A boy salutes as Turkish army vehicles drive by their village 11 October 2017 on the Turkish-Syrian border in Reyhanli, Hatay Province, Turkey. (Photo by Osman Orsal, Reuters via Alamy Stock Photo)

# Framing Turkey's Cross-Border Counterterrorism Operations in the Context of Pragmatic Strategic Culture

## An Operational Design

Col. Özgür Körpe, PhD, Turkish Army

Syria has an exceptional place in the military career of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey and the shaper of Turkish strategic culture. Syria was his first place of duty after Atatürk was assigned as an Ottoman officer, and it was his last place of duty as an Ottoman general. Atatürk resided at one time or another in all the important cities of Syria.

Following World War I, during the Republican era in which Atatürk was elected as Turkey's first president, Atatürk's interest in Syria focused on two main issues. The first was to ensure the peaceful incorporation of Hatay Province into Turkey in 1939 instead of Syria, and the other was ending the French Mandate over Syria and supporting its full independence in 1945.

A similar situation existed between Turkey and Iraq. Atatürk made diplomatic efforts to incorporate Mosul Province into Turkey, but eventually, respecting the decision of the League of Nations, he accepted the terms of the 1926 Ankara Treaty that ceded Mosul to Iraq. After that, similar to how he supported Syria, Atatürk supported Iraq in its efforts to end the British Mandate and to become an independent state.

Atatürk's legacy of support for the independence of every country in the region is important as it provides essential perspective to the developments taking place in the region today. For Turkey, demanding land from any state would compromise its own territorial claims established by the Treaty of Lausanne and other associated treaties. Atatürk envisioned and cared about the transformation of both Syria and Iraq into independent and stable states that would make them potential bulwarks helping to ensure Turkey's own borders and security. Unfortunately, current developments echo the concerns Atatürk also had over festering territorial disputes from a century ago. The problems stemming from instability in Syria and Iraq still threaten Turkey's security today.

On the other hand, the Western-oriented political model, which was formulated by Atatürk and especially consolidated by his successors after the Second World War, has made it both a respected member of the Western hemisphere and a center of attraction for many societies in the Middle East in the past century.

It is against the legacy of Atatürk's actions that the current situation between Syria and Turkey should be analyzed. Although Turkey is not the cause of the current Syrian civil war, it nevertheless has faced from many quarters one-sided, uninformed, and superficial criticism for its having undertaken defensive measures along its border with Syria while the real historical background and the fact that it has been greatly and adversely affected by the civil war has been ignored. Therefore, accusing Turkey of opportunistic interventionism behind its cross-border operations—in fact, border security operations—is indicative of an extremely ill-informed and shallow point of view.

States like Turkey that remain stable in the midst of neighboring unstable regions are very scarce in the world, and perhaps none of those states are as stable as Turkey. In literature, the condition of a state that becomes unstable in a short time due to the spillover of political problems from neighboring states is called "bad neighborhood instability."[1] In short, all the political and military activities of Turkey as they relate to Syria have been aimed at precluding the negative "bad neighborhood" effects caused by the Syrian civil war.

Nevertheless, maintaining stability requires some changeable political or strategic measures on the part of Turkey. This changeability is described as "the pragmatic character of Turkish strategic culture."[2] In this definition, "strategic culture" refers to Turkey's way of war, or its use of force. "Pragmatic" refers to the practical changeability of this behavior as it adapts to changing circumstances and threats.

However, the changeability referred to here should not be misunderstood. From my perspective, changeability is not "sordidness" that puts personal interests above anything else. Nor is it the "untrustworthiness" of someone who compromises his or her sublime purpose when in trouble. Finally, it is not that somebody opportunistically turns to deny the purpose that he or she defended so fervently yesterday because today more favorable opportunities arise in changing conditions or because they feel themselves in danger.

