

Global Shifts and Military Dimension in Middle Power Politics:

Turkey's Military Activism in the post-Arab Spring era

by

Tolunay ÖNDÜL

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**Global Shifts and Military Dimension in Middle Power Politics:
Turkey's Military Activism in the post-Arab Spring era**

Koç University

Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities

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Tolunay ÖNDÜL

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and that any and all revisions required by the final
examining committee have been made.

Committee Members:

Prof. Şuhnaz YILMAZ ÖZBAĞCI (Advisor)

Prof. Ziya ÖNİŞ

Assist. Prof. Seçkin KÖSTEM

Date: September 30, 2022



*Babam (E) Hv. Plt. Tuğg. Kazım ÖNDÜL 'ün Şahsında Türk Hava Kuvvetleri 'nin
Ebedi Filo 'ya İntikal Eden, Emekli ve Görevdeki Kahraman Pilotlarına...*

ABSTRACT

Global Shifts and Hard Power Dimension in Middle Power Politics:

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What is the role of hard power in middle power politics? While the existing literature on middle powers places greater attention on soft power dominated worldview, the importance of military and defense industry dimensions is highly neglected. However, middle powers cannot be confined to soft power and low-politics issues given the dramatic alterations in regional and global scales. For that reason, this thesis focuses on the potentials and risks generated by military activism and defense industry investments for middle powers drawing on the Turkish case in the post-Arab Spring period. Accordingly, middle powers can indeed considerably benefit from their hard power toolbox to shape the geopolitical dynamics involving multiple actors from within and outside of the region in the direction of their own national interests. Nevertheless, this potential should not be taken for granted and it depends on a carefully crafted, cautious and balanced implementation of wise policies without underestimating the role of soft power working in the background as well. On the flip side, being increasingly associated with military force and ambitious defense industry endeavors could undermine the soft power components of middle power foreign policy behavior. As a result, a suboptimal mix of soft and hard tools negatively impacts broader activism strategies of middle powers, with a particular blow on their ability to form effective coalitions as well as on aspirations to serve as normative role models in their respective regions.

ÖZETÇE

Küresel Değişimler ve Orta Ölçekli Güç Siyasetinde Sert Güç Boyutu:

Arap Baharı Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye'nin Askeri Aktivizmi

Tolunay Öndül

Uluslararası İlişkiler, Yüksek Lisans

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Orta ölçekli güç siyasetinde sert gücün rolü nedir? Orta ölçekli güçlerle ilgili mevcut literatür yumuşak gücün egemen olduğu dünya görüşüne daha fazla dikkat çekerken, askeri ve savunma sanayi boyutlarının önemi oldukça ihmal edilmektedir. Ancak, bölgesel ve küresel ölçekteki dramatik değişimler göz önüne alındığında, orta ölçekli güçler yumuşak güç ve alçak politika meseleleriyle sınırlandırılmaz. Dolayısıyla, bu tez Arap Baharı sonrası dönemde Türkiye vakasından hareketle orta ölçekli güçler için askeri aktivizm ve savunma sanayi yatırımlarının yarattığı potansiyel ve risklere odaklanmaktadır. Buna göre, orta ölçekli güçler bölge içinden ve dışından çok sayıda aktörü içeren jeopolitik dinamikleri kendi ulusal çıkarları doğrultusunda şekillendirmek için sert güç unsurlarından önemli ölçüde yararlanabilirler. Gelgelelim, anılan potansiyelin kullanılması arka planda çalışmaya devam eden yumuşak gücün rolünü de küçümsemeden, dikkatle hazırlanmış, temkinli ve akil politikaların dengeli bir şekilde uygulanmasına bağlıdır. Diğer taraftan, askeri güç ve iddialı savunma sanayii çabalarıyla giderek daha fazla ilişkilendirilmek orta ölçekli güç dış politika davranışının yumuşak güç bileşenlerini zayıflatabilir. Sonuç olarak, yumuşak ve sert araçların ideal olmayan oranlarda bileşimi orta ölçekli güçlerin aktivizm stratejilerini olumsuz yönde etkiler ve özellikle etkili koalisyonlar kurma yeteneklerine ve kendi bölgelerinde normatif rol modelleri olarak hizmet etme arzularına zarar verir.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
Abbreviations.....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research Question & Purpose	1
1.2 Hypotheses & Methodology	4
1.3 Organization of the Thesis.....	7
Chapter 2: Middle Powers in a Shifting Global Order: A Theoretical Overview	9
2.1 An Introduction to Middle Power Concept.....	9
2.2 Traditional & Emerging Middle Power Distinction	13
2.3 Different Approaches to Defining Middle Powers	14
2.3.1 Positional Approach	14
2.3.2 Identity-Based Approach.....	15
2.3.3 Behavioral Approach.....	16
2.4 Deviations in Middle Power Behavior in light of Hegemonic Decline	22
2.5 Concluding Remarks on Middle Power Literature	26
Chapter 3: The Role of Military and Defense Industry in Middle Power Activism	28
3.1 The Importance of Hard Power During Global Shifts	28
3.2 Potentials and Risks of New Military Technology Areas.....	31
3.3 Rethinking Defense Spending and Military Capability	34
3.4 Military Power and Coercive Diplomacy	39
3.5 Role of Geopolitics in Coercive Middle Power Diplomacy	40
3.6 Defense Industry in Middle Power Activism: Benefits and Costs	43
3.7 The Necessity to Avoid Military-Industrial Complex Trap.....	50
3.8 Reactions to Middle Power Military and Defense Industry Activism.....	53
3.9 Potentials of Identifying Niche Military Technology Areas	56
Chapter 4: Turkey's Recent Military And Defense Industry Activism.....	59

4.1	Turkey's Middle Power Credentials From Different Approaches.....	59
4.1.1	Positional Approach	59
4.1.2	Identity-Based Approach.....	60
4.1.3	Behavioral Approach.....	61
4.2	Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry and Its Ramifications	65
4.2.1	Brief History of Turkish Defense Industry.....	65
4.2.2	The Current Status of Turkish Defense Industry.....	71
4.3	Evaluating Potential Risks of Defense Industry Investments in Turkey ..	75
4.3.1	The Risk of Creating a Military-Industrial Complex	75
4.3.2	Social Costs of Prioritizing Indigenous Defense Industry	77
4.3.3	The Risks Created by the Weakening Economic Performance	78
4.4	Turkey's Recent Military Activism From Middle Power Perspective	79
4.4.1	The Interplay of Geopolitics, Increased Capabilities and Threats	79
4.4.2	Maritime-Related Confrontations: Greece and Libya	83
4.5	Costs of Coercive Foreign Policy Strategies	89
4.5.1	Military Confrontations	89
4.5.2	Costs of Assertive Military Activism and External Reactions	90
4.6	The Significance of Democratic Credentials	94
Chapter 5: Conclusion		96
5.1	Contributions & Summary of Findings	96
5.2	Limitations & Further Research	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Selected Middle Powers and Niche Diplomacy Areas	18
Table 2.2: Criteria for Successful Emerging Middle Power Activism.....	20
Table 3.1: Top 10 Largest Importers of Major Arms, 2016-20.....	48
Table 4.1: Major Turning Points in the History of Turkish Defense Industry	68
Table 4.2: Top 15 Largest Exporters of Major Arms, 2017-21.....	72
Table 4.3: Selected Localization Projects of Turkish Defense Industry	73



ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkish Acronym)
ASELSAN	Military Electronic Industries (Turkish Acronym)
ASPILSAN	Military Battery Industries (Turkish Acronym)
AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom, United States (Security Pact)
CAATSA	Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act
EU	European Union
HAVELSAN	Air Electronic Industries (Turkish Acronym)
MIKTA	Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, Australia (Group)
NPR	National Public Radio
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
QUAD	The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
UN	United Nations

Chapter 1:INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Research Question & Purpose*

Global power transformations create a permissive international environment for middle powers. The absence of a dominant power coupled with the fragmented structures of the blocks from within enable middle powers to utilize the opening policy space in pursuit of conducting more independent foreign policy and seeking higher status in the global stage. In this sense, the ongoing drastic changes in the international system are expected to “give weaker and secondary states more options ... for maneuvering and bargaining” (Ikenberry, 2016) while these changes are at the same time “dangerous” and require “prudence and self-restraint” for middle powers in crafting their foreign policy (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021a).

Global shifts are occurring based on two main pillars. One of them is the alterations in the global distribution of material capacities, a process further accelerated by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. The U.S. and EU economies suffered from deep recessions followed by relatively slower economic recovery processes compared to the rising non-Western powers of the Global South. Among them, the spectacular rise of the Chinese material capacity attracted the greatest scholarly attention with its decisive impacts on the world order. In fact, China has already surpassed the U.S. in terms of its share in global trade and is expected to become the world’s largest economy in the upcoming years. As a result, China has emerged as a major contender against the post-Cold War U.S.-led international order. However, the new world order is less likely to be characterized by a U.S.-China bipolarity due to additional set of global power centers such as Russia and India as well as other rising powers.

Especially, the geopolitical alignment between Russia and China poses a significant challenge for the already-declining US global domination. However, the U.S. continues to exert enormous influence over international dynamics and its powerful military that possesses an unmatched level of force projection capability provides hard power superiority. Nevertheless, the fragmentations in the U.S.-led political and security structures including NATO and the narrowing of the military power gap between the U.S. and China in the recent years pose a challenge to this superiority, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

The second pillar of global transformations emanates from the normative shifts in today's increasingly post-liberal world. Despite the optimistic prospects in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War era, 'the end of history' is still far away and the future of liberal international order is uncertain. The Chinese model of economic development based on authoritarian state capitalist principles enabled diffusion of such tendencies at the expense of democratic backsliding across different regions.

However, dissemination of illiberal way of governance does not only stem from authoritarian states like China and Russia. The liberal values, domestic and international, are targeted even in the core of the system. The unilateralist and protectionist policies of the U.S. under Trump administration exemplifies this trend. In addition, the rising right-wing populism and xenophobia in the face of economic challenges created by the Global Financial Crisis coupled with the massive refugee influx due to the ongoing Syrian civil war have had a remarkable influence on the European countries as well. The United Kingdom left the EU as a result of the BREXIT campaign in 2016 which was dominated by an anti-immigration narrative which was contrary to the European values. Elements of similar reactions and democratic backsliding are seen in many EU member states as well as other parts of the world, including middle powers.

In such a transitional and rapidly shifting international environment, the role and place of middle powers remain underexplored. In this regard, the spread of middle power studies would reinforce efforts to enrich and widen the international relations literature which is “too tightly focused on great power politics” (Carr, 2014) and “has been studied from a very Eurocentric perspective...” (Buzan & Little, 2000). In addition, middle powers have the potential to design effective foreign policy strategies enabling them to “punch above their weight” and have a greater say in international politics in the face of changing global power distribution (Cooper & Mo, 2011). As a result, the concept is also instrumental in revealing typical and/or optimal middle power foreign policy strategies (Flemes, 2007).

With that being said, the existing literature on middle power politics places its attention more on the significance of soft power. These involve diplomatic activism on multilateral platforms, taking part in coalition-building efforts and targeting niche diplomacy areas in international affairs. (Cooper, 1997; Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). Moreover, middle powers are known for their desire to reduce conflicts and polarization in global affairs. To achieve these goals, they rely on methods that draw strength from soft power capabilities such as mediation, facilitation, multilateralism, foreign aid, and accepting refugees in line with their role as international stabilizers.

However, the middle power literature suffers from an overemphasis on soft power features. In other words, it would be misleading to evaluate middle power behavior solely on actions based on their soft power related capacities and initiatives especially considering the further deteriorating global security environment. In fact, the post-Cold War international context “offered greater leeway for middle powers to pursue more independent foreign policies also beyond ‘soft policy’ fields, including in security and defense” (Græger, 2019). It is the hope of this thesis that a more comprehensive

involvement of military and defense industry dynamics to the literature would contribute to the missing aspect of middle power studies.

For that reason, the present study aims to fill the abovementioned gap in the literature by posing the question: *What is the role of hard power capabilities in middle power activism?*

In evaluation of hard power features, the emphasis is given on military capability. In this regard, the thesis also involves extensive discussions on defense industry developments since military strength today is mostly determined by access to modern military technology either through domestic production or external dependence.

1.2 Hypotheses & Methodology

There are two hypotheses in this study:

H1: *In the emerging post-Western order middle powers no longer rely exclusively on soft power capabilities. Hard power is becoming increasingly important in influencing the foreign policy behavior of such states in the current international context.*

Rather than merely adopting soft power tools for targeting low-politics issues in international relations, middle powers can also rely on their hard power for a broader involvement in regional contexts. The increasing level of threat perceptions in many parts of the world due to rise of several power centers that are also militarily powerful states and the spread of great power rivalry to a wider geography force middle powers to take hard power measures. A successful examination in this regard may eventually facilitate identifying appropriate middle power behavior through combining soft and hard power capabilities in an attempt to achieving ‘smart’ power. As a result, a holistic approach

seems to better serve the analysis of middle powers' capacity to 'punch above their weight'.

***H2:** Investment in indigenous defense industry has a decisive impact on status and autonomy seeking policies of middle powers.*

Middle powers strive for higher status and foreign policy independence in their efforts through a variety of tactics. Since the gap between great powers and the rest in military technology is significantly wider than other economic and social indicators, arms trade represent a crucial aspect of international politics where great power domination is felt and translated into creating broader political dependence mechanisms as well. With that in mind, increasing the self-sufficiency in defense industry is a priority for middle powers.

To address the research question and the hypotheses, this thesis employed process tracing as a 'within case' method. This enables examining the critical junctures as well as determining factors behind continuity and change in the role of hard power in Turkish foreign and security policy from a middle power angle. Among different approaches to analyzing middle powers, this thesis adopted behavioral approach to elaborate on the implications of middle power activism in a shifting international order.

This study covers the post-Arab Spring era. Despite the fact that Turkey was ruled by the successive AKP governments beginning with its November 2002 election victory and the seemingly uniform nature of the ruling party and its leader, Turkish foreign policy has experienced dramatic shifts which enables the thesis to reveal differing implications of diverging foreign policy strategies throughout the period. The reason for concentration

on the post-Arab Spring era emanates from the immensely changing security parameters in the region in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings.

Both quantitative and qualitative resources are used from English and Turkish languages. These involve academic journals and books, prominent newspaper articles, public statements of senior officials, data and reports published by official state and international institutions as well as defense industry companies and non-governmental organizations. For instance, statements of heads of state and government, documents of Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as the official/unofficial reports prepared by various actors provided useful insights. On the other hand, quantitative data acquired from respected resources contributed to highlighting the changing dynamics of military capability and arms trade across the globe. As such, wide range of resources and the use of quantitative and qualitative assessments together enabled the thesis to draw comprehensive and complementary inferences.

In selection of the empirical case among middle powers, the capacity and the potential of states for employing both soft and hard power capabilities have been taken into consideration. In other words, a middle power that is fortunate to possess a power toolbox consisting of adequate soft and hard elements would better serve as a case study for this thesis. Owning material and non-material resources at the same time helps demonstrate the consequences of possible policy choices prioritizing one type of power over another or at times mixing them for the ideal utilization of the mentioned power toolbox.

In this respect, Turkey as a middle power stands out as a striking case with its hard and soft instruments. The country has the second largest Armed Forces after the US within the NATO Alliance. Moreover, Turkey ranks 13th in world military power ranking, which is higher than any of its neighbors who “do not pose a conventional, existential threat to

Turkey in terms of their latent or military power with the partial exception of Iran” (Global Fire Power, 2022; Aktürk, 2021).

Turkey’s soft power toolbox is also considerable, manifesting itself in the form of, among others, historical and cultural ties with many regional and extra-regional actors, generous humanitarian and developmental assistance programs as well as its position as the largest-refugee hosting country in the world. In fact, more details on Turkey’s rich hard and soft power capacity will be further illustrated in the relevant section. As such, Turkey constitutes an appropriate case for the purposes of this study.

1.3 *Organization of the Thesis*

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The next chapter introduces an overview on the existing literature on the concept of middle power. By providing the theoretical background and the widespread debates revolving around the role of middle powers, the chapter aims to illustrate how the adoption of the concept evolved among international relations scholarship as well as practitioners. Moreover, it also presents how the literature responded to the emerging theoretical challenges by offering modifications to enhance the analytical strength of the concept. Finally, the chapter also aims to show that the conventional literature on middle powers heavily relied on soft power capabilities when assessing their foreign policy behavior.

The third chapter introduces the importance of hard power strategies for middle powers in a shifting world order reshaped by alterations in the distribution of global material power. While hard power options involve a wide range of coercive elements, the particular focus is on military power. In this sense, the chapter investigates the role of military capability and national defense industry capacity to understand how middle powers can benefit from such hard power elements in addition to more commonly

accepted soft techniques of middle power activism. The chapter first aims to explain the relationship between military capability, defense budget and the geopolitical context in which middle powers operate. Then, it moves on to a discussion on the importance of indigenous defense industry from various perspectives. The emergence of new areas of military technology and opportunities brought by them is also part of that discussion. Later, the internal and external factors that encourage/discourage middle powers to invest in their own defense industry are presented after carefully examining the consequences of dependence on foreign procurement in strategic arms. Finally, the chapter proposes integrating elements of conventional middle power activism into middle power defense industry strategy through targeting niche areas of military technology which would, in turn reinforce horizontal cooperation collectively benefitting their quest for foreign policy autonomy.

The fourth chapter analyzes the Turkish case in light of the discussions in the previous sections. It begins with conceptualizing Turkey as a middle power from different theoretical approaches. The chapter proceeds with an evaluation of the country from middle power behavior perspective with references to its recent activism. Then, the chapter explores the background of the recent rise of the Turkish defense industry sector considering the parameters discussed in the previous chapter. Later, a deeper analysis of Turkey's military activism and the implications of increasing reliance on coercive methods in its region is presented with concrete examples. Next, the dynamics of Turkey's recent military activism are critically analyzed and paying attention to cost-benefit calculations.

The final chapter concludes the thesis by providing presenting the key findings and contributions. Moreover, it also offers potential areas for future research.

Chapter 2: **MIDDLE POWERS IN A SHIFTING GLOBAL ORDER: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

2.1 *An Introduction to Middle Power Concept*

This chapter critically reviews the existing literature on theoretical discussions involving middle powers. In doing so, it aims to highlight broad similarities and differences in defining, categorizing, and assessing the middle power concept among international relations scholarship. Also, the chapter intends to illustrate an important gap in the middle power studies that this study attempts to fill, which is the role of military capabilities and defense industry dimension in middle power foreign policy behavior.

