing.



Figure 1: A MiG-21 of Romanian Air Force [3]

In this study, this formation has been handled by its reasons.

### 2. APPROACH TO AIR FORCES OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

In Table 1, as of 2013, the inventories of air forces of each European country have been seen. When reviewing this table, we could see that these 5 countries are composed of Russia, Turkey, England, France and Germany.

Table 1. European Countries Air Forces Inventory

	Aircraft*	Transport Aircraft**	Helicopter	UAV	TOTAL
Russia	2243	612	1606	30	4491
Turkey	769	122	633	274	1798
United Kingdom	660	118	504	30	1312
France	490	196	484	4	1174
Germany	385	94	404	6	889
Italy	344	123	393	6	866
Spain	304	119	297	0	720

Greece	398	76	217	20	<b>711</b>
Poland	203	59	270	30	<b>562</b>
Ukrain	216	56	253	0	<b>525</b>
Sweden	283	21	52	10	<b>366</b>
Portugal	155	39	152	0	<b>346</b>
Kazakhstan	237	22	76	0	<b>335</b>
Azerbaijan	95	5	184	10	<b>294</b>
Switzerland	135	6	46	84	<b>271</b>
Finland	171	10	52	1	<b>234</b>
Serbia	97	12	70	10	<b>189</b>
Netherlands	81	30	77	0	<b>188</b>
Belgium	119	19	31	18	<b>187</b>
Romania	82	15	63	7	<b>167</b>
Austria	59	15	85	0	<b>159</b>
Belarus	72	6	76	0	<b>154</b>
Czech Republic	55	17	78	2	<b>152</b>
Bulgaria	61	10	59	0	<b>130</b>
Norway	73	15	36	0	<b>124</b>
Denmark	57	7	51	2	<b>117</b>
Croatia	55	3	37	8	<b>103</b>
Bosnia Herzegovina	10	0	86	0	<b>96</b>
Armenia	33	3	44	0	<b>80</b>
Hungary	25	8	33	9	<b>75</b>
Albania	13	0	57	0	<b>70</b>
Georgia	10	0	29	7	<b>46</b>
Slovenia	19	5	16	0	<b>40</b>
Slovakia	16	5	12	5	<b>38</b>
Moldova	26	6	5	0	<b>37</b>
Ireland	5	18	10	3	<b>36</b>
Lithuania	15	11	6	0	<b>32</b>
Cyprus	1	1	25	2	<b>29</b>
Macedonia	11	1	16	0	<b>28</b>
Montenegro	11	0	16	0	<b>27</b>
Latvia	4	4	9	0	<b>17</b>
Malta	4	4	5	0	<b>13</b>
Estonia	0	2	4	1	<b>7</b>
Iceland	0	1	2	0	<b>3</b>
Luxembourg	3	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8105</b>	<b>1896</b>	<b>6661</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>17241</b>

\*All fighter, training etc. aircrafts

\*\*All transport, tanker, VIP, Electronic war etc. aircrafts

According to the data of 1999; the first 5 countries are Russia, France, Turkey, Germany and Italy and there is not any different perspective and when comparing with the Table 1, except Turkey, the inventory numbers of other countries have been decreasing. In this manner, Russia is the first country by decreasing the number at the rate of 70% and the other countries respectively have decreased the number of their aircrafts and helicopters in their inventory such as ; France is at 50%, Italy is at 25% and Germany is at 22%. However, in contrary to these four countries, Turkey has increased the number of inventory at the rate of 23%. On the other hand, England has located in first 5 countries in 2013 and has increased its inventory at the rate of 5%. However, according to this study that was performed in 1999, during the period of 1999-

2013, the inventory amount of European Countries Air Forces have decreased in the great amount at the rate of 51% and the number has dropped from 33809 to 17241 indeed.