Changing purpose means changing the

**Col. Özgür Körpe, PhD, Turkish Army,** is an assistant professor of military strategy at Army War College, Istanbul. He holds a BS from the Turkish Military Academy, MA degrees from the Strategic Researches Institute and the Army War College, and a PhD from Yıldız Technical University. His assignments include counterterrorism operations in northern Iraq and tours as advisor/instructor in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Afghanistan.

desired end state in the strategy, the sublime purpose. When this is changed, the whole strategy—the whole case—changes, and efforts take on a completely different character. A pragmatist in the context above is one who can keep the execution flexible without changing his or

## Table 1. Purposes Mentioned by the National Security Council

| National Security Council press releases | Purposes |
|---|---|
| **Operation Euphrates Shield** 24 August 2016 | Ensure our border security, prevent attacks against our country, remove Daesh and other terrorist organizations from the region completely. |
| **Operation Olive Branch** 10 January 2018 | Render terrorists ineffective, ensure the security of Turkey's borders, contribute to regional and global peace, ensure the Syrians return to their homeland, and help provide protection of the territorial integrity of Syria. |
| **Operation Claw-1/2** 8 May 2019 | Against the *Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK) nesting in the north of Iraq, destroy the caves and shelters used by the terrorist organization in the Hakurk region, and neutralize the terrorists. |
| **Operation Peace Spring** 9–17 October 2019 | By neutralizing terrorist organizations such as Daesh-PKK/ Kurdistan Communities Union (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan*, or KCK)/Democratic Union Party (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat* [PYD]/People's Protection Units (*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*, or YPG), which pose a threat and danger to our country and our nation and cause instability in our region; to save the region, which has become a home for terrorism, from the persecution of Daesh-PKK/PYD/YPG; not to allow the establishment of a terror corridor; and establish a peace corridor within the framework of respect for the territorial integrity of Syria by creating suitable conditions for the safe and voluntary return of our Syrian brothers to their homes and lands. |

(Table by author)

her purpose. So, the most important qualities that distinguish pragmatism from opportunism are methodologies based on purpose that generate useful solutions, utilitarianism that pursues general operational utility, and finally, pragmatic ethics that accept the concrete facts of life and do not compromise this idea.

Further, the pragmatic nature of the strategic culture is also about skillfully melding continuity and change. According to Jeremy Black, strategic behavior is composed of elements that change and those that do not change.[3] It is wrong to assume that they do not exist and to examine them separately.

Jack L. Snyder, the originator of the concept of strategic culture, warns researchers in his article "The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor" that culture, including strategic culture, should only be considered when all other explanations fail.[4] Additionally, Snyder states, plain old politics or pragmatism would provide the most useful prism for explaining a change in strategy.[5] Kerry Longhurst contributes to an understanding of the changeability of culture with the concept of "fine-tuning." According to Longhurst, changes in culture are not usually radical but usually a fine-tuning.[6]

In *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*, Malik Mufti, a professor of international relations at Tufts University, adds to an understanding of strategic culture by asserting that there are offensive and defensive tendencies in Turkish strategic culture. In his work, Mufti asserts that there are discernible offensive and defensive tendencies in Turkish strategic culture and connects Atatürk's security measures, distinct from Ottoman ones, to pragmatism by calling them "tactical flexibility."[7]

Of course, I am aware that pragmatism comes into play in the limitation problems of political philosophy and produces useful solutions based on field experience. Just like Turkey, I know that pragmatism was adopted in