The initial usage of the middle power concept was first encountered in 16th century Europe. The Mayor of Milano, Giovanni Botero categorized the world states into three groups: grandissime (great powers), mezano (middle powers), and piccioli (small powers). His definition of ‘mezano’ or middle powers stressed their ability to stand on their own feet. Accordingly, middle power is a state that “has sufficient strength and authority to stand on its own without the need of help from others” (Rudd, 2006). The more recent adoption of the concept in line with the current debates can be found in Canadian foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Since then, the frequency of the usage of the term gradually expanded to a number of other countries in both theoretical and practical manners. However, the analytical value of the concept continues to be part of a contentious issue in the literature.

Both the value and the usefulness of the middle power term are controversial and disputed to this day (Ravenhill, 1998; Carr, 2014). Let alone the definitional differences in the literature, some even question the existence of a middle power concept itself (Frühling, 2007; Stairs, 1998). In his article on assessing Canada’s deliberate adoption of

middle powerhood, Adam Chapnick regards the concept as a “myth” and “mere rhetoric” (Chapnick, 2000). Ravenhill (1998) doubts if the concept should continue to take part in the academic debates anymore and Hurrell (2000) claims that “attempts at ... a tight and rigorous theory of middle-powers ... have led to a dead-end”. In fact, even those who support utilizing the middle power concept admit that it needs clarity (Jordaan, 2017).

Both ‘middle’ and ‘power’ components of the term cause serious controversy among international relations scholars. To begin with, one needs to define ‘great’ and ‘small’ first to understand what ‘middle’ refers to. In terms of such hierarchical decisions, the exact point that draws the distinction between one category and the other leads to contention. Secondly, and more importantly, the ‘power’ component of the concept brings about even greater disagreements to the efforts to understand middle powerhood. After all, power itself is among one of the most disputed concepts in the international relations literature. In this regard, “the concept of political power poses one of the most difficult and controversial problems of political science” (Morgenthau, 1964) which is “an elusive concept” (Keohane & Nye, 1977) and “its proper definition remains a matter of controversy” (Waltz, 1986).

The existence of a variety of diverging approaches to middle powers and their role in the regional and global affairs, in a way, primarily stems from the problematic nature of defining and measuring any notion related to the concept of power in the international relations discipline. As such, “no commonly accepted definition or method of definition of middle powers exists” (Ping, 2005) and the scholarly discussions in this regard appear to be at an “impasse ... mired, and without a clear path forward” (Cooper, 2011).

On the other hand, middle power concept continues to attract scholarly attention and it is unlikely to disappear from the literature given the persistence of frequent academic publications in the field. The ongoing interest in the concept is also linked to

the ascending role of states who are considered as middle powers in a rapidly shifting international order. Besides narrow and region-specific implications, the role they play at a time of major global transformations inform the systemic debates as well. In fact, “the middle power model exhibits an impressive, albeit not unchallenged, capacity for revitalization ... with a shift away from a unipolar locus of power” (Cooper, 2013).

Early efforts to describe middle powers have focused on the space between great and small powers. In fact, “the distinction between great and small powers ... is of course one of the elemental experiences of international politics” (Morgenthau, 1964). However, identifying middle powers by only acknowledging the existence of certain “states weaker than great powers in the system but significantly stronger than the minor powers and small states” (Holbraad, 1984) would be a rather superficial assessment of in what ways middle powers can impact the international system.

While coming from a similar point of departure through locating middle powers between great and small powers, Eduard Jordaan develops a deeper understanding of the concept. His approach to defining middle powers as “states that are neither great nor small in terms of international power, capacity, and influence, and demonstrate a propensity to promote cohesion and stability in the world system” brings their foreign policy preferences into the discussion (Jordaan, 2003). Keohane’s approach to middle powers, on the other hand, puts emphasis on assessing their ability to affect systemic factors. Belonging to the “system-affecting” category in his four-level hierarchy, middle power is “a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution” (Keohane, 1969). The necessity to form horizontal and vertical collaboration channels is also

underlined in the behaviorist group of scholars which will be presented in the appropriate section below.

Another set of approaches to defining middle powers include elements of a certain level of military capability. Serving to their role conception in the international system and their national security, middle powers should have the “capacity for self-preservation, or at least significantly increasing the costs for any great power aggressor” (Carr, 2014). Dibb takes the military capability discussion into the center of middle power debate as he posits that “one of the defining characteristics of a middle (or medium) power ... is that it will seek to have a credible minimum of defense autonomy or self-reliance” (Dibb, 1995).

White (2009) attributes larger potential and responsibility to middle powers by defining middle power as “a state that can shape how the international system works to protect its interests, even in the face of competing interests of a major power”. In emphasizing protection of interests rather than just focusing on self-defense, White increases his expectation from middle powers which Carr finds appropriate as it reflects “a more useful way of thinking about modern uses of military power” (Carr, 2014).

Drawing also on Keohane’s ‘systemic impact’ approach, Carr’s definition of middle powers describes them as “states that can protect their core interests and initiate or lead a change in a specific aspect of the existing international order” (Carr, 2014). However, the lack of a clear description of the ‘core interests’ inevitably causes a theoretical uncertainty. Moreover, in practice, core interests of a state may vary depending on the ruling party’s ideology. Therefore, Carr’s definition appears to have a vagueness issue which could evoke theoretical and practical misunderstandings.

2.2 *Traditional vs Emerging Middle Powers Distinction*

Certain countries were given the middle power label albeit from different approaches over the years. While acknowledging some objections, for instance, “a consensus has developed that ... Canada, Australia, Sweden and Norway are middle powers” (Jordaan, 2003). However, the expansion of the list of middle power category to include a number of additional states such as, among others, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Malaysia Mexico, Argentina, and Nigeria constituted an important hurdle for the analytical strength of the middle power concept. Bringing together these newly added countries with established middle powers in the literature like Canada and Australia resulted in a confusion due to the increased diversity of the middle power group. This, in turn, posed a challenge for the relevance of the concept. It became far more difficult to identify common features and foreign policy priorities among a group consisting of Sweden, Australia, and Canada on the one hand and South Africa, Malaysia, Brazil, Argentina, and Turkey on the other. The risk of suffering from a shallow set of similarities started to weaken both the middle power theory-building efforts and the predictive power of the concept itself.

In the face of increased theoretical challenges in melting this enlarged group in the same pot, the solution offered by Jordaan (2003) was the creation of two sub-categories of middle powers, namely *traditional* and *emerging*, based on their constitutive and behavioral differences. In constitutive terms, traditional middle powers are recognizable through their “wealthy, stable, egalitarian, social democratic and not regionally influential” characteristics. In contrast, emerging middle powers are “semi-peripheral, materially inegalitarian, recently democratized states” that demonstrate a strong regional influence and self-association.

In behavioral terms, the former display “a weak and ambivalent regional orientation, constructing identities distinct from powerful states in their regions and offer appeasing concessions to pressures for global reform”. On the contrary, the latter “exhibit a strong regional orientation favouring regional integration but seek also to construct identities distinct from those of the weak states” in their surrounding regions and they support reforms rather than radical changes in the global governance (Jordaan, 2003).

2.3 Different Approaches to Defining Middle Powers

2.3.1 Positional Approach

Three conceptual approaches to identifying middle powers have dominated the scholarly debates on that matter: *positional*, *identity-based*, and *behavioral*. First group of scholars have focused on the ranking of states based on their material power and capacity to reveal middle powers as a group that are neither great nor small (Gilley & O’Neil, 2014). This approach considers quantitative measures such as population, geographical size, military strength, economic indicators usually measured by gross domestic (or national) product to position and rank states. According to Wood’s perspective in his 1987 article, for instance, middle powers were countries ranked from sixth to thirty-sixth regarding their GNP in the year 1979. It is important to note that he also acknowledged the significance of “influence” and “prestige” as components of a state’s power (Wood, 1987).

Offering concessions from quantitative measures to such immaterial qualities demonstrate the difficulty of grasping a state’s power with only quantitative factors and reveals the weakness of positional approach to middle powerhood. This is why majority of scholars have abandoned employing solely positional parameters in classifying middle

powers since it has “proved to be of almost no value in predicting or explaining the behaviour of those states classed as middle powers” (Jordaan, 2017; Ravenhill, 1998).

2.3.2 *Identity-Based Approach*

Secondly, the identity approach leaves it to the policymakers to determine the status of their countries whether their country is a middle power rather than relying on scholarly assessments. Seen this way, the identity approach is an extension of the constructivist tradition in international relations literature. Accordingly, middle powerhood should be considered as a “self-created identity or ideology” (Hurrell, 2000) and it is best perceived as an intentionally formulated “political category” by policy makers (Hynek, 2007) depending on their assertion of middle power status (Beeson, 2011).

In addition to simplifying the identification challenge, the identity approach also bears a certain degree of predictive power since it signals an anticipated foreign policy pattern to be followed (Carr, 2014). In other words, “knowing about a state’s perception of its identity (both type and role) should help us understand how the state will act” (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001). As a matter of fact, asserting middle power status has a long history in Canada and Australia, dating back to the Second World War (Chapnick, 2000; Ravenhill 1998; Carr, 2014). Among others, South Korean leaders also consistently claim middle power status since the late twentieth century (Easley & Park, 2018).

Yet, decision makers in some states identified as a middle power by the literature, and indeed exhibit many aspects of middle power foreign policy behaviour barely adopt such identity. More strikingly, evaluating states on the basis of claims of policy makers could pave the way for manipulatory assertions to gain unjustifiable prominence, such as North Korea’s claim to be a democracy (Carr, 2014).

2.3.3 *Behavioral Approach*

An alternative and indeed more popular way of addressing the question of identifying middle powers concentrates on a set of behavioral similarities. In order to distinguish middle powers from others, accordingly, we need to focus on common foreign policy strategies established by the literature that middle powers tend to follow. In their landmark study of the behaviorist approach, Cooper, Higgott and Nossal underline the characteristics of middle power behavior and proposes identifying middle powers through “their tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, their tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes and embrace notions of ‘good international citizenship’ to guide their diplomacy” (Cooper et. al., 1993).

Other behaviorist scholars sought to expand these commonalities by including other factors. For instance, a widely accepted quality of middle powers is their willingness to reduce conflicts in international relations starting with their surroundings. Rather than only passively desiring a more stable world, middle powers actively involve in conflict resolution efforts as facilitators and mediators which makes them “helpful fixers” in their immediate region and beyond (Græger, 2019).

Besides contributing to their role conception in general, such a tendency also stems from their relatively limited capacity to overcome obstacles to be generated by international crises. The repercussions of a chaotic regional and global events are likely to put a great deal of burden on middle powers’ shoulders which they have restricted resources to deal with. These burdens can emanate from wide range of issues, from regional security matters that they need to address to humanitarian crises leading to sudden irregular migration flows as well as crippling economic shocks.

Given their fairly constrained material and political capacity to take up such challenges, middle powers not only demand but also invest in international stability through diplomatic initiatives and economic contributions. A common middle power behavior, in this regard, is their willingness for increased provision of public goods for the stability of the international system. Public goods are, by definition, to the benefit of all parties with the inherent ‘free-riders problem’ where some utilize these goods without actually contributing to the pool. In this respect, middle powers’ eagerness to generously offer public goods is not only useful for the international system but it is also a sign of their enthusiasm to seize opportunities for elevating their own status.

However, their constrained material capacity and overall influence force middle powers to behave selectively in choosing areas of international politics that they will actively engage in. Within this framework, middle powers focus on specific policy domains depending on their inherent qualities, national interests as well as the geographical context in which they operate. By identifying “niche diplomacy” areas, middle powers seek to play for a leading position in these policy fields in regional and/or global governance (Cooper, 1997). Moreover, the pursuit of niche diplomacy conduct constitutes a striking similarity between traditional and emerging powers. Table 2.1 exemplifies niche diplomacy practices of certain middle powers.

Table 2.1: Selected Middle Powers and Niche Diplomacy Areas

Middle Power	Niche Diplomacy Area
Australia	Environment, Human Rights, Non-Proliferation
Brazil	Global Health Diplomacy
Canada	Human Security
Mexico	Global Environmental Politics
South Korea	R&D and Technology Transfer
Turkey	Humanitarian Diplomacy, Mediation

For different reasons, middle powers usually select their own niche areas from the so-called ‘low politics’ issues such as environment, human rights, and global health diplomacy. In this regard, the “complex interdependence” structure of the newly emerging world offers middle powers “low politics opportunities” (Walton, 2020). While the name suggests the opposite, low politics matters are not “unimportant, insignificant, or unnecessary” but instead they increasingly occupy a “central” position in international relations in the post-Cold War era (Baba, 2018). The multifaceted implications of the COVID crisis on global health, trade, energy, and food security issues have proven that as well.

Drawing on the debates revolving around middle power behavior, Öniş and Kutlay (2017) emphasize the importance of four main tenets in terms of successful emerging middle power activism. Accordingly, emerging middle powers carry a great potential in terms of productively contributing to global governance and thus upholding their own status in regional and global stages. Still, their success hinges on how they qualify in addressing four key conditions: i) making use of soft power credentials to serve as role models, ii) effective coalition-building skills with established and emerging powers, iii) proper examination of expectation-capabilities balance to avoid a mismatch, and iv) ability to pinpoint niche areas where their “unique and exceptional contribution” will be visible (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). Table 2.2 highlights the mentioned building blocks of emerging middle power activism with positive and negative examples.

Table 2.2: Criteria for Successful Emerging Middle Power Activism

Criteria	Key Parameters	Exemplifying Middle Power Activism (P: Positively, N: Negatively)
<i>Capability to Serve as a Role Model in Regional and Global Contexts</i>	Economic development & Democratization performance	South Korea (P)
<i>Effective Alliance Formation or Coalition-Building</i>	Forming inclusive and encompassing coalitions based on a consistent set of normative principles	Middle Powers in G20, BRICS, MIKTA (P)
<i>Achieve a Balance Between Capabilities and Ambitions/Expectations</i>	The ability to synchronize material capabilities and expectations	Turkey (N)
<i>Identify Niche Areas in Regional and Global Governance</i>	Making a unique and exceptional contribution; gaining competitive advantage in the targeted areas	Canada, Australia, South Korea, Turkey (P)

Source: Öniş & Kutlay, 2017

The main motivation of middle powers in seeking for opportunities to scale up their regional and global influence stems from their desire to conduct a more independent foreign policy. In other words, they “strive hard to carve out an autonomous role in contemporary international politics” (Cooper & Flermes 2013; Gilley & O’Neil, 2014).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that whether middle powers will exert considerable influence on issues of regional and global governance should not be taken for granted. Indeed, it is heavily dependent on carefully crafted, balanced and wise policy implementation taking into consideration not just potentials but also limits brought by the country's power toolbox as well as by the (shifting) structural dynamics of the international order.

Besides capacity constraints, the recent enhancements in middle power activism in multilateral stages, in part, stems from the substantial transformations in global governance structures. Fueled by hegemonic shifts and rise of additional power centers in the changing international environment, relatively more pluralistic platforms such as the Group of Twenty (G20) provide an ample policy space for middle power activism. Such plurality not only facilitates interactions among middle powers but also enables them to strengthen the importance of multilateralism in international relations. In fact, they "compete for status among themselves in global governance" as well (Parlar-Dal, 2019). Formed by G20 middle powers, MIKTA is another example for middle powers' coalition-building efforts which brings together both traditional and emerging middle powers (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). As such, middle powers' efforts within institutions like G20 and MIKTA in hopes to diversify and reinforce their networks to form effective coalitions with their peers and great powers serve their status policies and offer new ways to ensuring stability in an increasingly multipolar world.

Accordingly, their commitment to multilateralism in the form of advancing inclusive global governance structures and defending consent-building mechanisms is a useful parameter to understand the degree of their stabilising role in international affairs (Baba, 2018). Regarding their positioning in the emergence of great power rivalry, performing a "go-between" role facilitates middle powers' potential to have a meaningful

impact in their respective regions by way of regional and cooperative bridging alignments (Spero, 2009). Through involving its neighbors and other regional actors, a middle power can contribute to international stability by reducing the regional security dilemmas that involve great powers (Baba, 2018).

2.4 *Deviations in Middle Power Behavior in light of Hegemonic Decline*

On the other hand, Jordaan (2017) posits that “counter-hegemonic component of the foreign policy of many emerging middle powers” hinders their role as international stabilizers. At this point, it is important to clearly set whether a surge in differences with the (weakening) hegemon cause destabilizing effects on the international order. Within this framework, a narrow understanding of international stability which demeans the notion to only serving to the continuation of the US-led international order would likely strictly limit the middle power foreign policy preferences. Moreover, it is in fact the inability and/or unwillingness of the United States for playing its leadership role that should be questioned more in a transitional global context. Therefore, limiting the stability-provision capacity of middle powers with their inclinations to whether enthusiastically favoring the US leadership position when indeed the United States itself fails to meet its commitments to the liberal order appears disputable.

Nevertheless, there is also a growing discomfort towards certain emerging middle powers’ foreign policies. Within this context, it is not a coincidence that elements of underlying emerging middle power behavior that cause confusion occur at a time of post-hegemonic world where they “have more room to maneuver through a variety of instruments and policies (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017).

At the same time, overambitious middle power activism continues to attract serious criticism. Moving away from the international stabilizer role is an essential source of increasing doubtful approach towards many emerging powers. The stabilizing role is one that many scholars associate with supporting the US-led international order and liberal norms. In this regard, Gilley and O'Neil (2014) draw attention to "counter-hegemonic instincts" of emerging middle powers even though they should actually be devoted to the "orderliness and security in interstate relations" (Cox & Sinclair 1996).

In this respect, scholars increasingly focus their lens on specific emerging middle power cases to highlight their deviations from established parameters of middle power role conceptions. For instance, Black and Hornsby (2016) in their article on evolving foreign policy preferences of South Africa as an emerging middle power uses labels such as "Third Worldist", "solidarist", and "revisionist" to describe the country's recent aspirations. In line with this approach, South Africa's recent activism is believed to be exceeding the limits of the reformist nature of emerging middle powerhood and it has transformed into demanding more radical international change leading to weakening of both liberal norms and American leadership (Jordaan, 2017). Turkey in the recent years has also been viewed from a similar perspective. In this respect, Kutlay and Öniş (2021) point out that Turkey displays "an unusual degree of foreign policy activism, going well beyond conventional middle power behavior" primarily due to the interventionist and coercive elements based on frequent use of militaristic methods when coping with matters of regional security.