Table 2. European Countries Air Forces Inventory (First 5 countries in 1999)

	Aircraft	Transport Aircraft	Helicopter	TOTAL
Russia	6086	1139	8105	<b>15330</b>
France	1314	138	905	<b>2357</b>
Turkey	859	102	503	<b>1464</b>
Germany	592	84	769	<b>1445</b>
Italy	715	52	641	<b>1408</b>

The reasons of this decline are as follows:

- The period where the balance of powers of Russia and countries of former Warsaw Pact that used the products that had produced by the Former Soviet technology had been provided by the number of aircraft, tank, helicopter had provided was closed. On the other hand, disintegration of Soviet Union and Former Warsaw Pact was realized and these countries had preferred to combine with other Western European Countries so that the market share of the western products had increased. These products are the superior products in terms of technology and they do not need any numerical superiority.
- Due to the fact that it is very expensive to use the defense industry products and particularly to use the aircrafts, even great number of squadron affects the country economies. Because, the maintenance, repair and operation expenditures for an aircraft is more than the cost of that aircraft.
- On the other hand, one of the other reason is to decrease the war danger between the European countries considerably and to remove the borders . Previously, East-West cold war and afterwards, integration with the EU so that the hot war danger was also eliminated are the reason of decreasing the number of inventory not



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only in the air forces but also all armed forces accordingly.

- In spite of the fact that the technology has been rapidly developing and the drones and cheapest systems have been used in the war technologies, the importance of the aircraft and helicopter numbers have decreased ultimately. Particularly, it is more than difficult to explain the extraordinary rising in the number of UAV. In 2012, in accordance with the research in a notification that was handled in this congress, when total UAV number of European Countries was 181 (table 3), one year later, this number became 579 indeed (Table 1).
- In the structuring of Air Forces, the most important and effective reason is the geopolitical location that was also taken in this notification

### 3. STRUCTURING AIR FORCES AND GEOPOLITICAL LOCATION

45 countries defined in Table 1 are the European Countries having an arm and armed forces and in the period of 1999-2013, only 5 countries have increased the number of their inventories belonged to the air forces. These countries are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, Turkey and England.

Azerbaijan needs to have continuous power because of the historical conflict against its neighbor, Armenia. Particularly thanks to its rich natural resources, it is on the first countries whose national income has been increasing fast. This case has provided an advantage for Azerbaijan in terms of arming.

On the other hand, Kazakhstan is a country that was disintegrated from Soviet Union and has biggest land and the country has to pay ultimate

attention in terms of border security indeed. This also requires a strong arm forces.

Switzerland that is one of the oldest independent country gives ultimate attention to the border security nowadays. Because, everything and all balances in the world has been changing day by day but Switzerland is still called as " Safe Box of the World". It is more than explanatory to increase the number of UAV fleet from 24 to 84.

On the other hand, Turkey has different a geopolitical location in comparison with other European countries. Its land and surroundings have caused great wars during the history and these wars have been still continuing. Besides, Turkey has been attacked by the terrorist groups for years from Iran, Iraq and Syria through the PKK terrorist organization and in the meantime, it must have disincentive power against its neighboring countries.

By the way, United Kingdom has preferred to be a leading and responsive country in the international response powers together with the USA. Especially in last years, the emergency response requirements such as Middle East problem, Arab Spring responses, Falkland Islands have caused to increase the military power.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- Due to their geopolitical locations, Switzerland, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan Air Forces have increased their powers.
- All other European Countries have decreased their powers. The reason of this is that they do not have geopolitical locations; Former Soviet Products have been removed; war danger between the European Countries namely border removals as

well as the economic power of all Europe have decreased accordingly.

- Because of its geopolitical location, Russia is located in the first rank in Table 1 by a great difference. Because, its borders are the longest border all around the world and it extends two continents. It is neighbor both with USA and China and it wants to keep its super power in this sense.
- The most attractive development is about UAV numbers. According to this, in the beginning of the period 1999-2013, when any UAV has not been officially used, nowadays, 579 UAV has been using indeed. This number was 181 as of 2012.

- The first country that has been using UAV very much is Turkey and Switzerland follows Turkey as in the second place. The only reason of this structuring is the geopolitical position of both countries.

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