the establishment and development processes of the United States of America. In my view, "pragmatism" as a concept encompasses both Mufti's offensive/defensive dialectic and Longhurst's fine-tuning definition. Leaving aside further conceptual discussion on the determinations of Longhurst and Mufti, I will be content with showing the reflection of pragmatism, especially "purposefulness" and "changeability," on current Turkish operational art as it applies to the current situation with Syria.
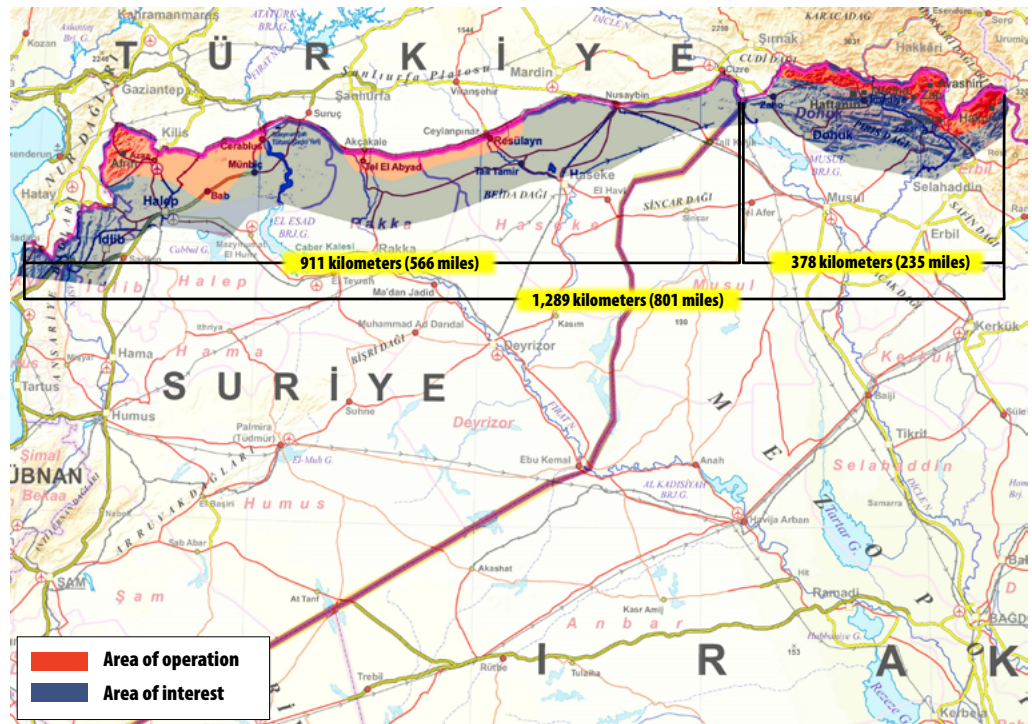


(Figure by author; map from Turkey's General Directorate of Mapping)

**Figure 1. Turkish Armed Forces Operational Area of Interest**

## Strategic Culture and Modern Warfare

The "changing" face of war itself is a concept that recent writers also like to use. Has something really changed in the nature of current warfare as opposed to previous concepts of war? If so, what has changed?

What we subconsciously problematize here is essentially the transformation of the classical state of war between states to conflicts that may not be between states. In other words, in our sophisticated and complex age, the state has lost its Weberian monopoly on violence. This situation is rapidly evolving into unlimited violence as foreseen by Carl von Clausewitz.[8]

Under rapidly changing conditions, the operational design methodology habitually used for understanding or framing complex operational problems and the operational art used in solving the problems are also having to change rapidly. The speed of change requires understanding the wicked problem and making decisions with the same intensity but even faster. This paves the way for maneuver superiority and the possibilities of asymmetry in operational art to be challenged.

Different research problems can be produced from the historical, political, and strategic framework summarized above. In this study, the effects of the civil war in Syria on Turkey's strategic behavior are briefly discussed. Then, the article focuses on the operational impact of this changing strategic behavior, aiming to identify Turkey's operational problems caused by the Syrian civil war using a pragmatic operational approach. The design methodology proposed by Jeffrey M. Reilly is used to frame the environment, problems, and solution.[9]

It is worth emphasizing that the data from research findings are collected from open sources, but the model created for the research is the author's mental construct based on a theoretical framework. Moreover, the events discussed have not yet completed their historical development, so the data obtained from the field for later analysis are constantly updated. For example, at the time of writing this article, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have launched the operations Claw-Thunder and Claw-Lightning, which are the continuation of the Claw operations, against PKK elements in northern

(Figure by author; map from Turkey's General Directorate of Mapping)

## Figure 2. Turkish Armed Forces Comparative Operational Areas

Iraq. Thus, in keeping with G. W. F. Hegel's aphorism, "the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk," this study focuses only on Turkey's operational purpose and approach.[10]

## Framing the Troubling Environment

During the civil war in Syria, the international security environment that Turkey faced verified Clausewitz's "paradoxical trinity" metaphor, circulating between primordial violence, hatred, and enmity.[11] The *Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê's* (Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK) opportunism and legitimacy efforts are not new for the TAF. However, what is new is that this type of warfare is directed and managed on a multilayered scale that extends to the strategic level. Operational art provides useful data to describe this wicked problem.