In the face of widespread examples of similar deviations by a number of emerging middle powers, Jordaan (2017) suggests a set of remarkable modifications in the middle power literature. Accordingly, the constructivist approach to middle powerhood based on

self-assertion as well as positional and behavioral parameters are disregarded. He also proposes that popular characteristics of middle powers such as investing in niche areas in international affairs and functioning as good international citizens should not be relevant to be classified as a middle power anymore.

Jordaan (2017) defends that the conception of middle powers should solely depend on a single factor, that is acting as international stabilizers. To be more concrete, the stabilizing role here is directly linked to supporting the US-led international order that is based on liberal values. Displaying counter-hegemonic inclinations and promoting multipolarity, both of which Jordaan describes as ‘destabilizing’ requires removal of states from middle power category. As a result, middle powers should be identified as “mid-range states that actively support the liberal hegemonic project” (Jordaan, 2017).

Initially, it is noteworthy to remind that it was Jordaan himself in his 2003 article who had in the first place drawn attention to the necessity to form an additional classification to describe ‘emerging’ middle powers in order to “rescue the concept from increasing vagueness” (Jordaan, 2003). After slightly over a decade, however, removing the emerging middle power label from some states on the grounds that they abandon their function as international stabilizers, a role Jordaan (2017) directly connects with enthusiastically defending the liberal hegemonic order, seems quite problematic. Middle powerhood does not suggest a static stance especially during fast-paced global transformations. In contrast, as Robert Cox points out, “the middle-power role is not a fixed universal but something that has to be rethought continually in the context of the changing state of the international system” (Cox, 1989).

In fact, the world has witnessed important developments that necessitated scholars to ‘rethink’ the role of middle powers in the period between 2003 and 2017, years corresponding to the first and second articles of Jordaan expressing two different views regarding the emerging middle power concept (Jordaan, 2003; Jordaan, 2017). In this respect, particularly the 2008-09 global financial crisis represents an important turning point for the fate of the global political economy with its accelerating effects on hegemonic shifts and changes in global power balances (Öniş, 2019). Other than that, the continuous and spectacular rise of China, restoration of Russian influence with frequent use of its military to redraw maps, dissemination of armed conflicts especially with the Arab Spring and the spread of illiberal norms and practices around the world including in the West are examples of profound global change.

Since 2017, but especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, the major trends in international relations have further accelerated to increase the unpredictable and volatile nature of the current world order. In determining the role of middle powers under such drastic international changes, therefore, adherence to the hegemonic order in an increasingly post-hegemonic world should not be regarded as a determining factor for losing middle power identity.

On the other hand, as Jordaan (2017) argues, a high degree of counter-hegemonic activities of middle powers might indeed have destabilizing effects. However, scholars should approach counter-hegemonic components of middle power foreign policies with caution and on a case-by-case basis. To illustrate, opposing to the Iraq War in 2003 at the time was against the hegemonic interests of the United States. Yet, it was the U.S. invasion of Iraq that destabilized the region to a great extent and contributed to the born

of DAESH terrorist group utilizing the power vacuum resulting from the invasion itself. The lack of stability in Iraq after almost two decades persists to this day.

In retrospect, many middle powers at the time, both traditional and emerging ones, opposed the U.S. invasion in the first place. For instance, as a middle power, the Turkish parliament in its decision in 2003 disallowed the U.S. troops from invading Iraq its borders. This example highlights the necessity for carefully approaching to middle powers' resistance to the hegemonic demands and interests and shows that not every objection to the hegemon should be considered destabilizing. Foreign policy choices of middle powers should not be expected to completely align with the hegemonic interests even during unipolar world order, let alone at times of rapid global transformations towards multipolarity.

2.5 *Concluding Remarks on Middle Power Literature*

While all three approaches to identifying middle powers (i.e., positional, identity-based, behavioral) have weaknesses, each one of them enriches the discussions on the concept from a different aspect. It seems that behavioral perspective receives a lot more attention and most scholars assess middle power behavior to examine their role in the current international order that is in transition. With that being said, even when more emphasis is given to the behavioral approach, the middle power studies still continue to benefit from positional and identity-based approaches that are representative of realist and constructivist schools, respectively.

With regard to the positional parameters, it is true that scholars analyzing middle powers through their behavior do not rely on numeric metrics based on material power rankings. However, material constraints play an important role in limiting or allowing

dynamics of middle power activism. In pursuing niche diplomacy, for instance, middle powers' "actions need to be consistent with overall capacity, foreign policy behavior and role conception" (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). In a similar sense, the necessity to manage the capabilities-expectations gap implies that limited material capabilities endanger overall expectations of middle powers, which adversely affects their foreign policy goals.

While far less popular than the abovementioned approaches, the identity-based approach can still inform the discussions over middle power behavior. Status inconsistencies have a negative impact on middle power activism primarily emanating from the mismanagement of capabilities-ambitions balance. Therefore, although this study employs the behavioral approach to middle powerhood in line with the majority of modern IR scholarship, the positional and self-asserted identity considerations will also be taken as parameters shaping middle power activism and its successful implementation.

Finally, this chapter has explicated that when it comes to putting an effort to understanding middle power behavior, the literature mostly focuses on the soft power capacities and actions. In an increasingly volatile world with the rise of great power competition and regional security challenges, however, overreliance on soft power capabilities may hinder their regional and global influence. Within this framework, the next chapter examines the factors that affect the role of hard power in middle power activism in the newly emerging global order.

Chapter 3: **THE ROLE OF MILITARY AND DEFENSE INDUSTRY CAPABILITIES IN MIDDLE POWER ACTIVISM**

3.1 *The Importance of Hard Power During Global Shifts*

As presented in chapter two, middle power activism is associated with a predominantly soft power dominated foreign policy strategy. A key reason for the relatively less scholarly attention on the hard power aspect of middle powers could be the focus on countries operating in rather less dangerous geopolitical contexts during the initial conceptualization of the term.

Canada, for instance, shares a land border only with the U.S., which is not only the global military superpower and NATO ally but also the two countries share a continental defense framework called North America Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a unique cooperation mechanism with its binational military command structure (U.S. Department of State, 2022). In addition to the enviable position of Canada regarding perceiving no direct threat from any country in the world, its only land bordering country, the United States, “could not ask for a better friend or ally than Canada” in the words of former President Barack Obama (Global News, 2016).

Other traditional middle powers like Australia, Norway and Sweden also had similar level of external military risks until recently. However, the restoration of Russian military power and the impressive developments in Chinese military capabilities have changed the situation in their respective regions, which necessitates a reconsideration of middle power activism based on new security parameters.

As mentioned previously, behavior-based approaches have focused on perspectives pertaining to soft power skills of middle powers such as good international citizenship, promoting multilateralism, seeking for building effective coalitions, and

targeting niche areas in global politics. Overall, such tendencies together help middle powers to play a constructive role in stabilizing the international system. In this regard, issues of realist worldview like “survival, security and conflict are not considered as decisive factors in defining the concept of middle power” within the behavioral approach (Shin, 2015).

On the other hand, relying only on traditional soft power techniques becomes increasingly challenging for many middle powers given the dramatic alterations in their surrounding regional security complex as well as in global scale. In this respect, the recent geopolitical shifts lead to “a military bias of geopolitics which puts national security thinking first” (Guzzini, 2012). Finding themselves in an increasingly militarized world, therefore, middle powers also feel under pressure to rethink their security strategies in the face of weakening effectiveness of multilateral frameworks, growing regional and global security challenges as well as the demise of the liberal rules-based international order.

As such, while middle powers benefit considerably from their soft power toolbox, a potential urgency for enhancing their security architecture may require a reconsideration of excessive reliance on soft power in their foreign policy behavior. At this point, as Græger (2019) argues, although middle powers’ “traditional policies within the ‘soft power’ belt may continue, ‘doing good’ may become less prioritized” mainly due to the immediate need for security with the weakening of existing security shelters. As an example of shelter, NATO’s credibility loss is attributed to the “anti-liberal foreign policies” of the United States as the backbone of the Alliance with its unmatched material capacity (Græger, 2019).

In concrete terms, references to the Russia’s return to global stage have been widely associated with its coercive and interventionist actions as reflected in the Georgian war (2008), annexation of Crimea (2014), military involvement in Syria (2015) and the

ongoing war in Ukraine (2022). Moreover, increased Russian military presence predominantly in the forms of airspace violations and overflights, incursions into the territorial waters and increased frequency and scope of Russian military exercises deepens the intensity of the security situation for the Nordic middle powers and the Eastern European countries as well. Interestingly, in this respect, the Norwegian analysts approach quite cautiously to the US presence in Norway as a response to the overambitious Russian military activity in the Baltic Sea due to such an action's potential to diminish, rather than increase, the country's security (Græger, 2019).

As opposed to the Russian experience associating its return with militaristic methods, it is noteworthy to remind that rise of China as a global power is rather linked to economic factors with the country's spectacular growth and development performance. While China has also been adopting aggressive foreign and security policy in its region recently through exploiting the power asymmetries, the phenomenon of Chinese ascendance is still more related to its tremendous economic success story. China's official rhetoric attributes this success to the model of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" as emphasized 13 times in President Xi Jinping's speech on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in July 2021 (Nikkei Asia, 2021).

Moreover, the consistent and remarkable rise of China pursuing a more ambitious foreign policy under Xi Jinping, combined with the return of Russia to world stage as a highly coercive global actor under Putin offered an alternative set of normative pathways. Within this framework, the rise of authoritarian tendencies and democratic backsliding demonstrates a parallel process with the emergence of the Russia-China axis in an increasingly post-liberal world (Öniş & Kutlay, 2019). The previously widely accepted norms that the level of liberal democracy helps economic development that incentivized

countries to democratize for achieving higher status lost momentum. Despite the questions on the long-term resilience of the said axis, these alternative partnership mechanisms informed by the shifting distribution of global material capacities pave the way for more confident displaying of counter-hegemonic actions. Within this context, China's alignment with Russia "strengthened China's repositioning as an established global power, not simply a rising economy." (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021b).

Besides the outstanding economic development performance, however, the recent exponentially enhancing Chinese military capabilities both quantity and quality wise is also worth mentioning. Currently, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has numerically both the largest standing army and naval force as well as the third third-largest air force fleet in the world with major modernization and capacity building efforts in progress (U.S. Department of Defense, 2021) Therefore, the so-called peaceful rise of China notion is rather adjusting to a new great power rivalry conjuncture especially in Taiwan and broader Indo-Pacific contexts. Furthermore, China's attempts to widen its global military outreach, especially in Africa and the Middle East, through security cooperation agreements would likely enlarge the geopolitical fault lines in the context of great power competition.

3.2 Potentials and Risks of New Military Technology Areas

Remarkable developments in modern military technology offer significant potentials for middle powers. Many existing advanced systems (e.g., nuclear capabilities, submarines, ballistic missiles, fighter jets, etc.) require years-long cumulative know-how through costly R&D investments that only a handful of countries can afford and play for the leadership. On the other hand, the recent progress in areas like artificial intelligence,

unmanned systems and cyberwarfare opens up a window of opportunity for middle powers to occupy a significant position through pioneering in these domains. In fact, countries that “are first to harness once-in-a generation technologies often have a decisive advantage on the battlefield for years to come” as former U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper indicates and among the newly emerging fields of military technology, he attaches greater importance to artificial intelligence which has “the potential to transform nearly every aspect of the battlefield, from the back office to the front lines” (Garamone,2020).

The impact of cyberwarfare and unmanned systems on modern military technology and the war zones are also incontestable. Speaking of cyber-security, former U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo has underlined that it is in fact a “far bigger problem than many acknowledge” (Pompeo, 2021). The dramatic effects of armed drones on the battlefields in many parts of the world is also widely appreciated and will be discussed under the relevant parts of the thesis. As such, emergence of a new generation of advanced conventional and hybrid military tools allows middle powers to compete with more technologically advanced countries in certain areas and products of defense industry.

Despite the abovementioned advantages of the newly emerging areas of military technology for middle powers, the moral concerns presented by the usage of autonomous systems and cyberspace necessitate a careful approach towards utilizing them. For instance, lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) supported by the artificial intelligence technology are qualified to target and fire without needing human order and/or interference, paving the way for questions regarding moral concerns and legal liability (Sözübir, 2021). Within the framework of the moral issues debate, the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) also attract a serious amount of public attention due to their extensive usage and potential role in civilian casualties. However, a clear distinction

should be made between automation and autonomy. Automation relies on predefined parameters without eliminating human intervention. For instance, many UAVs today are capable of auto-landing, which can be cancelled by the operator. Autonomy, on the other hand, relies on artificial intelligence that can act through “totally independent decision-making processes with full awareness of the environment and condition in the operation area (Sözübir, 2021). As such, pure dependence on artificial intelligence during lethal operations in residential areas makes it difficult to intervene out of a necessity to ensure adjusting to the changing parameters of the mission.

From a middle power angle, the associated risks can result in too costly outcomes considering their efforts in pursuit of humanitarian diplomacy as part of their broader middle power foreign policy behavior. Thus, possible negative consequences such as civilian casualties would be extremely harmful to the humanitarian and overall soft power aspect of middle power diplomacy.

The usage of cyberspace as an extension of hard power is another area that middle powers need to approach with caution. The striking pace of digitization enables cyber threats to pose enormous challenges for states, constituting one of the most critical national security risks. The magnitude of the threat emanates from the widespread use of computer systems in every branch of public and private sector; therefore, making countries, institutions, companies, and individuals vulnerable in the face of cyber-attacks.

For middle powers, cybersecurity is just as important as it is for every other country. They might very well invest in enhancing their cyber capabilities whether for defensive or offensive purposes. In fact, manipulative methods are an important element of modern warfare to disrupt the opponent’s computer and communication systems with the aim of damaging the proper functioning of strategic military assets such as frigates, command and control units and planes.

However, usage of cyberwarfare against civilian democratic processes similar to Russia's alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections would be unrecoverably hazardous for middle power activism and its foreign policy objectives. Despite the widespread democratic backsliding in all over the world, interference in the electoral process or a comparable cyber-attack on non-military targets would lead to an international response rather than bilateral reaction and would cause an irrevocable damage on soft power credentials as well.

As such, although one of the central purposes of this thesis is to demonstrate how middle powers can benefit from hard power elements, an overreliance on these would generate numerous adverse effects. Unlike soft power related diplomatic initiatives, utilization of hard power components and coercive tools might result in much riskier outcomes due to its potential to generate unintended and/or undesired consequences. Besides, being increasingly associated with its military force and ambitious defense industry exports may very well undermine the soft power components of middle power foreign policy behavior. As a result, a suboptimal mix of soft and hard tools by middle powers would negatively impact their broader strategic activism with a particular blow on their ability to form effective coalitions as well as on aspirations to serve as normative role models in their respective regions.

3.3 *Rethinking Defense Spending and Military Capability*

Measuring countries' military power has been one of the consistent endeavors for many international relations scholars. Also, national security institutions constantly evaluate their own country's military capabilities vis-à-vis potential rivals and adversaries as well as regional and extra-regional actors. In the international relations literature, within this context, it appears that annual military spending has been a widely adopted

parameter for analyzing military power through panel and cross-sectional data. Nevertheless, we observe that some scholars attach more than necessary importance to the yearly military expenditure data on the grounds that it reflects military power of states in a comparative manner. The middle power literature suffers from this generalization as well.

For instance, in an attempt to compare the material strength of the seven G20 middle powers, Parlar-Dal (2019) employs six quantitative indicators such as GDP, population, annual GDP growth and military spending in 2017. In doing so, she aims to associate numerical ranks to each specific indicator group. As an example, Brazil ranks first in population, sixth in GDP growth rate and so on. However, using military spending in a given year alone to demonstrate material ranking appears highly debatable. Such an analysis would not generate accurate representation of material capabilities especially when it comes to military strength. A comparatively higher amount of annual or a slightly longer-term defense spending data do not necessarily determine greater military power.

In assessing the defense budget, one should also take into account the composition rather than only focusing on the total expenditure. The reason for that is military spending consists of a wide range of expense items. These include, among others, costs stemming from operations, maintenance, R&D investments, foreign procurement, military aid as well as personnel salaries, social security payments, expenditure on social facilities belonging to military institutions and even retirement pensions. This is to illustrate that not every cost item has the same effect on contributing to the strengthening of overall military power.

Within this framework, considering the large amounts of money spent on defense, distinct approaches to structuring the allocation of the defense budget across various

expense items make an enormous difference. Such decisions determine the progress in the field of military technology and enhancement of military capabilities. Brazil's 2013 budget, in this respect, constitutes a striking example with 73% of the country's military expenditure consisting of personnel costs alone in that year (Bruneau & Tollefson, 2014). Putting the Brazilian case into a comparative perspective, personnel costs in the same year comprised around 50% of the defense spending in India, France, and China; 31% in the United Kingdom, and 24% in the United States (Bruneau & Tollefson, 2014).

In a similar vein, when responding to the criticisms about the U.S. military budget, former President Obama stated, "But when it comes to our military, what we have to think about is not, ... just budgets, we got to think about capabilities. We need to be thinking about cybersecurity. We need to be thinking about space." (NPR, 2012). Therefore, although military expenditure data provides a useful tool for making hierarchical observations, the composition presents greater insight as it leads to making more informed projections regarding the changing military capabilities of states.

While a comprehensive analysis of the military spending would be more explanatory, it is still far from optimal. There are numerous parameters in a country's military capability equation. For instance, possession of major combat platforms capable of creating power multipliers for the Armed Forces constitute a crucial factor. In this regard, aircraft carriers, frigates, and submarines for the Naval Forces; fighter jets and tanker planes (for air-to-air refueling that enables larger operating radius) for the Air Force; tanks, artillery and attack helicopters for the Army exemplify such power multipliers.

When making interstate military power comparisons of the comparable or same platforms, one should also take into account whether countries have modernized and up-

to-date versions that carry advanced weaponry systems. In other words, a mere count of the military equipment would not yield a dependable conclusion as to comparing military capabilities. In this respect, Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee for U.S. presidency in 2012, criticized the weak importance attached to the U.S. Navy as it was “smaller now than any time since 1917” while President Barack Obama indicated that the U.S. also has “fewer horses and bayonets because the nature of our military has changed. We have these things called aircraft carriers, ... and submarines. The question is not a game of battleship where we are counting ships, it is what our capabilities are” (NPR, 2012). The presented exchange on the issue of defense budget and number of military equipment in possession contributes to an important debate in this chapter, that is the interaction of numerical and non-numerical factors with regards to assessing the military power.