The Syrian civil war started as part of the Arab Spring movements that swept across the Middle East in 2010, but unlike other popular movements, the Syrian conflict quickly turned into a civil war. The potential for the conflict in Syria to have negative effects on regional and global security attracted the attention of international public opinion. While the states of the region were cooperating, a new coalition against Daesh was established on a global scale.[12]

The emerging situation in Syria caused concern in Turkey for its border security (Turkey's border with Syria is its longest). The threat was multidimensional; a massive influx of refugees, emerging terrorist networks, and rising transnational crime, which are natural outcomes of a civil war, were the main problems. The number of people forcibly displaced from Syria due to conflict, violence, and persecution reached record levels globally, and Turkey became the host for the largest number of Syrian refugees in the world.[13]

In conjunction with migration issues, Turkey's border cities became vulnerable to cross-border mortar, rocket, and missile attacks by terrorists. For example, between 18 January and 2 October 2016, twenty-five Turkish citizens lost their lives as a result of the ninety-five rocket attacks carried out by Daesh from Al Bab, Syria.[14] Terrorists did not settle with cross-border fires. They also targeted the major cities and resorts of Turkey with suicide attacks, IED attacks, and armed attacks. Until the end of 2016, Daesh and PKK terrorist attacks had claimed hundreds of lives in Turkey, just as in Europe and the United States.[15]

The PKK, taking advantage of the opportunities created by the civil war in Syria, expanded its terrorist activities in northern Syria and continued to attack Turkey from Tal Abyad, Ras al-Ayn, Qamishli, Ayn Al Arab, Manbij, and Afrin in the northern areas of Syria.[16] Thus, the PKK came to threaten Turkey's border with both Iraq and Syria. With Turkey's many border cities coming under threat from both Daesh
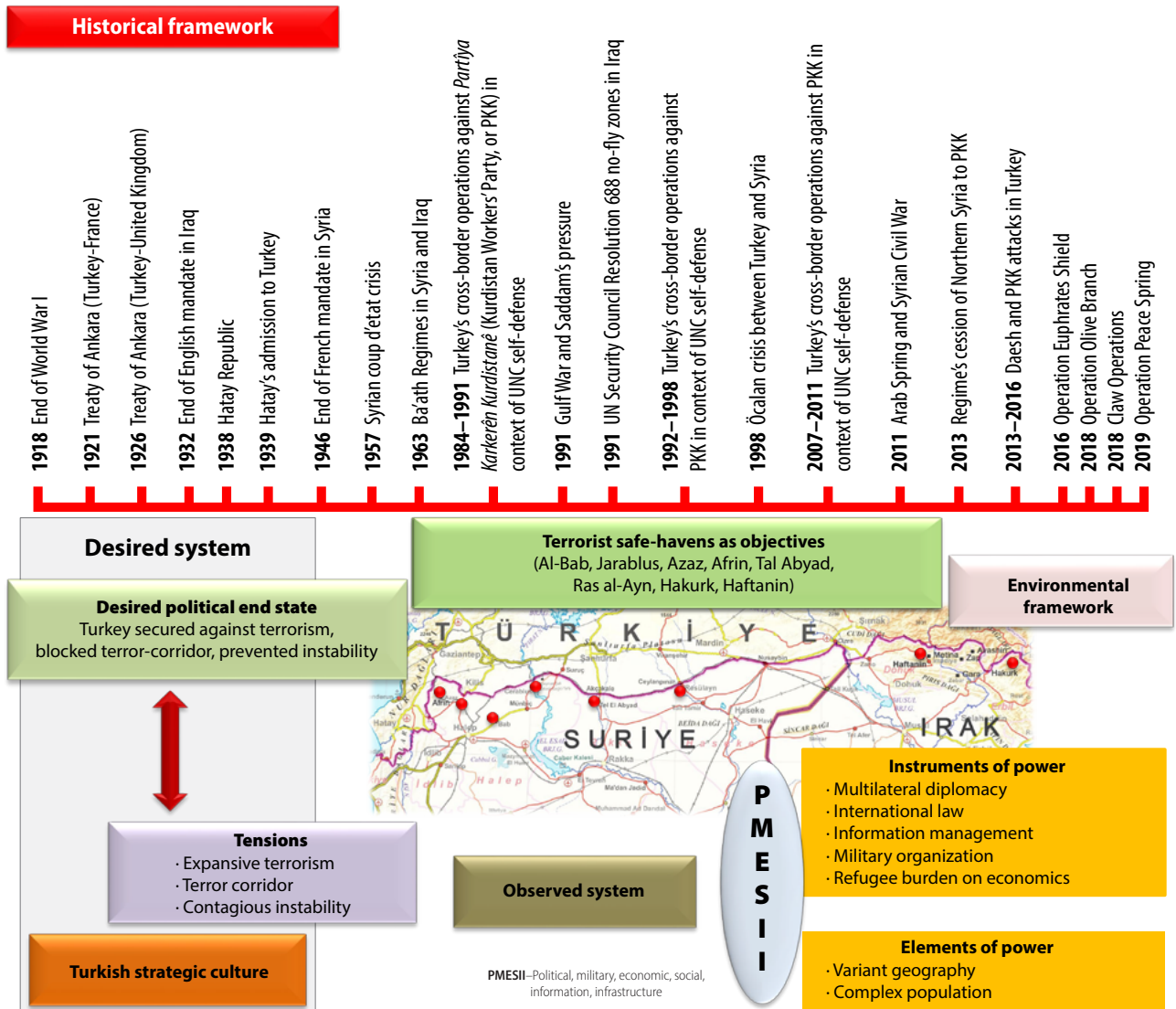
**Figure 3. Phase 1: Framing the Environment**

and the PKK, the operational area of interest of the TAF extended from the Hakkari-Iran-Iraq border in the east to the Hatay-Syria border in the west (see figure 1, page 119).

Of special note, the extensive area where the TAF was operating in Syria against terrorists was of a shifting character. For example, the area of Operation Euphrates Shield (OES) consisted of predominately residential areas, while that of Operation Olive Branch (OOB) included relatively rugged, forested, fortified, and residential areas. Although uneven in the Operation Peace Spring (OPS) region,

residential areas were the decisive operational targets (see figure 2, page 120).

The operational area in Iraq, on the other hand, was unique, consisting of high mountains, steep and rugged terrain, and dense forests. Moreover, this area was a safe haven where the PKK had been based for many years and had benefited from the infrastructure and transportation facilities by taking advantage of the authority vacuum.

In view of the environmental framework above, Reilly's mind-mapping method has been used for strategic modeling. Figure 3 models the first phase of the design.

## Framing the Wicked Problem in Context of Pragmatic Purposefulness

**Strategic purposefulness.** Sanctuary is essential for terrorist activities. For many years, terrorists found such a safe haven for basing of operations in the mountainous regions of Iraq and partially in Syria, far from the control of the central government. From this region, Daesh conducted terrorist activities during the Syrian civil war, providing lessons for other terrorist organizations like the PKK.

During a five-year period in which the lives of hundreds of Turkish citizens were lost and numerous threats were made against Turkey, the country made peaceful attempts, and even warnings, to relevant states and international organizations regarding the unacceptable situation. However, while the immigration problem and multidimensional terrorism threat constituted a heavy burden on Turkey, it drew little global attention or interest, to the disappointment of the Turkish people. Thus, Turkey finally concluded that it had no option but "to pull itself up by its own bootstraps." Consequently, Turkey deemed it necessary to intervene in the uncontrolled area that constituted a perfect safe haven for terrorists in both Syria and northern territory of Iraq. Contrary to some assertions, Turkey clearly stated the purpose of its planned intervention together with the self-imposed restrictions on its operations from the outset. Table 1 (on page 118) reveals the purpose of Turkey's cross-border operations in a comparative manner, which were clearly presented in global media.[17]

Of note, Turkey did not go beyond the predetermined objectives. The most prominent feature of Turkey's operations was that there were no hidden agendas.