Regarding the issues of modernization and the advanced weaponry systems, comparisons require a more detailed focus. The same aircraft, for instance, may acquire enormously different capabilities based on its version and equipment. To illustrate, not every F-16 fighter jet is the same depending on whether it has been upgraded to the recent versions carrying a much more developed radar and ammunitions than the previous versions, determining the target range and overall capabilities of the aircraft itself.

For instance, each of the Egyptian and Turkish Air Force represents approximately 2 per cent of the active global military fleet and besides others, F-16s constitute the backbone of their fighter squadrons, having 218 and 245 of them, respectively (Flight Global, 2021). Unlike Turkish F-16s, however, Egyptian F-16s lack the AIM-120 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to Air Missile (AMRAAM) due to the U.S. policy to ban the sale of these missiles to several Arab states considering the Israeli request (Fighter Jets World, 2020). The relative ease of the Turkish Air Force to acquire the Beyond Visual Range (BVR) engagement capability more easily, partly owing to Turkey’s longstanding

NATO membership, provides a much greater advantage beyond numeric measures that only consider the major platforms but not their technologic superiorities and weaknesses stemming from modernization and equipment quality issues.

On the other hand, despite the previously mentioned emergence of unmanned systems recently, even the most powerful Armed Forces today continue to heavily rely on humans. In other words, the ability of well-trained and skilled personnel is of vital importance for overall military capability. Using the above example, in Turkey, it takes approximately seven years for someone to become an F-16 pilot including the four-year Air Force Academy, two-year flight training and one year combat-readiness training in F-16s. Besides the length of the process, training a fighter pilot is quite a costly investment itself. Thus, the fact that Turkish Air Force has expelled over 600 pilots in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt in July 2016 created a major problem for the country's air power (Özer & Uslu, 2018).

The shortage of pilots has reached to the extent that the government has called on former fighter pilots working at commercial airlines to return the Air Force on a voluntary basis with the decree-law numbered 690 (Resmi Gazete, 2017a). Nevertheless, since far less than the expected number of pilots had come back, the government has then issued another decree-law numbered 694 (Resmi Gazete, 2017b). This time, the pilots who meet certain criteria related to age and experience were required to return or otherwise their commercial pilot licenses would be cancelled which means the termination of their civilian careers as well.

This example accurately depicts the importance of skilled personnel in critical fields of military equipment and technology, ensuring concrete realization of the technological superiority as in the case of abovementioned brief comparison of the

Egyptian and Turkish Air Force capabilities. Moreover, such a dramatic and overnight decline in trained personnel has not been appropriately reflected in any quantitative measure with the notable exception of pilot to aircraft ratio, which decreased to less than a pilot for an aircraft.

Therefore, there are numerous parameters to consider in attempting to compare military capabilities of states. Other than the defense budget, a commonly adopted tool by scholars is Global Firepower (GFP) index which takes into account over 50 individual factors to formulate conventional military power scores for countries including military spending, manpower, equipment, geography, and natural resources (Global Firepower, 2021).

3.4 Military Power and Coercive Diplomacy

While such attempts cover and reflect the parameters of military power in a more detailed fashion through comprehensive formulations, they can still be misleading for various reasons. First of all, power is indeed an “actual or potential relationship between two or more actors (persons, states, groups, etc.) rather than a property of any one of them” and power should be dealt “within specified issue-areas and ... specified regions.” (Baldwin, 2002) It is with the relational approach to power that scholars can explain why military superpowers may not always defeat their substantially weaker opponents as in failed campaigns of the U.S. in Vietnam and Afghanistan, as well as the unsuccessful Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late-Cold War era (Carr, 2014).

The second issue is the prominence of power projection capabilities which also draws the limits of coercive diplomacy. Some states are “powerful within their geographic regions” yet they lack the ability to demonstrate that power globally (Cooper et al. 1993). In fact, global power projection is a highly exceptional skill that even great powers

perform with significant challenges and in declining levels of effectiveness as the distance widens. One solution to that is signing bilateral security cooperation agreements with relevant states to acquire the right to operate military bases. In this respect, for instance, the U.S. has about 750 overseas bases distributed to over 80 countries which puts a huge financial burden on the defense budget (Haddad, 2021).

3.5 *Role of Geopolitics in Coercive Middle Power Diplomacy*

Since the necessity for power projection across geographies strictly restricts states' military capabilities beyond their respective regions, geopolitical factors play a crucial role regarding the effectiveness of middle powers' military capabilities. In other words, geopolitics is a key determinant for middle powers as to whether they can translate their respective military power into an influential component of foreign policy strategy. In light of the worsening security situation in many parts of the world as a result of the rise of both conventional and hybrid threats, neglecting the hard power dimension of middle power activism would create a conceptual deficiency. Depending on the associated geopolitical risks and opportunities in their vicinity, middle powers are exposed to varying levels of necessity to develop appropriate foreign and security policies also utilizing their military strength.

For instance, middle powers of the Indo-Pacific region including but not limited to Australia and South Korea encounter with the remarkably improving Chinese military capabilities. Especially, the dramatic expansion of the Chinese naval power and presence in the region over the recent years dramatically influences the threat calculations of Australia and South Korea. Combining this with their respective roles in the broader U.S. containment policy against China, the two countries have no choice but to get involved, at least to some extent, in this increasingly hard power dominated great power

competition, including through armament. This necessitates the reconsideration of their military capabilities, strategies, and partnerships as they do so within national security frameworks as well as multilateral security cooperation mechanisms like AUKUS and QUAD. In fact, the two countries have dramatically expanded their foreign acquisition. Accordingly, Australia and South Korea's arms imports in the last 5 years increased by 62 and 71 per cent respectively compared to the previous period, resulting a steep climb in global rank as 4th and 7th largest importers globally (SIPRI, 2021). However, not all middle powers face with such worsening geopolitical and security environment in their region like middle powers of the Indo-Pacific. Latin America represents an opposite case in this regard.

Today, developments in Latin America attract relatively less attention in the global stage and their effects remain comparably limited. After centuries, the region is not an epicenter of great power competition anymore. Considering the invasions, civil wars and decolonization struggles in the 19th century, and the fact that the Latin American continent was at the heart of the closest point to a nuclear war during the Cold War era with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 (see Allison, 1969), the region has transformed into a much calmer geography in the recent years regarding its role in great power competition. Besides the calmness, Latin America has also become geopolitically less relevant globally while hosting significant regional diplomatic initiatives aimed at improving economic interdependence (Malamud & Schenoni, 2020). The implications of these developments are also reflected in arms imports statistics. According to SIPRI (2021), the continent's arms imports "were at their lowest level for any 5-year period in the past 50 years" in 2017-2021.

As an emerging middle power situated in Latin America, Brazil enjoys an enviable position in international community regarding its external threat calculations despite high

level of internal disorder and violence. Brazil's former Minister of Defense has once stated: "Brazil has no enemies. There is not one country that hates us or is prejudiced against us" (Bruneau & Tollefson, 2014). Neighboring ten countries, Brazil has no border disputes even with those having such disputes with each other like Bolivia and Venezuela. Moreover, its long-lasting rivalry with Argentina that reached its peak in the 1970s has weakened by the 1980s (Thies, 2005). The two countries have peacefully transformed their strategic rivalry as well as nuclear and missile competition into a cooperation framework (Sotomayor Velazquez, 2004).

In this sense, both being located in Latin America and maintaining relatively peaceful relations with the regional actors leave relatively limited space for Brazil to benefit from its military capabilities as an extension of middle power activism. This is not necessarily to say that the country is at a disadvantageous position in its status-seeking efforts compared to other middle powers. Although the proportional use of soft and hard elements in its foreign policy will likely differ, Brazil can more comfortably concentrate on defense industry moves, without antagonizing its regional partners thanks to the good neighborly relations with each other. In fact, the ongoing investments that paved the way for Brazilian defense industry's recent export performance show the country's willingness to this end. Accordingly, Brazil's arms exports increased by 48 per cent in 2017-2021 compared to the previous five-year period (SIPRI, 2021).

As such, geopolitical considerations can have a decisive impact on determining whether middle powers can benefit from military activism as well. Although a country like Brazil, whose Armed Forces rank among the top ten worldwide according to the GFP worldwide military strength index, faces the challenges of power projection and geopolitical importance (Global Firepower, 2022). While the geopolitical factors on the one hand limits taking advantage of the hard power toolbox, they also help avoid the

potential negative consequences of overdependence on militaristic methods in international relations. Nevertheless, it would be fair to argue that Brazil as a middle power may not reflect its rising influence in the global stage through its military strength as opposed to its developing economy and soft power oriented diplomatic activism.

3.6 *Positioning Defense Industry in Middle Power Activism: Benefits and Costs*

In an unpredictable world whose history is full of armed conflicts and wars, states feel the need to possess effective military equipment to ensure their own security. Especially when they sense an increase in the perceived level of threat, states are inclined to divert a serious portion of their material resources from other sectors to either buy or make weapons. Regardless of the existence of a potential risk of an armed conflict in the foreseeable future, however, defense budgets constitute a remarkable part of national income across the world. This mainly stems from the concept of deterrence, which refers to raising the costs of a military conflict for the adversaries in case of an attack, therefore deterring them from doing so.

While deterrence can also be complemented through diplomatic means and taking part in multilateral security cooperation platforms (e.g., NATO and Warsaw Pact), a more common way of ensuring deterrence is by having a sufficiently large, powerful, well-trained, and combat-ready military force equipped with modern weapon systems. Given the rapid developments in military technology, the availability of sophisticated arms and equipment at their disposal provides countries with a considerable level of self-confidence and deterrence capacity.

In this respect, states usually face with a dilemma for acquiring military equipment after specifying their needs. They can opt for direct foreign procurement or invest to domestically manufacture in appropriate numbers and qualities, finding themselves in the

“make or buy weapons?” position (Bağcı & Kurç, 2016). Due to the unique characteristics and challenges of the arms trade that will be discussed in the relevant section below, building a viable national defense industry appears to be a more reliable choice, which also has its own challenges embedded to it.

Defense industry is a strategically important sector for a country due to its direct linkage to national security and the state of foreign relations. Regarding national security, defense industry provides the necessary military tools and equipment for defending the country against external and/or internal threats. For reasons stemming from the mentioned strategic nature, both the defense industry firms and more broadly the arms trade around the world are accustomed to strict domestic and international regulations.

Domestically, even private firms need explicit consent and at times governmental and/or parliamentary approval by their own states when their products are demanded by a foreign country. More strikingly, and usually, the official representatives of the exporting state take part in these negotiations, which widens the scope of the negotiations from a simple business trade to a broader international political economy basis. As such, even the largest defense industry firms with billions of dollars of annual export capacity are not allowed to sell their products to any customer who can afford to pay what is written on the price tag.

The involvement of political decision-making further alleviates the complexity of the process by including additional set of criteria and demands by the exporting nation that private firms (i.e., the producer of the military equipment itself) are not asking for. For instance, the supplementary conditionalities may include any form of political concessions and demands regarding a major policy change, as well as restrictions on end-users, logistical networks, prospective modernization process and export licenses for intermediary goods. In other words, the seller country uses its leverage as the supplier of

an essential product for other party's national security to include some strings attached to the purchase agreement.

Alternatively, depending on the current state of relations between the two countries, the government of the producer may reject an offer in the first place without even consulting with the producer. This stems from the highly regulated nature of the defense industry and arms trade due to the strong strategic and at times game-changing implications of prospective arms sales. Moreover, some countries require additional steps before approving such sales based on the nature and monetary worth of a potential acquisition.

For instance, as the world's by far the largest exporter of defense industry goods, the United States renders necessary the senate approval for arms sales over a certain amount for different types of military equipment (see Congressional Research Service, 2021). Recently, within this context, the U.S. Senate blocked the Trump administration's arms sales to the Gulf nations in 2019 (Edmondson, 2019). As such, decisions regarding arms trade are taken by a complex set of actors in consideration of factors well beyond that of just business and profitability concerns of private firms. The dynamics of arms trade across the world can only be understood through a deeper analysis of interacting variables of domestic and international politics.

In the domestic political economy setting, the decision as to whether relying on national defense industry or foreign procurement in acquiring military equipment presents important trade-offs. As a high-tech sector, defense industry can be an important source of industrial production and employment. Moreover, the spillover effects created by the defense industry can also help other sectors in the economy to improve their efficiency.

For instance, R&D expenditures, which constitute a significant part of the allocated resources to the defense industry, have a positive impact on the enhancement of

overall economic activity in countries. This, in turn, helps create employment opportunities not just in the major defense industry companies and their sub-contractors, but also in other sectors as well with the additional know-how and competitiveness capacity gained by the national defense industry ecosystem. Furthermore, transfer of enhanced technological capacity levels generated by the R&D activities within the defense industry to sectors like electronics and auto-industry would support overall economic growth and development with high value-added production opportunities.

Another economic advantage of indigenously producing the military needs deals with the balance of payments of national budgets. By nature, defense industry contracts carry a costly financial burden sometimes at the level of billions of dollars especially when they involve strategic equipment such as fighter jets, submarines, missile defense systems and frigates. As a result, foreign procurement results in a burden over the balance of payments potentially leading to or enlarging the current account deficit. Other than limiting the import dependency on such highly expensive military equipment, therefore, a national defense industry can contribute to the economy if it can successfully develop exportable products. Therefore, in the case that an advanced national defense industry is built, this can reverse the adverse economic effects of the once import-dependent military equipment needs on a country's balance of payments in addition to generating strategic gains.

However, nationalizing the defense industry brings about certain opportunity costs as well. Despite the abovementioned advantages, building an advanced defense industry requires major investments from scratch to catch up with the modern military technology. Instead of allocating their constrained material resources into this relatively risky investment, states might choose to guarantee their security through looking for existing sophisticated, widely used, combat-proven military equipment available on the market.

The reason for that is not every defense industry project eventually leads to producing successful equipment, and the lost time and investment costs cannot be taken back. Germany's failed "Euro Hawk" drone program which costed \$793.5 million before it was scrapped in 2013 constitutes a remarkable example within this context (Newdick, 2021). At times when states are risk-averse and feel themselves under pressing security needs, especially, they would likely prefer direct foreign procurement choices.

As shown in Table 3.1, Saudi Arabia exemplifies this type of behavior as the world's largest importer of major arms in the 2016-2020 period. Moreover, 79 per cent of Saudi Arabia's arms imports were supplied by the United States (SIPRI Yearbook, 2021). As a result, this enables Saudi Arabia to strongly reinforce its deterrence capacity in a highly unstable region with its modern and advanced Armed Forces equipped with mostly US-origin cutting edge military technology. Thus, states may have access to world-class defense industry products without having to build theirs. However, the credibility of their trade partners as to whether they will continue to commit to the arms trade in an unhindered fashion to supplying arms in the future is always uncertain and subject to changing political will. Due to the irreplaceable nature of national security and the role of possessing military equipment in ensuring that, a certain level of self-sufficiency in defense industry is always desirable.

Table 3.1: Top 10 Largest Importers of Major Arms, 2016-20

Rank	Country	Global Share (%)
1	Saudi Arabia	11
2	India	9.5
3	Egypt	5.8
4	Australia	5.1
5	China	4.7
6	Algeria	4.3
7	South Korea	4.3
8	Qatar	3.8
9	UAE	3
10	Pakistan	2.7
TOTAL		54.2

Source: SIPRI Fact Sheet (2021b): Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2020

One risk in arms trade is that the exporting countries may ban the sale of their military equipment based on the changing parameters of bilateral relations. Such a policy change would leave import-dependent countries vulnerable in ensuring their national security particularly in the face of emerging threats. In line with these concerns, Saudi Arabia has put forward a new vision that aims to transform its defense industry strategy. The country's General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI) plans a total investment of over \$20 billion for its domestic defense industry by 2030 and expects to increase the share of the R&D expenditures in defense budget from 0.2% to approximately 4% (International Trade Administration, 2021).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia also intends to localize over half of its spending on military equipment by the same year and the Industrial Participation Program published by GAMI encourages companies in the sector to prioritize localization policies. (GAMI, 2019). Many other top importing states shown in Table 3.1 also have similar plans and investments to achieve more reliance on their own military technology. As such, supporting the progress of national defense industrial base has proven to be critical even for countries that have no problem with allocating immense resources to acquiring military equipment mostly through direct foreign procurement.

Developing an advanced national defense industry may also create challenges with respect to social expenditures. Since the process requires investing enormous time, money and human capital, there is another trade-off between the advantages of having a viable localized defense industry and the social costs. One of these social costs is the negative socioeconomic effects emanating from diverting financial assets from areas that more directly contribute to the societal well-being. In other words, governments most likely will have to reduce their spending on, for instance, health, education, housing, transportation, and agricultural sectors to allocate a fair amount of budget to their own defense industry programs.

In addition to the financial burden on social welfare, defense industry sector employs a highly skilled labor force. Engineers constitute the backbone of the R&D and project departments. Similar with the economic resources, installing these brilliant minds into other sectors rather than the defense industry might have been more beneficial to the society. As such, despite the spillover effects of the defense industry and although security is also an integral part of social welfare, costly nature of creating a local defense industry can get harsh criticisms especially during economic fluctuations in peace time.

At this point, besides the abovementioned reasons, an important factor to understand why countries may prefer foreign procurement deals with the logic of economies of scale. The long-established production lines and the technologic edge help big defense industry firms to significantly decrease their unit costs, providing them with the ability to present attractive offers for foreign buyers. Thus, since a newcomer's unit costs in defense industry at the initial stages would be much higher, foreign procurement options may seem economically more appropriate, albeit the said risks.

3.7 *The Necessity to Avoid a Military-Industrial Complex Trap*

Another important issue with owning a developed defense industry is the risk of creating a military-industrial complex. Generally speaking, it is used to express concerns over the profitability-oriented approach to security policy by members of the abovementioned network, rather than prioritizing national interests and international stability. In literal terms, military-industrial complex refers to the “network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies” (Weber, 2019).

The main driver of the corrupting influence that the military-industrial complex strives to build over policymaking is the spread and prolongation of armed conflicts across the world with an aim to increase their revenue by selling more arms. Domestically, the military-industrial complex endeavors to secure allocation of immense budgetary resources to the war industry by exaggerating the threat perceptions and buying political support through various ways including campaign donations.

A concept first coined by himself; former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower had seriously warned the American public about the dangers of military-industrial

complex. President Eisenhower's reaction was as a result of the arms and space race during the Cold War era that exploited large amounts of monetary resources. In the relevant section of his speech, President Eisenhower stated:

We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security alone more than the net income of all United States corporations.

Now this conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual—is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet, we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved. So is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted.

Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together (National Archives, 2021).

Besides the content of President Eisenhower's remarks on the subject, his background is worth noting. Before his political career, Eisenhower was known for his military successes and in fact he is one of the leading military figures in the 20th century. In the Second World War, the troops under his command played an instrumental role in defeating the Nazi forces. General Eisenhower served as the Supreme Allied Commander of the Expeditionary Force and was responsible for the invasion of North Africa with Operation Torch as well as the invasion of Normandy with Operation Overlord. Coming

from a military background with combat experience makes his statements on the military-industry complex more remarkable.

It is also noteworthy to highlight the timing of the speech. President Eisenhower indicated his concerns over the military-industry complex within his roughly 15 minutes long televised farewell address to the nation, only three days before passing over the presidency to his successor, John F. Kennedy. This implies President Eisenhower's deliberate choice for bringing up the military-industrial complex issue as one of his legacies to the American public.

The military-industrial complex debate preserves its popularity to this day. In a televised interview, for instance, former President Trump has quite explicitly expressed his own concerns in this regard in multiple occasions. When explaining the strong resistance that he has faced over his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, Trump said "You do have a military-industrial complex. They do like war. ... They never want to leave. They always want to fight" (The Real New Network, 2019). In a different speech, Trump once again called attention to the same subject, by saying that senior officials in the Pentagon dislike him "[B]ecause they want to do nothing but fight wars so that all of those wonderful companies that make the bombs, make the planes, make everything else stay happy" (Ali & Stewart, 2020).

Therefore, as middle powers ambitiously invest in building their own defense industry sector, they should also pay a special importance to preventing the creation of a military-industry complex. Otherwise, the manipulation of the political decision-making processes to pursue coercive policies even when it contradicts with the national interests would become unavoidable as in the case of the United States. A giant and unchecked

military-industrial complex would result in adverse consequences in economic, political, and security realms.

3.8 *Reactions to Middle Power Military and Defense Industry Activism*

While investments in strengthening the Armed Forces contribute to deterrence and overall national power capacity, the implications of an assertive policy to this end may not always generate desired outcomes. Many regional and global actors would cautiously observe and seek for ways to react when a middle power attempts to dramatically enhance its military capability in a short span of time. Since military power remains to be an instrument of foreign policy through deterrence and coercion, such a change in regional power balances might not resonate well in the eyes of neighboring countries and other regional and global players. Especially when this capability expansion translates into a turn in foreign policy conduct towards a more unilateralist, interventionist, and coercive manner, regional and, at times, extra-regional reactions are almost inevitable.

The most immediate reaction to a middle power's policy to significantly enhance its military capability, in this regard, would initially come from its region. The effects of a changing regional balances of military power raises the risk for other regional actors to be affected by the increase in external coercive capacity in their vicinity. In the case of a historical rivalry between the two countries, in particular, the reaction is likely to be instant and strong. The rise of a rival military power necessitates investments in one's own Armed Forces as well as an active diplomacy to manage the newly emerging regional realities by striving to mobilize international support. Middle powers, therefore, may face with countermeasures against their rising military strength and involvements in the form of differing diplomatic and military maneuvers, such as a policy of containment.

The regional actor whose threat perceptions increase with the advancing military effectiveness of the middle power would reconsider its own military capabilities to repair its eroding deterrence capacity. In other words, the relative weakening of military power urges policymakers to seek ways to compensate the shifting regional military balance. In an attempt to empower their Armed Forces, a likely outcome is a revised security policy through drastic expansion of defense expenditure and armament through foreign procurement of strategic military equipment.

Such a reaction, in turn, could initiate a regional security dilemma that damages the middle power itself (see Jervis, 1978; Snyder, 1984). The main driver of this situation would stem from the middle power's mistake in creating perceptions that the enhancement of its military capabilities is designed in a way to antagonize regional actors through increasingly employing militaristic methods in foreign policy conduct. A regional arms race does not serve the interests of a militarily ambitious middle power that also strives to build a self-reliant national war industry. The reason for that is that the rival state would likely acquire strategic arms from a great power whose military technology is well beyond that of a middle power which is in the process of gradually developing its own defense industry.

Therefore, a middle power's counter-reaction to regional armament can in fact necessitate costly foreign procurement from which it attempts to enthusiastically refrain. The major concern here stems from the arise of unexpected and expensive armament which impedes the middle power's defense industry development. Middle powers would feel the need to shift the allocation of budgets from ongoing indigenous projects to a set of once unnecessary, or at least not urgent, modernization and foreign acquisition programs. As such, a miscalculation of the optimal mix of military capability and foreign

policy conduct have the potential to create not only an economic burden on the already constrained material capabilities of middle powers, but it can also slow down their efforts to improve local military technology through investing in the nationalization of defense industry.

Yet, military power is not the only source of deterrence and coercion. If a state's actions are regarded threatening due to the allegations of destabilizing, revisionist and provocative characteristics, a rather collective reaction by international community would serve as a more deterrent tool than military force. Therefore, the process of advancing the military capability should not drastically alter foreign policy strategy to be able to avoid isolation in regional and global levels.

Besides the abovementioned challenges posed by an arms race, middle powers should also be aware of their regional rivals' strategy to pursue a diplomatic activism to damage their prestige and credibility in the global stage. Such a strategy involves attempting to convince other regional actors that the said middle power's actions are harmful for the broader regional stability rather than constituting a dispute between two countries. Following bilateral efforts, if successful, these attempts can reach to an extent that several regional players constructing new regional frameworks as a response to the overambitious and unilateralist middle power activism. Moreover, the regional rival would most probably utilize its overall diplomatic capacity to mobilize the extra-regional networks it has such as international and intergovernmental organizations. In order not to further isolate itself in its region, therefore, middle powers need to maintain a cautious strategy to avoid alienating countries and organizations in its region and beyond.

In this regard, major/great powers have a wider array of tools to confront middle power military activism that disrupts their influence. Since major powers are "more active

and less constrained by distance than other actors” (Lee & Thompson, 2017) they are inclined to and capable of affecting many regions in the world simultaneously. In light of middle power activism that damage its influence, the United States, for instance, can employ effective coercive and diplomatic tools to make that middle power pay a price, if it does not back down. These measures can include, among others, trade sanctions, arms embargo and suspension of ongoing cooperation mechanisms and programs.

Other than coercive methods, great powers have the chance to use diplomatic ends similar to regional actors as mentioned above but with more considerable impact due to their larger diplomatic networks and influence. Besides mobilizing new coalitions, great powers can also support and involve in the regional multilateral frameworks to increase the magnitude of the pressure against the military activism of a middle power. Facing a synchronized confrontational stance from global and regional actors together would seriously hinder both soft and hard elements of middle power activism in its region and beyond.

3.9 Potentials of Identifying Niche Military Technology Areas for Middle Powers

There seems to be a great potential for middle powers in terms of defense industry cooperation with each other. A thorough consideration of the conventional literature on middle power behavior in light of the above discussions on the strategic value of defense industry and the changing dynamics of modern military technology reveals mutually beneficial opportunities for all middle powers.

As laid out in chapter two, middle powers concentrate on multilateralism through building effective coalitions, and they identify niche diplomacy areas given inherent limitations regarding political and material capabilities. In fact, such attributes of middle

powerhood are mostly applied to soft power related fields. However, these can be extended towards hard power through coalition-building with their peers. To achieve that, nevertheless, they need to follow what they are doing regarding niche diplomacy areas.

In defense industry cooperation, specifying niche areas of military technology would be more beneficial than acting alone in localization of all components of military equipment needs due to limited material capacity problem. The emergence of new fields in military technology enables possible investments to yield high marginal revenue as we are in the initial phases of their development. In this context, Turkey's ascendance to a global drone power exemplifies the potential.

One of the main advantages of enhanced middle power defense industry cooperation would be contributing to their quest for greater autonomy in international relations. In the earlier pages, it has been demonstrated that arms trade is a key factor for establishing certain dependence mechanisms on great powers through security and foreign debt stemming from costly credits or payments, as well as logistical needs such as maintenance and spare parts. As great powers tend to make use of having the upper hand in this dependence structure, additional demands involving political strings restrict middle powers' maneuvering capacity.

On the other hand, if middle powers can divert their import dependence on certain military equipment from great powers to their middle power peers, the need for political concessions would likely diminish excessively. Since middle powers have little, if any, geopolitical expectations from each other, possible defense industry contracts would bear rather limited concerns. Moreover, the diversification of export and import markets together would strengthen their positions in arms trade with great powers, softening the conditions for future procurements.

In order to take full advantage of such opportunities, multilateral cooperation would be more effective. While acknowledging the benefits of bilateral defense industry deals, taking these efforts on a multilateral level would generate most optimal outcomes. As there are numerous highly costly areas of military technology that middle powers are dependent on great powers, participation of as many middle powers is needed. In this sense, MIKTA as an all-middle-powers-club can serve as an interesting experiment, also through bringing together both traditional and emerging middle powers. Although emerging middle powers are more assertive with regards to reinforcing their foreign policy independence, there is no reason for traditional middle powers to take part in such mutually beneficial cooperation on military technology as well.

Chapter 4: TURKEY'S RECENT MILITARY AND DEFENSE INDUSTRY ACTIVISM

This section explores Turkey's middle power credentials in more detail. In this vein, we will be applying three approaches to defining and categorizing middle powers mentioned in chapter two to the Turkish case. Namely, these are positional, behavioral, and identity-based approaches and the main aim here is to test Turkey's middle powerhood from different angles. In fact, Turkey's belonging to the middle power category has been consistently analyzed in the literature. The persistence of studies that examine Turkey from a middle power angle leaves little concerns regarding Turkey's middle power credentials, with the partial exception of certain criticisms revolving around its recent assertive status-seeking policies along with some other emerging middle powers. Nevertheless, a brief review of the existing studies on whether Turkey is treated as a middle power among international scholarship reveals that it is quite often viewed as such (Joordaan, 2003; Hale, 2000; Öniş & Yılmaz, 2005; Müftüler-Baç & Yüksel, 1997; Parlar-Dal, 2018; Spero, 2009; Weiss, 2018; Baba, 2018; Öniş & Kutlay, 2017, Bayer & Keyman, 2012; Balla, 2012).

4.1 Turkey's Middle Power Credentials from Different Approaches

4.1.1 Positional Approach

In terms of positional parameters, Turkey comfortably qualifies as a middle power. In fact, Turkey's gross domestic product ranking has fluctuated between 16th and 24th since 1980 and gross national income has followed a similar pattern as well (World Bank, 2022). Therefore, Turkey fits into Wood's (1987) criteria of middle powerhood which necessitates ranking between sixth and thirty-sixth in the world in terms of

economic size. Demographically, Turkey's population is approximately 85 million which makes it the 18th most populated country around the globe (UNFPA, 2021). Moreover, Turkish Armed Forces rank 13th most powerful military globally according to Global FirePower index (Global FirePower, 2022). In short, if one favors the positional approach to defining middle powers, Turkey can easily meet the standards.

4.1.2 *Identity-Based Approach*

On the other hand, the identity-based approach gives us a less convincing picture regarding Turkey's middle power credentials. As explained before, the identity-based version of the middle power theory takes into account the self-defined identity of states to assess their status as middle powers. In this regard, in contradiction with many other traditional and emerging middle powers such as Canada, Australia and South Korea, Turkey's official rhetoric rarely, if any, adopts middle power identity. Turkish national elites are known for their more frequent use of 'regional power' or 'great regional power' compared to 'middle power' narrative and Turkey, for that reason, "has a weak middle power national role conception" (Parlar-Dal, 2019). As a result of this, the problem of status ambiguity receives criticism and, in a study, Turkey is considered as a "self-appointed superpower" (Zalewski, 2010).

Although self-created identity is important and large deviations from that which result in a mismatch of capabilities and expectations could lead to 'status inconsistencies', one should remember that the identity-based approach is not much popular among international relations scholarship. Nevertheless, crafting foreign policy strategies based on a self-identity in line with the realities is to the benefit of middle powers and, in fact, all states.

4.1.3 *Behavioral Approach*

In terms of behavioral parameters, it would be fair to say that Turkey fulfills most of the criteria. To begin with, Turkey favors multilateralism in international relations. In Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's words, "[W]e have always advocated free, fair, transparent and rules-based multilateralism in our foreign policy, and we will continue to defend that" (Atlas, 2020). As an emerging middle power, however, the country is not happy with the current state of multilateralism that is based on the post-World War II dynamics, and it actively campaigns for reforming of international organizations. Most vocally and consistently, Turkey at the highest level seeks for a UN reform that focuses on, among others, restructuring the UN Security Council regarding the permanent memberships and veto powers. President Erdoğan published the book titled "A Fairer World is Possible" which includes Turkey's official stance in reforming the UN to reinforce its multilateral promise (Erdoğan, 2021). Moreover, Turkey is a member or observer of numerous multilateral mechanisms in the regional and global scale. In addition to the UN, Turkey is also a member of, most notably, OSCE, NATO, G20, MIKTA, OECD, WTO, IMF, World Bank, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Turkic Council, and many others.

Turkey's leading role in peaceful resolution of conflicts in its region and beyond is also in line with another important attribute of middle power behavior. In this regard, Turkey's ambitious mediation activities are generally well-received by the international community. In the most recent case, for instance, Turkey's endeavors to help open a grain corridor from the Ukrainian ports has been a "victory for diplomacy" according to the

Secretary-General of the UN Antonio Guterres, who underscored Turkey's "pivotal role" in reaching the deal. (UN News, 2022; Donmez & Hamit, 2022).

The mentioned Black Sea Grain Corridor initiative which envisages the formation of a Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul with the participation of Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and UN officials, allows the much-needed food products to be shipped from the Ukrainian ports after multiple inspections. The deal that Turkey facilitated was a remarkable success to avoid food insecurity in many parts of the world including in Africa and it is expected to ease the upward pressure on the commodity prices. In addition, Turkey also brokered a prisoner swap between the two countries in September 2022 which provided around 200 war prisoners from each side to return. Turkey's position as being able to communicate with both sides of the conflict continues to uphold its stabilizing role which is an integral part of middle power behavior.

Turkey's mediation initiatives are neither limited to the Russian-Ukrainian war nor its own region. Turkey has recently involved in conflict resolution efforts in many regions such as the Balkans, Middle East, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and even Southeast Asia. In the Balkans, Turkey launched two separate trilateral consultation mechanisms to secure lasting dialogue among regional actors and for the preservation of peace and stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the participation of Serbia and Croatia (see Mulalic, 2019). In the Middle East, Turkey facilitated indirect talks between Syria and Israel in 2008, took part in Iraq's internal reconciliation process, and conducted an enthusiastic mediation campaign with Brazil, another emerging middle power, to ensure peaceful conduct of Iran's nuclear program with Tehran Declaration of May 2010 between Iran, Brazil and Turkey. In South Asia, Turkey jointly initiated the 'Heart of Asia: Istanbul Process' with Afghanistan aimed at strengthening regional dialogue and cooperation in 2011. In this vein, Turkey also pioneered a trilateral cooperation

mechanism with Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Africa, Turkey engaged in assisting the talks between Somali and Somaliland, and in Southeast Asia, contributed to the peace process in the Philippines.

A closer look into these cases would reveal that not all of Turkey's mediation efforts have succeeded. Among these, especially, the failed attempt by Turkey to find a solution to Iran's nuclear ambitions in collaboration with Brazil had adverse effects on these two middle powers' international image and prestige. While major powers had initially supported the two countries by delegating limited responsibilities, Turkey and Brazil attributed a much larger meaning to the process within the framework of achieving greater foreign policy independence. The eventual failure because of the resistance by delegators in this regard created a "boomerang effect" where Turkey and Brazil's "ascent in the international power hierarchy through functional delegation started to lose momentum" and their "diplomatic relations with the established powers failed to reach their previous levels" (Levaggi & Yılmaz, 2019). Despite certain setbacks, however, Turkey has proven itself as a reliable mediator in many conflict resolution efforts across the globe.

In addition to active efforts in the field, Turkey's mediation strategy manifests itself within the framework of raising awareness and capacity creation as well. In other words, Turkey involves in multilateral efforts to ensure the dissemination of mediation. For instance, Turkey co-chairs Groups of Friends along with Finland in the UN within the framework of "Mediation for Peace" initiative launched in September 2010, and in OSCE launched with Finland and Switzerland in 2014, as well as in OIC with Saudi Arabia, Gambia and OIC General Secretariat launched in 2018. Moreover, Turkey also hosts Istanbul Mediation Conference series since 2012 and a "Mediation for Peace" certificate program for diplomats from OIC member states. In short, Turkey's large scale

mediation activities are based on “multi-layered and diverse architecture” (MFA, 2022a) which helps the country to reinforce its ‘good international citizen’ image as emphasized in the middle power literature.

Besides its mediation activities, Turkey has emerged as a global humanitarian actor with its multidimensional policies in this context. Turkey’s humanitarian agenda is a product of well-coordinated and institutionalized efforts including but not limited to wide range of aid and emergency assistance programs, development coordination, as well as its open-door policy in the face of huge migration flows created by regional instabilities, in particular the Syrian war. Within this framework, it is worth underscoring that Turkey’s official narrative labels Turkish foreign policy as “entrepreneurial and humanitarian” for many years (MFA, 2019). Moreover, the theme of the 2022 Ambassadors’ Conference which was “Wise and Compassionate Turkish Diplomacy on the Eve of 2023 and Beyond” also embraced the humanitarian characteristics of the country’s foreign policy strategy (MFA, 2022b). Therefore, unlike Turkey’s relatively weaker self-portrayed identity regarding middle powerhood, the frequent adoption of humanitarian features demonstrates a rather compatible view of the self with the realities.

Turkey’s humanitarian diplomacy has garnered international attention due to provision of significant amount of aid and playing a leading role in multilateral efforts to this end. Turkey is currently the world’s second largest donor following the United States while it also allocates the highest share in proportion to national income towards humanitarian aid. Despite a 23 per cent decline compared to 2020, Turkey still preserved its mentioned ranks in 2021 by spending over \$5.58 billion which corresponds to 0.86 per cent of the national income according to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (Development Initiatives, 2022). As a result of Turkey’s active humanitarian diplomacy, the first ever World Humanitarian Summit was held in Turkey in 2016. Moreover, the

UN's decision in 2021 to establish an OCHA office in Istanbul also stemmed from the contributions of Turkey to global humanitarian diplomacy as well as maintaining the one and only cross-border humanitarian assistance operation into Syria as mandated by the UN Security Council Resolutions 2165 in 2014 and 2449 in 2018 (UN OCHA, 2018). Besides, Turkey actively promotes agenda for the Least Developed Countries in multilateral stages and extended a helping hand to over 160 countries worldwide during the pandemic with medical and other forms of assistance initiatives (Turkish Presidency, 2022). Therefore, Turkey's choice of prioritizing humanitarian agenda in international relations also reflects a successful implementation of middle power niche diplomacy (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017).

4.2 *Rise of the Turkish Defense Industry and its Ramifications*

4.2.1 *Brief History of Turkish Defense Industry and Major Turning Points*

The poor defense industry legacy that the young Republic inherited coupled with the devastating effects of the consecutive wars in the first quarter of the 20th century caused Turkey to fall behind in areas of military capability and technology. In order to close the gap, defense industry investments in Turkey began in the early Republican era with the directions from the founding President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Most notably, the formation of Kayseri Airplane Factory in 1926 as a Turkish-German joint project under Turkish Aircraft and Engine Corporation (TOMTAŞ) was an important initial step in this regard.

Other developments such as the establishment of Turkish Airplane Association (Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti) in 1925, transforming Gölçük into a shipyard beginning with 1926 and the Turkish-German cooperation for building submarines which were delivered to Turkish Naval Forces in 1937 are also considerable given the limited economic and

industrial capacity of the country. In terms of private initiatives, Vecihi Hürkuş designed and produced first Turkish-made plane in 1924, Şakir Zümre opened the first war industry factory in 1925, Nuri Demirağ established the first private airplane factory in 1936, and Turkish Aeronautical Association built the Etimesgut Airplane Factory as well as the Airplane Engine Factory in 1939 and 1941 (Özlü, 2022; THK, 2019).

Despite the ambitious efforts for having a strong national defense industry at the time, there have been a major transformation towards foreign dependence especially after the Second World War. In this regard, two different statements aptly summarize the policy change. In 1937, President Atatürk said in his speech “From now on, all our planes and their engines should be built in our country and our war industry should be shaped on this basis” (TBMM, 1937). In 1949, on the other hand, the Commander of Turkish Air Force, General Zeki Doğan said to Nuri Demirağ, “If I order planes from your factory when I can get free planes from American aid, tomorrow this nation will hang me” (Meydan, 2018).

The major reason for such a different vision for national defense industry in less than a decade stemmed from the U.S. military assistance programs to Turkey, most notably within the framework of the Truman Doctrine announced in 1947. Accordingly, Turkey and Greece received, in total, \$400 million worth of military and economic aid from the U.S. in hopes to prevent these countries from entering into the Soviet sphere of influence in the post-World War II bipolarity. This was welcomed by Turkey due to the rising Soviet threat especially felt after the meeting between the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow Sarper and the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov in 1945. In the meeting, Molotov threatened Turkey by not renewing the non-aggression pact of 1925 unless certain territorial and sovereignty demands were met (Barlas & Yılmaz, 2016). Truman was convinced that the threat was credible. In his words, “There isn’t a doubt in my mind

that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean” which shows the delicacy of the situation from both Turkey’s and the United States’ points of view (Trachtenberg, 1999).

For Turkey, the Truman Doctrine served as an “opportunity for the modernization and the improvement of its Armed Forces” and “symbolized the beginning of a more active U.S. involvement marked by security concerns” in the region (Yılmaz, 2015). Turkey’s admission to NATO in 1952 has deepened Turkey’s position in the Western camp and further facilitated its access to modern military equipment through loans and aids. Besides its positive effects on modernizing the outdated Turkish military, however, the U.S. assistance to Turkey also significantly damaged the domestic defense industry, thereby laying the foundations for excessive dependence on the United States. Most of the factories built previously were either closed or transformed into other types of industrial production facilities. Despite the seemingly mutually beneficial arms trade, the history showed that most of the critical turning points that caused Turkey to revise its arms procurement strategy towards domestic production and having a more independent defense industry have come after disagreements with the United States (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Major Turning Points in the History of Turkish Defense Industry

Events	Prominence	Implications
<i>Truman Doctrine (1947)</i> <i>&</i> <i>NATO Membership (1952)</i>	Major U.S. efforts in the form of military assistance program and preventing Turkey (along with Greece) from entering the Soviet sphere of influence in the early post-World War II bipolarity.	• Truman Doctrine represent a milestone for accelerating Turkey's heavy reliance on American defense industry products. • Turkey's acceptance to NATO reinforced its position in the Western camp and provided easier access to U.S. military equipment.
<i>Cuban Missile Crisis</i> <i>(1962)</i>	The crisis was resolved with President Kennedy's offer to withdraw nuclear missiles deployed in Izmir without consulting with Turkey.	• First major blow for Turkey that caused realization of the inferiority of Turkish national security in the eyes of the U.S. government.
<i>Johnson Letter (1964)</i>	President Johnson banned Turkey from using the American-made military equipment in a possible intervention in Cyprus and implied that NATO will not protect Turkey in case of a subsequent Soviet aggression.	• The rhetorical tone and the content of the letter caused a disbelief in Turkey, and it remains one of the lowest points in bilateral relations. Turkey began to diversify its arms suppliers afterwards.
<i>Cyprus Peace Operation</i> <i>(1974)</i>	Turkey's military intervention in the island of Cyprus triggered an arms embargo by the U.S. congress in 1975-1978.	• Formed the basis for institutionalization and awareness for the national defense industry. • Led to the establishment of major defense industry companies such as Aselsan (1975), Isbir (1978), Aspilsan (1981), Havelsan (1982)
<i>Defense Industry</i> <i>Executive Council</i> <i>Meeting (2004)</i>	The committee emphasized importance of domestic production and unique design. \$11 billion worth of foreign procurement tenders were cancelled.	• Domestic contribution rate and overall self-confidence started to significantly increase. • The funds were channeled towards indigenous helicopter, tank and drone projects.

The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, where the world came to the brink of a nuclear war, created the first major disappointment for Turkey. The U.S-Soviet deal that envisaged the dismantlement of the missiles in Cuba in return for non-publicized removal of the Jupiter missiles in İzmir raised questions in Turkey. Turkey's discomfort was mainly due to not being consulted beforehand in such an important national security issue for itself (Güney, 2008). Turkish policy makers, then, noticed the weak importance attached to and the inferiority of Turkish national security in the eyes of the U.S. government.

Only a year later, Turkish-American relations have deeply shaken by another security-related issue. Following the outbreak of intercommunal fights and specifically the Bloody Noel incidents in Cyprus in December 1963, Turkey intended to militarily intervene in the island to restore constitutional order as one of the guarantor states. The U.S. President Lyndon Johnson's letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü (1961-1965) restricted the use of American military equipment in a possible operation and implied reluctance to protect Turkey in case of a Soviet threat. In this regard, the 'Johnson Letter' caused Turkish-American relations to "hit rock bottom" (Güney, 2008).

Since the majority of Turkey's military equipment was coming from the U.S. especially after the adoption of the Truman Doctrine, it was technically impossible to conduct a military operation without using American military equipment. As such, the Johnson Letter incident marked a crucial point for Turkey in realization of reducing over-dependence on the U.S. in arms trade through diversification of import markets. Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, (1965-1971) indicated in a documentary that Turkey at the time turned towards alternative sources such as Italy and France in order to procure necessary equipment for a future amphibious attack (32. Gün Arşivi, 2020). Within a

short period of time, Turkey acquired parachutes, helicopters and landing ships that played an essential role in the subsequent Cyprus Peace Operation.

Among all, the most dramatic turning point for Turkish defense industry occurred in the aftermath of its military intervention in Cyprus following a coup d'état by the Greek Cypriots in July 1974. The U.S. congress, with the influence of the Greek lobby, imposed an arms embargo on Turkey that lasted between 1975 and 1978. The establishment of Land, Naval and Air Force Support Foundations that enabled making public donations to eliminate the impacts of the embargo has played a leading role in founding major defense industry companies such as ASELSAN (1975), ISBIR (1978), ASPILSAN (1981), and HAVELSAN (1982).

Later on, the said foundations were united under name of Turkish Armed Forces Foundation (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerini Güçlendirme Vakfı-TSKGV) in 1987 which continues to operate under the same name today. Therefore, the U.S. arms embargo to Turkey in 1975-78 was instrumental in considerably shifting the vision for Turkish defense industry towards indigenous initiatives and reducing dependence on the United States and others. Despite the short-term disadvantages of the U.S. arms embargo, it actually formed the basis for institutionalization and awareness for Turkey's defense industry. As such, the main motivations for Turkey stemmed from the heavy external shocks that forced the country to seek for alternative sources of military equipment, funding, and ultimately investing in and establishing its own national defense industry.

As opposed to the above-mentioned international developments, the last turning point derives from domestic reasons. In the Defense Industry Executive Committee (SSİK) meeting held on May 14, 2004, it was determined that \$11 billion worth expenditure for foreign acquisition plans would be permanently cancelled (Mevlütöğlu, 2020). The initial plan consisted of buying attack helicopters, main battle tanks and

drones. Instead, the committee decided to prioritize domestic production and unique design, allocating these funds for indigenous projects which later materialized as ATAK helicopter, ALTAY tank and world-renowned numerous armed drones.

In addition to delivering these domestic alternatives, the decision taken at the said meeting paved the way for gaining industrial self-confidence and created a spill-over effect for other projects as well. The 20 per cent localization rate of defense industry in 2002 reached 44 per cent in 2008 and it is currently measured as approximately 80 per cent (Turkish Presidency, 2022). Therefore, the 2004 SSİK meeting constitutes a revolutionary transformation and one of the crucial turning points for the success story of Turkey's defense industry.

4.2.2 The Current Status of Turkish Defense Industry

Turkish defense industry sector has been rapidly growing and enhancing its technological capabilities reflected in various indicators. For instance, the number of ongoing projects rose from 66 in 2002 to over 700 in 2020, thanks to a dramatic increase in the overall project budget in the same period from \$5.5 billion to \$60 billion and in R&D expenditures from only \$50 million to \$1.5 billion. As a result, both the revenues and exports increased over tenfold, reaching \$10.8 billion and \$3 billion, respectively (SSB, 2021).

The upward trend in defense industry production has also impacted Turkey's arms trade statistics significantly. According to SIPRI's Arms Transfers Database, Turkey ranked the 12th largest exporter in the world in the five-year period 2017-2021 as opposed to its 16th position in 2012-2016, and its top export markets are Turkmenistan, Oman and Qatar (SIPRI, 2022). Turkey has also witnessed the third largest climb in its share of global arms exports among the top 15 countries by an increase of 31 per cent, behind

South Korea and France whose shares increased by 177 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively. In fact, 9 out of the top 15 countries' global share have decreased in the said category and period (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Top 15 Largest Exporters of Major Arms, 2017-21

Exporter	Share of global arms exports (%)	Share of global arms exports (%)	Per cent change from 2012-16 to 2017-21
	2017-21	2012-2016	
1) United States	39	32	14
2) Russia	19	24	-26
3) France	11	6.4	59
4) China	4.6	6.4	-31
5) Germany	4.5	5.4	-19
6) Italy	3.1	2.5	16
7) United Kingdom	2.9	4.7	-41
8) South Korea	2.8	1	177
9) Spain	2.5	2.2	10
10) Israel	2.4	2.5	-5.6
11) Netherlands	1.9	2	-12
12) Turkey	0.9	0.7	31
13) Sweden	0.8	1.2	-35
14) Ukraine	0.7	2.5	-72
15) Switzerland	0.7	1	-35

Source: SIPRI Fact Sheet (2022): Trends in International Arms Transfers

In terms of arms imports, on the other hand, Turkey's share decreased by 56 percent from 2012-2016 to 2017-2021, making the country 17th largest importer of arms. Another notable data in this regard shows the shifting trend in Turkey's arms imports from the United States. Despite the long-lasting lead of the U.S. as Turkey's major supplier of arms, that is no longer the case as of 2021. Moreover, although Turkey was the 3rd major export market for U.S. defense industry products in 2012-2016, it dropped to the 17th position in 2017-2021 (SIPRI, 2022).

Table 4.3: Selected Localization Projects of Turkish Defense Industry

<i>System</i>	Foreign Product used by Turkey	Indigenously Produced Equivalent
<i>Attack Helicopter</i>	COBRA & SUPER COBRA (U.S.)	ATAK
<i>Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Air-to-Air Missile</i>	AIM-120 AMRAAM (U.S.)	BOZDOĞAN
<i>Drone</i>	HERON (ISRAEL)	TB-2, ANKA, AKINCI, AKSUNGUR
<i>Heavy Torpedo</i>	MK-14/MK23 (U.S.)	AKYA
<i>Anti-Ship Missile</i>	HARPOON (U.S.)	ATMACA

Such a dramatic decline can be attributed to several factors stemming from both the negative direction of bilateral relations and Turkey's changing defense industry strategy towards localization (see Table 4.3). From the Turkish side, the fact that Turkey-U.S. relations witnessing many crises simultaneously explains the reluctance of Turkey in maintaining the high level of dependence on American military equipment and weapon

systems. Among others, Turkish-American disagreements over Syria regarding U.S. supply of arms to PYD/YGP/SDF and strong political support provided to them against Turkey's military operations in Northern Syria, President Biden's backing of Armenian claims on 1915 events, and refusal of the U.S. to hand over the leadership of FETO have all played a role in pushing Turkey away from the U.S. and its arms industry.

On the other hand, the U.S. also demonstrated significant reluctance in providing arms to Turkey, manifesting itself in the form of CAATSA sanctions and other implicit embargoes through slowed-down bureaucratic and Congressional processes (Euronews, 2020). Most notably, the U.S. removed Turkey from the F-35 program, of which Turkey was a partner taking part in the supply chain, on the grounds that Turkey acquired S-400 air defense system from Russia. This decision alone has been decisive in negatively affecting the arms trade numbers as Turkey had planned to buy over 100 F-35 jets, for which Turkey already paid \$1.4 billion. Thus, the recent decline of U.S. military exports to Turkey stemmed from the mutual hesitations regarding arms trade between the two countries owing to challenges in bilateral relations, as well as the outstanding performance of Turkish defense industry that enabled reducing the country's foreign dependence on many import items.

Moreover, Turkey's renewed defense industry approach that strived to overturn the export/import imbalance paved the way for its companies operating in this sector to substantially increase their global competitiveness. Many Turkish companies have improved their place in respected world rankings published by Defense News Top 100 and SIPRI. Although there are issues like methodological differences regarding what should count as defense products, some big companies' refusal to participate, (e.g., General Atomics and SpaceX) and inability of some companies (mostly Chinese and

Russian) to meet transparency requirements which takes them out of the list, these studies are still useful for observing trends in arms trade.

In 2021's Defense News Top 100 list which takes into account defense revenues in 2020, Turkish companies made the list with 7 companies, namely ASELSAN (48) TUSAŞ (53), BMC (89), ROKETSAN (91), STM (92), FNSS, HAVELSAN (99) (Defense News, 2021). This was a record for Turkey with highest number of companies taking part in this Top 100 list and ASELSAN for the first time ranking in the top 50. The next year, however, only 3 Turkish companies took part in the same list primarily due to the addition of several Chinese companies. As Defense News website indicated, BAYKAR, producer of Bayraktar armed drones, was also eligible to be on the list and its absence was the company's choice (Callan, 2021).

4.3 *Evaluating Potential Risks of Defense Industry Investments in Turkey*

4.3.1 *The Risk of Creating a Military-Industrial Complex*

In light of the successful performance of the Turkish defense industry companies, the question of whether all these developments can create the military-industrial complex challenge could be a reasonable concern. In such a scenario, the expectation would be an increased political influence of defense industry companies in the making of national security strategy towards more frequent adoption of hard power. Since Turkey does in fact increasingly pursue coercive and militaristic policies in its region (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021a), it is important to understand whether this militarily assertive foreign policy style stems from the profitability considerations of defense industry companies with potential political pressure on the circles of government.

Despite the seemingly compatible story here, the risk of military-industrial complex in Turkey appears to be very low compared to the U.S. where the term was first used. In

the U.S., the corrupting influence of the military-industrial complex is mostly visible through campaign donations in congressional and general elections in both state-level and national contexts. American defense industry companies are able to exert enormous influence in legislative processes, also utilizing the relatively weak centralization of political parties.

More importantly, defense revenue of the U.S. companies remains at an unmatched level. In 2020, 41 of the top 100 companies in SIPRI's Top 100 Arms-Producing and Military Services Companies were American which constituted 54 per cent of all arms sales of the top 100. Lockheed Martin alone represented 11 per cent of the top 100 with \$58.2 billion, followed by Raytheon Technologies with \$36.8 billion and Boeing with \$19.6 billion worth of arms sales. In comparison, the combined revenue of the five Chinese companies in the list of which three in top 10 (i.e., NORINCO, AVIC and CETC) was \$66.8 billion (SIPRI, 2021)

As Turkey's largest defense industry company and only participant in SIPRI's top 100 ranking, ASELSAN's arms sales totaled only about \$2.2 billion in the same year (SIPRI, 2021). In addition, overall defense industry revenue of Turkey in 2020 was \$10.8 billion, which is less than one-fifth of Lockheed Martin alone (SSB, 2021; SIPRI, 2021). Therefore, despite the rise of Turkish defense industry sector and companies in the recent years, they are still very small when compared with their equivalents in the developed world, especially those in great powers. For that reason, their potential to create a military-industrial complex is quite limited.

Nevertheless, an underestimation of the increasing financial and political strength of defense industry firms in middle powers could be misleading, and their business interests should never be prioritized against national interests. Otherwise, over-dependence on military power may very well unnecessarily undermine soft power credentials and

international image of middle powers and their status-seeking strategies. It is also important to note that increasingly coercive foreign policy conduct and assertive defense industry investments could be part of a strategy to achieve domestic political gains without calculating the capabilities-expectations balance, another challenge for successful middle power activism (Bağcı & Kurç, 2016; Öniş & Kutlay, 2017; Kutlay & Öniş, 2021a).

4.3.2 *Social Costs of Prioritizing Indigenous Defense Industry*

As explained in the previous chapter; while there are economic advantages of defense spending (Viotti, 1994), the trade-off with social spending may harm welfare (Buzan & Herring, 1998). Moreover, the nature of modern military technology requires much larger investments in order to make or buy weapons, which negatively affects other sectors of the economy (Gilpin, 1981). In this respect, the increase in Turkey's military expenditures and defense industry investments raises questions about the potential effects on social expenditures.

In fact, Turkish defense spending had demonstrated the highest upward trend from 2011 to 2020 among the top 20 countries with a 77 per cent increase in the said period. (SIPRI, 2021). On the other hand, Turkish military expenditures decreased for two consecutive years in 2020 and 2021 in USD terms by 5 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively with the effect of the weakening of the Turkish Lira and overall economic hardships (SIPRI 2021 & 2022). As opposed to the significant increase since 2011, Turkey's military spending as a share of GDP remained broadly stable around 2 per cent between 2011 and 2021, which was 3.3 per cent in 2003 (Seren, 2020).

Therefore, Turkey managed to significantly reduce the military burden on its national budget in the first decade of the century, and then kept it in similar levels afterwards.

Turkey's success in this regard is based on strong economic growth performance especially during the early AKP era (Öniş, 2019) and giving up on the highly costly foreign procurement options as decided in Defense Industry Executive Committee (SSİK) meeting in May 2004. As such, Turkey did not have to increase its military expenditure at the expense of its social expenditures such as health and education. This is especially noteworthy for the broader middle power activism strategies that face limited material capability challenges.

4.3.3 *The Risks Created by the Weakening Economic Performance*

Maintaining a policy of extensive military activism and defense industry investments requires constant allocation of immense funds to these areas. For that reason, economic performance is a key determinant for the appropriation of adequate resources for the ongoing military operations and indigenous projects. In this respect, Turkey's economic indicators have started to ring alarm bells due to recent unorthodox monetary policies.

Although Turkey had reaped the benefits of overcoming the consecutive economic crises of 2000 and 2001 thanks to a series of structural reforms and fiscal discipline, the country has been going through an economic turmoil. The chronic inflation problem of Turkey which had moved to single digits in 2004 made an astonishing comeback, surpassing 80 per cent in August 2022. In the early years of the AKP era, low inflation was the backbone of continuous economic growth contributing to the development as well. In this context, the reversal of the situation partly stems from the serious concerns over the erosion of central bank autonomy and credibility (Çakmaklı & Demiralp, 2020; also see Demiralp & Demiralp, 2020) that fails to conduct proper anti-inflationary policies due to political pressure (Öniş & Kutlay, 2021).

Among others, Turkish financial and business sectors deeply suffer from the currency depreciation due to country's external debt, foreign dependence on energy resources and import-dependent exportable goods that require intermediate goods from abroad. Defense industry sector too, albeit a crucial increase in domestic contribution rate, faces with the challenge of rising project costs which results in postponements in delivery periods as in the case of İstif-class indigenous frigates. Combining this with Turkey's expanded military presence in its region and beyond and the increasingly coercive and interventionist policies that require a steady stream of monetary flow, sustained economic growth under fiscal and monetary stability conditions is a necessity.

4.4 Turkey's Recent Military Activism from Middle Power Perspective

4.4.1 The Interplay of Geopolitics, Increased Capabilities and Threats

As known, the previous chapter involved a discussion on the role of geopolitics in determining the boundaries of risks and opportunities for middle power military activism. In this sense, Turkey's unique geopolitical location simultaneously offers both significant challenges and a suitable policy space for pursuing effective military activism. While Turkey's multiple regional identities provide convenience for shaping more than one regional dynamics in the direction of its national interests, the country's location also dictates exposure to the effects of numerous tectonic shifts and armed conflicts in international relations.

Turkey is prone to regional and great power rivalries that occasionally create military conflicts especially in the MENA, Balkans, Caucasus and most recently the Black Sea regions. Combining these with the traditional disputes of which Turkey is a party, such as Turkish-Greek conflict that has the potential to escalate quickly, and more recent threats stemming mainly from the Syrian territory, preserving reliable military strength

and deterrence capacity has consistently been an integral part of Turkish national security strategy.

Within this framework, Turkish foreign policy in the recent years has been increasingly relying on flexing of military muscles. In the words of Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, formerly the chief of General Staff, Turkish Armed Forces are “conducting the most intense and effective activities” and “carried out and continues to carry out the most comprehensive military operations and exercises in the history of the Republic with great success” (Budak, 2022; Doğan & Budak, 2022). Moreover, Turkish Foreign Ministry has started to emphasize Turkey’s activeness and strength “on the ground and at the table” since 2019 (MFA, 2019b).

Turkey’s long-lasting counterterrorism efforts against the PKK has continued with increasing activeness with a change of concept after the failure of attempts to achieve a political solution in 2015. First, months of residential clashes in Sur, Cizre and Nusaybin districts took place between August 2015 and March 2016. And more recently, Turkey has moved towards maintaining a continuous military presence with large units in Northern Iraq under the Pençe (Claw) operation series since 2019 as opposed to temporary military operation style of the past as seen in the 1990s’ and 2008 Güneş (Sun) Operations.

Aside from the larger-scale military developments to be discussed below, Turkey also expanded its military outreach with establishing new bases abroad. Turkey’s military presence in Qatar, for instance, began in 2015 with a relatively minor unit. However, as part of its deeper alignment with Qatar after the Gulf Crisis of 2017, Turkish Armed Forces carried out a joint military exercise in the country and significantly expanded the already-existing post in the country by building an additional military base in 2019. Somalia, on the other hand, hosts Turkey’s largest military base abroad which was established in 2017 and mainly responsible for the training of Somalian Armed Forces.

Furthermore, Turkey also decided to transform the Geçitkale Airport in Northern Cyprus as an air base for armed drones to be permanently deployed (Milliyet, 2021).

Turkey's assertive military activism is justified and motivated by deteriorating security environment in the region especially after the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011. More specifically, the civil war in Syria has had dramatic effects on Turkey from several perspectives. First and foremost, the conflict in Syria led to a huge migration flow to Turkey's southern borders, making the country the largest refugee hosting nation around the globe with over 3.7 million registered Syrian migrants under temporary protection (UNHCR, 2022). The economic, demographic, sociocultural and political impacts created a burden on Turkey, also affecting its relations with the European Union as well. In particular, Turkey's weakening economic performance that coincided with the rising anti-immigrant populist discourse in the European countries have forced Turkey into a difficult equilibrium.

Secondly, the emergence of Northern Syria as a safe haven for various terrorist organizations including PYD/YPG/SDF, DAESH, and other radical fundamentalist/separatist groups threatened Turkey as it shares a 911 km long border with Syria. The security concerns of Turkey accelerated with multiple highly deadly terrorist attacks carried out mostly in the form of suicide bombers in many corners of the country, including in cities distant from the border such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Kayseri. Among these were the attacks targeting a demonstration in Ankara train station in October 2015, Istanbul Reina nightclub during new year's party in 2017, Ataturk Airport in June 2016, Istanbul's Besiktas district and Ankara that claimed the lives of 107, 54, 45, 45 and 37 people, respectively (Köker, 2016). In addition to other similar attacks, Turkey also suffered from cross-border fire from inside the Syrian border. Mortar attacks coming from the Syrian territory to Turkish border cities like Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Hatay were quite

common due to Syrian government's withdrawal from the region that paved the way for non-state armed groups and foreign terrorist fighters to fill the vacuum.

As such, Turkey's recent military incursions into Northern Syria are motivated by the combination of direct security threats from terrorist attacks and a strong desire to prevent the formation of a "terror corridor" led by PYD/YPG/SDF which is affiliated with the PKK. In this direction, Turkey launched four cross-border military operations in Syria under the names of Euphrates Shield (2016) against DAESH, Olive Branch (2018) and Peace Spring (2019) against PYD/YPG and Peace Shield (2020) against the Syrian regime forces following an air raid on Turkish troops on the ground. It is also important to highlight that Turkish Armed Forces conducted these operations in coordination with the Syrian opposition group, Syrian National Army, formerly known as the Free Syrian Army. Besides departing the non-interventionist approach towards the Middle East, Turkey's collaboration with a party of a civil war in a neighboring country is another major breakdown. In addition to these combat missions, Turkey also formed observation posts in Idlib province as part of a de-escalation zone deal with Russia and conducted separate joint patrols with the Russian and the U.S. forces in different parts of Northern Syria.

At this point, it should be noted that Turkey's military presence in Syria has been criticized, condemned, and strongly resisted by the United States. Most strikingly, President Trump sent a threatening letter to President Erdoğan on September 9, 2019, the first day of Operation Peace Spring. In the letter, Trump said: "You don't want to be responsible for slaughtering thousands of people, and I don't want to be responsible for destroying the Turkish economy—and I will. I've already given you a little sample with respect to Pastor Brunson" and indicated that so-called General Mazloum, the military leader of the SDF, is ready to negotiate whose confidential letter was enclosed. Trump's

letter ended with an extremely unusual, undiplomatic sentence: “Don’t be a fool!” (BBC News, 2019). Turkey also faced opposition from the EU member states and some of them, such as Sweden, began imposing de-facto sanctions, although not officially announced.

Another notable military activism of Turkey took place during the Second Karabakh War in 2020. In addition to extending strong political support, Turkey also supplied armed drones to Azerbaijan which were instrumental in the victory against the Armenian forces. Interestingly, Turkey’s decision to provide its own armed drones in use that possess Canadian-made Common Aperture Targeting System (CATS) to Azerbaijan, which was noticed after one of the drones was shot down, violated the export restriction of the product. The Armenian lobby in Canada also stepped in and their efforts have paid off by triggering an arms embargo against Turkey. In turn, Turkey had to look for domestic alternatives and Aselsan company produced the equivalent of the Canadian CATS. This example shows the importance of achieving high levels of self-sufficiency in defense industry since dependence on just one part can result in problematic cases. Nevertheless, Turkey continued its support for Azerbaijan and took part in the post-conflict settlement by participating in the joint Russian-Turkish center established in Agdam province for monitoring the ceasefire.

4.4.2 *Maritime-Related Confrontations: Greece and Libya*

Turkey and Greece, NATO allies who joined the Alliance together in 1952, have gone through multiple crises in the last century. The two countries share disagreements over the Aegean regarding delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas in terms of both territorial waters and continental shelf, the width of airspace, the demilitarized status of certain islands, flight information region (FIR) issue, the share of search and rescue (SAR)

areas, as well as certain geographical formations with controversial identity such as Kardak islets that brought the two on the verge of an armed conflict in 1996. In fact, bilateral relations suffer from a number of other disputes stemming from the Cyprus question, minority rights, and the blockages on Turkey's European Union membership process as well. Thus, there are already more than adequate reasons for these countries to monitor each other's military capabilities with extreme caution.

However, the recent exploration of hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has brought about a new chapter to Turkish-Greek differences. Although some regard the energy dimension as an opportunity for a rapprochement and closer cooperation between the two countries and even for the settlement of the Cyprus issue (Grigoriadis, 2014), the events have unfolded in the negative direction. Greece and the Greek Cypriots, with the support of the EU, act in line with the so-called 'Seville University Map' (see Vivero & Mateos, 2006) which represents a maximalist interpretation of maritime jurisdiction areas in favor of Greek and the Greek Cypriot claims. Accordingly, the island of Cyprus and each and every Greek island and islet, regardless of its size, proximity to the mainland, and whether it is inhabited, is given full effect in terms of creating continental shelf and exclusive economic zone. Moreover, the Southern Cyprus Greek Cypriot Administration (SCGCA) has been issuing licenses to multinational energy companies based on pre-announced parcels and bilateral maritime jurisdiction agreements it signed with the regional countries.

Despite Turkey's relatively late moves in this regard, its efforts in multiple fronts are based on the so-called 'Blue Homeland' (Mavi Vatan) Doctrine. Created by Admiral Cihat Yaycı, (see Yaycı, 2022) the doctrine reflects Turkey's own maritime claims in the Eastern Mediterranean. In contrast with the Greek and Greek Cypriot claims, Turkey defends the supremacy of the mainland over the islands. To realize its maritime

jurisdiction claims, Turkey in the recent years has aggressively invested in building a fleet of seismic activities of its own. Currently, Turkey possesses four advanced deep sea drilling vessels, namely Fatih, Yavuz, Kanuni, and Abdulhamid Han, and two seismic research vessels, Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa and Oruç Reis. The seismic activities, despite their seemingly peaceful nature with scientific purposes, has had an escalating effect on bilateral relations. The main driver of increased tensions is linked to both sovereignty and economic factors. In a historic rivalry situation dating back to hundreds of years, the sovereignty issue becomes even more relevant.

Within this framework, the Eastern Mediterranean basin has witnessed the interaction of seismic activities and use of militaristic methods for several instances recently. Turkey, owning the largest naval force in the region, forcefully and consistently removed vessels of multinational companies who were granted licenses by the Greek Cypriots in areas with overlapping maritime jurisdiction claims. More strikingly, when Turkey launched its own seismic activities in the said controversial areas, it protected the Oruç Reis research vessel with its Naval and Air Force on a 24/7 basis. In the meantime, Greek Armed Forces strived to deter Turkey by preventing Oruç Reis from conducting its research. The confrontation reached to the levels that two frigates from each side physically contacted each other, causing mutual damage. The dogfights intensified and Turkish Ministry of National Defense published a long video footage of Turkish F-16s locking onto Greek F-16s and Mirage-2000s on August 27th, 2020 (MSB, 2020). As such, Oruç Reis's activities have once again in history brought the two countries on the verge of an armed conflict in the summer months of 2020.

On the other hand, the active involvement of Turkish Armed Forces in Libyan civil war was probably the most unexpected and challenging one compared to others. Turkey's interests in Libya have particularly risen with the adoption of the Blue Homeland

doctrine. Accordingly, Libya shares a sea border with Turkey in terms of maritime jurisdiction areas, which extends Turkey's continental shelf westward at the expense of Greek claims. However, the failure to achieve internal reconciliation after the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 and the continuation of the civil war threatened Turkey's position since the friendly side, the Government of National Accord (GNA), was about to be destroyed by its opponent, Libya National Army (LNA), led by General Haftar. In fact, General Haftar's army was only about 8 kilometers away from capturing the capital city of Tripoli where GNA was based. Due to the alignment of General Haftar with Turkey's rivals, especially Greece and partly France, Turkey launched a highly comprehensive military plan of action and overturned the fortune of the civil war.

Turkey's backing of the GNA has been based on two simultaneously signed memoranda of understanding (MoU), one laying the ground for military and security cooperation, while the other drawing the maritime boundaries between the two countries. It is important to note here that Turkey's intervention in support of the Tripoli-based government was tied to the signing of a maritime deal, which indeed provides larger maritime jurisdiction area for Libya as well in comparison to a possible deal with Greece instead. Therefore, although the eventual maritime borders drawn by the mentioned MoU created a win-win situation, the preservation of the agreement in the face of LNA's attempts to capture the city of Tripoli required an extremely costly adventure for Turkey and its military.

Turkish Armed Forces mobilized each of its three service commands for supporting the Tripoli-based GNA against General Haftar's LNA forces. To begin with, Turkey has formed the "Libya Mission Force Command" to coordinate its military activities, commanded by an Army General. The said command operates in four different parts of the country, providing military advisory and training to the friendly side (Turkish Land

Forces Command, 2022). Turkish Naval Forces maintain an uninterrupted presence off the coast of Libya. Interestingly, TCG Giresun, a Gabya-class frigate, performed a 182-day mission without returning to its base or any other port, which is a record-breaking length for the Turkish Navy vessels. (TRT Haber, 2020). During its mission, TCG Giresun also engaged in real combat mission by firing air defense missiles against aerial targets.

Turkish Air Force, on the other hand, contributed to the Libya mission with its armed drones which has entirely reversed the situation on the ground. Turkish drones have conducted effective surveillance, close air support (CAS) and suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD) missions, which targeted not only the frontlines but also supply and logistic networks of the LNA. Most notably, these strikes have destroyed tanks, Russian-made air defense systems such the Pantsir S-1, as well as important command and control stations. Besides, Turkish Air and Naval Forces conducted a large military exercise off the coast of Libya on April 17th, 2020. In this "Open Sea Training", 17 military aircraft and 8 naval vessels (i.e., frigates and corvettes) conducted their mission that lasted 7 hours 35 minutes, which required multiple air-to-air refueling due to the length of the training (MSB, 2020).

Therefore, it is safe to argue that Turkey's military involvement in the Libyan crisis has had a decisive impact on the ensuring the survival of the Tripoli-based government and the continuation of the political dialogue. Following series of successful military operations of GNA with the support of the elements of Turkish Armed Forces, LNA forces significantly withdrew from their positions. Moreover, the diplomatic efforts have been revitalized within the framework of the Berlin process under the auspices of the UN. While the future of Libya is still uncertain today, it is clear that Turkey has taken an important step with regards to securing the boundaries of its exclusive economic zone

through a UN-registered bilateral agreement. Also, a likely humanitarian crisis coupled with a mass migration flow was averted.

Such a high level of military activity and coercive diplomacy would not have been possible without the recent accomplishments of Turkish defense industry. In fact, what enabled the game-changing effects of Turkey's military involvements have been the cost-efficient products developed by its defense industry companies. Among these, Turkish (armed) drones played a crucial role in changing the dynamics of conflicts in, for instance, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh where both battlefields included enemy air defense systems. In this respect, the enhanced electronic warfare equipment produced by Turkey, Koral being the most notable of these, was instrumental in disabling the enemy radar and communication systems.

Turkey's main competitive advantage in armed drones stems from producing effective drones in an inexpensive manner in comparison. In this respect, Baykar company's Bayraktar TB-2 and Tusaş's ANKA drones, in particular, garnered significant attention in the world by their enormous effects on the ground with indigenously produced missiles by Roketsan company. These smart micro munition (Milli Akıllı Mühimmat-MAM) series of missiles provide high strike precision against fixed and mobile targets. The relatively small and light nature of TB-2 and ANKA drones enabled them to carry mostly light missiles (MAM-L) while the most recently produced and delivered armed drones, namely AKINCI by Baykar and Aksungur by Tusaş, provided its customers, mainly Turkey itself, to conduct more effective missions with significantly enhanced missile structure by weight and number. For instance, SOM-J cruise missiles and MAM-T precision guided missiles allow carrying out longer range missions (Roketsan, 2021).

4.5 *Costs of Coercive Foreign Policy Strategies*

4.5.1 *Military Confrontations*

Such levels of securitization of foreign policy and interventionist tendencies unavoidably result in costly military consequences. For instance, a Turkish RF-4 jet conducting a reconnaissance mission over the Turkish-Syrian border was shot down by the regime forces in 2012, which led Turkish Air Force to change its rules of engagement and conduct regular Combat Air Patrol (CAP) missions along the border. The said Turkish reaction set the stage for two subsequent similar events. First, this time Turkish F-16s conducting CAP mission shot down a Syrian Mig-23 in 2014. Secondly, and more strikingly, a Russian Su-24 was downed by Turkish fighter jets in November 2015 which had dramatic repercussions on Russian-Turkish bilateral relations which Russia has the upper-hand due to the nature of “asymmetric interdependence” between the two countries (Öniş & Yılmaz, 2015; Köstem, 2018). The downing of the Russian jet also laid the foundation for expanded and more sophisticated Russian military presence in Syria with the deployment of S-400 advanced air defense systems, strictly limiting Turkish Air Force’s penetration into the border to support the operations (see Erşen, 2017).

A third event in this regard was the bombing of Turkish troops in Syria by the joint Russian and Syrian air raid in 2020, causing the death of 34 Turkish soldiers and the launch of Operation Peace Shield by Turkey against the Syrian regime forces in Idlib. Lastly, Turkish military positions in Watiya Air Base, Libya was attacked by United Arab Emirates Air Force in July 2020 as the two countries supported different sides of the conflict. There have also been other smaller instances of aggression against Turkish military units in the region throughout the years. Therefore, besides political consequences that may cause isolation in foreign policy, militarily engaging in regional

conflicts carry a great deal of risk for one's own troops on the ground as the geopolitical environment Turkey operates in hosts many conflicts where numerous regional and extra-regional actors are involved.

4.5.2 *Costs of Assertive Military Activism and External Reactions*

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the consequences of a noticeable increase in the military strength of middle powers is the changing threat perceptions of regional and extra-regional actors. Even if the middle power's policy to enhance its military capability through foreign procurement and/or domestic production is not designed against its neighbors, the vital nature of national security and deterrence prevents regional actors from positively receiving a middle power's investments in its Armed Forces.

When the increased level of its military strength has a transforming effect on middle power's foreign policy behavior towards a more coercive and interventionist turn, in particular, the external reaction will likely manifest itself in the form of major armament program. In addition to the possible arms race that paves the way for a security dilemma, the diplomatic effort to counterbalance the hard power dominated middle power foreign and security policy would lead to further isolation of the middle power in its region and more broadly, in multilateral platforms. Turkey's recent dealings with regional issues and the consequences resemble the abovementioned risk of strong reaction and isolation in international relations. This statement is especially valid within the context of long-lasting Turkish-Greek rivalry.

Greece's profound reaction to the escalation of tensions in summer 2020 where Turkey has shown its willingness to adopt coercive methods deriving strength from its rising military capabilities and defense industry informs the risks of overdependence on

hard power in international relations for middle powers. More explicitly, Greece has responded to the securitization of bilateral disputes through a notoriously large armament programs along with bilateral and multilateral engagements with regional and global actors to isolate Turkey in its region.

Greece's defense spending in proportion to its national income had been traditionally high even before the escalation of tensions in 2020. In 2019, for example, Greece was among a handful of NATO countries who pass the 2 per cent threshold with 2.3 per cent of its GDP allocated to military expenditures. In the very first budget after the outbreak of tensions in summer 2020, which was introduced to the parliament by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in December 2020, the Greek government proposed an increase in the defense budget by 57 per cent compared to the previous year, corresponding to 3.4 per cent of the country's GDP (Panoutsopoulou, 2020). The main driver of this extraordinary expansion stemmed from new foreign acquisition programs, including the procurement of highly capable Rafale fighter jets from France as well as the modernization of the existing F-16 fleet to the Viper configuration. Speaking of the agreement with France regarding the Rafale jets, Mitsotakis said "Never before has such a complex and important military program been carried out so quickly and efficiently" (Panoutsopoulou, 2020) which demonstrates the possibility of a quick military partnership against a middle power pursuing policies that are overdependent on its military power.

Moreover, Greece's armament program in reaction to Turkey's assertive policies was designed as a long-term agenda. Greek Finance Minister Christos Staikouras indicated that Greece plans to triple its annual payments on foreign military weaponry and equipment acquisitions compared to the recent years in the upcoming 2022-2028 period, with €11.5 billion of total deliveries in the said interval. In the shorter-term statistics,

annual cost of foreign military procurement increased from €515 million in 2020 to approximately €2.5 billion in 2021, which is also expected to reach €3.4 billion in 2022 (Neos Kosmos, 2022).

Consequently, another cost of frequent use of military power and an unusual degree of assertive middle power activism for Turkey has been the expenditures for once unplanned foreign acquisitions. The main concern here stems from Greece's acceleration of its modernization of Armed Forces, especially the Hellenic Air Force, in reaction to Turkey's recent turn towards hard power-oriented policies. As explained above, Greece has already equipped its Air Force with Rafale fighter jets that brings new advanced capabilities and signed an agreement with the U.S. to modernize most of its F-16 fleet to the Block-70 Viper version. In addition, Greece has also expressed its intention to buy fifth generation stealth F-35 fighter jets, which would significantly change the balance of air power over the Aegean.

In addition to Greece's moves toward further enhancing its air capabilities, Turkish Air Force faces with important endogenous challenges. Most strikingly, Turkey's removal from the F-35 program due to its procurement of Russian S-400 air and missile defense system has dramatically affected the country's planning of its Air Force. According to the original projections, Turkey was predicting that it would retire its F-4 fleet until 2020, which were to be replaced by at least 100 new fifth generation F-35 jets of which Turkey was a program partner. In this vein, Turkey began the 'Terminator Modernization' of its F-4 fleet in cooperation with the Israeli IAI company and renamed its modernized jets as 'F-4E 2020', in anticipation of their retirement date.

However, Turkey's removal from the F-35 program cancelled the retirement of its highly aged F-4E 2020 jets which still continue their service despite their outdated technological situation. The F-16 fleet also encounters with an aging problem. As

mentioned, moreover, Greece's ongoing major investment program towards reinforcing its air power with up-to-date capabilities pose a threat to Turkey's national security in the eyes of the Turkish defense planning structures. As a consequence, Turkey has officially demanded the U.S. to upgrade its F-16 fleet to the same Viper configuration as well through a combination of modernization kits and new acquisition, adding to the still unreturned disbursement that Turkey had made for the acquisition of F-35 jets.

At this point, it is noteworthy to remind that Turkey has its own national project under Turkish Aeronautical Industry (TAI) to produce an indigenous fifth generation fighter jet, called TF-X. In addition, there are numerous other local projects managed by Turkish defense industry that require significant R&D and production expenditures. Thus, the main challenge and concern that Turkey's assertive use of its military and aggressive seek for foreign policy independence resulted in has been the once unnecessary billions of dollars of ready-made foreign military acquisition in the face of changing balance of power and the deteriorating security environment. The new conditions that necessitate allocation of such high expenditures for arms trade also negatively influence the ongoing national projects given the restricted material capability of middle powerhood and recent economic hardships that the country faces. As such, Turkey's failure to intensify its diplomatic engagements with key regional countries and rather focusing on military solutions have generated an equilibrium where Turkey paid a high economic price and needed to reconsider its certain defense industry funds.

The above-mentioned recent developments in Libya are also of particular importance in terms of demonstrating the costs of overdependence on military strength for middle powers. Despite the effectiveness of Turkey's use of its military in Libyan civil war for shaping the dynamics in the direction of its national interests, this has been an extremely costly and burdensome strategy. In fact, Turkey's own foreign policy choices have forced

the country to heavily rely on its hard power toolbox in the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon equation. Turkey's failure to maintain amicable relations and consultations with other key coastal states while on the other hand the pro-active diplomacy followed by Greece and the Greek Cypriots in this regard left a restricted policy space for Turkey. As a result, Turkish decisionmakers saw no other option but to militarily engage in Libyan civil war mainly to protect its maritime boundaries as well as other interests in Libya such as construction investments. While successful mobilization of all Land, Air and Naval Forces for a civil war taking place in a geographically distant country has been instrumental in showcasing Turkey's military capability and deterrence, it was a far-from-ideal solution for a middle power with constrained material capacity.

4.6 *The Significance of Democratic Credentials*

Finally, domestic political developments should not be considered irrelevant to the middle power activism either. As being one of the core dynamics affecting soft power capacity and successful middle power activism, the weakening level of democracy in Turkey in the recent years represents a crucial challenge for the country. The erosion of Turkey's democratic credentials is reflected in, among others, Freedom House and V-Dem Institute reports. Turkey is considered as "Not Free" with third largest 10-year democratic decline (Freedom House, 2022) as well as "electoral autocracy" and "one of the top autocratizers" (V-Dem Institute, 2022) with significant levels of polarization and populist trends (Somer, 2019; Aytaç & Öniş, 2014).

Especially taken together with the adoption of coercive strategies and militaristic methods abroad, Turkey's rising authoritarian tendencies especially after the transition to presidential system in 2018 pose a challenge for maintaining the 'compassionate power' image. The combination of strong executive powers, state capitalist political economy

orientations and non-hesitant use of military force abroad, if continues, may accelerate the debates on questioning Turkey's middle power identity. The risk is serious since the said combination may increasingly resemble elements of Russian-style domestic and foreign policy features (Köstem, 2021; Öniş, 2019).



Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 *Contributions & Summary of Findings*

This thesis attempted to shed a light on the role of military force and defense industry in middle power diplomacy, which remains largely an unexploited mine. The conventional literature on middle power theory gives priority to soft power credentials considering their relatively limited material capabilities compared to major powers. However, the ongoing momentous international changes and heightened geopolitical risks around the world necessitate middle powers to attach meaningful importance to military strength and deterrence. The fact that “some middle powers are motivated to go beyond niche diplomacy and soft power” (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021a) is also a sign for the literature for the necessity of increased attention towards how middle powers utilize hard power in formulating their foreign policy behavior.

The recent developments threatening the Euro-Atlantic security architecture, Indo-Pacific region, and the Middle East through the enlargement of geopolitical fault lines where great power rivalry takes place prove that military force and threats of force maintain their relevance in international relations. Combining that with the rising hybrid and asymmetric threats as well as rapid shifts in global order, the emergent circumstances demonstrate that middle powers cannot be confined to soft power and low-politics issues with a romantic point of view.

The degree of influence of military power for middle power activism is not the same across different parts of the world. In fact, geopolitical considerations directly determine the boundaries, risks, and potentials for middle power military activism. For instance, middle powers of the Indo-Pacific are more inclined to rely on hard element in pursuit of eliminating the negative impacts of the emerging great power rivalry in their own region

between China and the United States. As a Latin American middle power, on the other hand, the role of hard power in Brazilian diplomacy is expected to be more limited. Yet, Brazil and other similar middle powers with respect to their exposure to geopolitical tensions can still take advantage of defense industry investments. The data presented in chapter three justifies this finding.

Turkey's richness in soft and hard power capacities with its unique geopolitical location hosting never-ending conflicts and great power involvements, enabled the country to represent a useful case study for this thesis. Turkey's assertive humanitarian diplomacy abroad and at home as the top refugee-hosting nation with generous humanitarian aid programs coupled with intensive mediation efforts constitute important parts of its soft power. Turkey also has powerful Armed Forces in terms of all its services (i.e., Land, Naval, Air Force) which has no match among its neighbors, Iran being the one partial exception (Aktürk, 2020). As such, foreign policy choices of Turkey regarding how it decides to maintain or tilt the balance between its soft and hard power capabilities inform our discussion on successful middle power military activism. Turkish case is also instrumental for understanding the importance of investment in indigenous defense industry for middle power behavior as the country "has moved towards from being a well-paying customer to a competitive exporter" in the recent period (Seren, 2020).

In this respect, defense industry investments with an aim to localizing the production of strategic arms play an immense role in terms of enabling middle powers to benefit from their own military equipment and weapon systems. Otherwise, great powers who dominate the global arms trade dictate their conditions for the continuity of supply chain and impose sanctions that can be quite painful when disagreements surface. Such a scenario is highly undesirable for middle powers especially given their quest for more autonomy and foreign policy independence in an increasingly multipolar world order. As

such, the reason for remarkable emphasis on defense industry in this thesis stems from the central role that arms trade play in terms of how great powers establish dependence mechanisms with other countries, including middle powers.

In addition to the importance of developing indigenous defense industry for status-seeking policies, it also brings about major economic advantages. The costly nature of modern arms can create a huge burden on the balance of payments and the overall national budget when they are procured from abroad. Besides eliminating the import items, defense industry investments can pay-off through generating remarkable export revenue as well, therefore positively influencing the export/import balance. Such benefits are especially vital for middle powers who possess rather constrained material capacity. Furthermore, relying on national arms industry brings about improved self-confidence in international relations and it also generates domestic political gains for the ruling party by reinforcing nationalist sentiments and pride.

This thesis also concludes that the emergence of new areas of advanced military technology offer a new window opportunity for middle powers' quest for strategic autonomy. As shown in the third chapter, recent developments in military technology enable first-comers to establish a leading position in these specific areas. As a middle power, Turkey's outstanding success in terms of its armed drones exemplifies the seizure of this opportunity. Turkish defense industry can produce armed drones in a much more effective and cost-efficient way than many other global powers as opposed to its relatively weaker overall position in arms industry.

Turkey's concentration on this niche area of recently emerging military technology reminds the niche diplomacy practices in middle power behavior. As such, it is a recommendation of this thesis that middle powers could also benefit from partnership in the defense industry sector through each participant focusing on different niche areas.

Besides technological and economic advantages, such horizontal cooperation would also collectively decrease middle powers' dependence on great powers not only in arms trade but also on political affairs as well given the said relationship between the two.

Despite the numerous advantages of investments in building a viable defense industry, there are still economic and political risks attached. In the economic realm, the greatness of initial costs of investment may require states to shift resources from more socially beneficial areas to defense industry. Reducing social spending in budget items like health and education would likely generate a domestic reaction and also potentially undermine prosperity and humanitarian development at least in the short term. In this regard, the materially unwealthy nature of many middle powers may increase the density of the problem.

Another challenge for defense industrial base is the creation of a military-industrial complex that prioritize corporate interests over everything else. Since corporate interests of defense industry companies rely on selling more arms, they may push for unnecessary militarization of the conflicting parties around the world as well as the host country itself. In fact, the military-industrial complex has become a major issue in the U.S., by far the largest arms seller globally, as first warned by President Eisenhower. When investing in national defense industry with business incentives, therefore, middle powers should strictly monitor these companies' political connections in order to avoid making suboptimal foreign policy decisions.

Furthermore, export revenue should not be the only source of motivation for middle powers when engaging in arms trade with others. In arms trade, suppliers are also attributed responsibility by the third parties when these arms are used against them. More explicitly, supplying arms to frozen, potential or hot conflict zones would likely generate fierce reaction from the buyer's opponent. In addition to the risk of alienating third

parties, middle powers also need to be careful regarding the purpose of potential users. In a case where their military equipment is used against civilian targets or in violation of international law, this would damage their middle power role conception as humanitarian and stabilizing actors of international community. Therefore, middle powers should approach with caution to arms trade considering future political, moral and humanitarian consequences.

Overall, the fact that Turkey's external relations are increasingly associated with military operations and defense industry developments coupled with democratic backsliding carry the potential to damage its soft power as well. In this respect, Turkey's global humanitarian actor image is the most vulnerable soft power component of the country. It should be noted that creating this image has put a great burden on Turkey in terms of financial sacrifices and domestic social and cultural repercussions, emanating mainly from the previously mentioned generous humanitarian assistance and development cooperation programs as well as the socio-economic and cultural challenges posed by being the largest refugee-hosting nation in the world.

As demonstrated throughout the thesis, middle powers can indeed considerably benefit from their hard power toolbox to shape the geopolitical dynamics involving multiple actors from within and outside of the region in the direction of their own national interests. Nevertheless, this potential should not be taken for granted and it depends on a carefully crafted, cautious and balanced implementation of wise policies without underestimating the role of soft power working in the background as well.

5.2 Limitations & Further Research

The main challenge and limitation of the thesis has been the head-spinning current developments on issues that are connected to our research question. In fact, many of the

concrete examples cited have occurred during the writing process of this study such as the Russian-Ukrainian war, second Nagorno-Karabakh war, Turkish-Greek military tensions in 2020, and Turkey's involvement in the Libyan civil war. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has also caused certain limitations on the one hand and convenience on the other. Besides restrictions in the form of lockdowns and other measures limiting human mobility and academic research, the pandemic further accelerated the existing trends in international relations, therefore bringing future to present. In this sense, the up-to-date nature of the debates in this study required extraordinarily close process-tracing and allowed examining highly recent examples for better answering the research question.

Also, while recognizing the limitations brought by single-case studies for the purposes of making generalizations, the Turkish case bears strikingly relevant qualities to evaluate middle power military activism. Since Turkey is fortunate to have plenty of soft and hard elements in its power toolbox which provides either opportunity to mix them in varying levels towards achieving smart power or the risk of over-dependence on one of the two, it has served as an insightful experience. Moreover, the comprehensive set of issues discussed in this thesis involving both military activism and defense industry strategy together required deeper and complementary analysis.

Nevertheless, future studies with more emphasis on comparative methodology could generate new discussions about the possible similarities and differences between separate middle power cases. The debate on the role of geopolitics in the thesis, I believe, can be a good starting point. Scholars interested in this can compare how utilization of hard power manifests itself in geographically distant middle power cases. Such studies can also be useful in demonstrating whether Turkey represents a unique and isolated case with respect to the role of hard power in middle power foreign policy activism. The adoption of comparative methods, therefore, would improve the external validity by testing the

applicability of the findings of this thesis to all or at least certain middle power groups with predefined characteristics. Moreover, a greater focus on the domestic political context in future research can enhance the depth of middle power studies given the entangled relationship between domestic and foreign policy.

Further studies might also narrow down the scale of this study to regional or subregional contexts or issue areas. For instance, scholars can investigate the connection between the changing level of defense industry investments and coercive middle power foreign policy behavior as well as comparative defense industry strategies of various middle powers. Alternatively, the question of how middle powers employ their hard power capabilities in relation to their long-lasting regional rivals (e.g., South Korea vs North Korea and Turkey vs Greece) would also serve as an interesting comparative study option. As seen, there are vast further research possibilities in the field. After all, middle power studies offer great potential for future academic works, waiting for lifelong students of international relations to explore.

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