**Operational purposefulness.** There were differently motivated terrorist groups in the TAF's operational area of influence and interest. Therefore, it was deemed impractical to analyze the center of gravity of the terrorists as a whole and to find an effective approach to solving the problem they created

for Turkey. So, the TAF did not waste time attempting to identify a single terrorist group's center of gravity in this complex and blurry environment. Instead, the TAF focused its efforts on determining critical needs and vulnerabilities of the separate terrorist groups, and conducting detailed target analysis to reveal physical targets.

The prominent critical vulnerabilities identified were specific terrorist command and control facilities, key
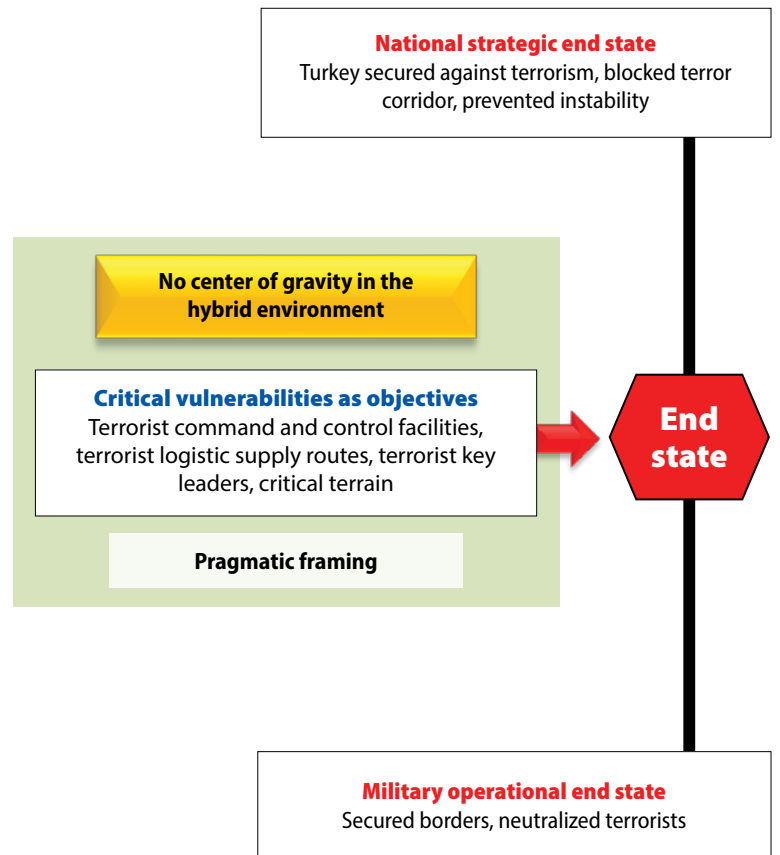


(Figure by author)

## Figure 4. Phase 2: Framing the Problem

terrorist leaders, and critical terrain. Thus, the operations resulted in dispersion of hundreds of terrorists from Daesh, the PKK, and other groups; dramatic reduction of the immediate threat from those groups; and a significant reduction in their long-term capacity to conduct armed terrorist activities in Turkey. This shows that the terrorists' critical vulnerabilities and corresponding TAF objectives were accurately identified. Figure 4 models the second phase of the design.

**Local legitimate forces**

**24 August 2016–16 October 2016 (Jarablus, Çobanbey)**

**17 October 2016–30 March 2017, Cut off terrorists' link-up**

**Regime**

*Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê's* (Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK)/
*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* (People's Protection Units, or YPG)

**Border gates**

KARKAMIŞ

JARABLUS

TURKEY

KİLİS

ELBEYLİ

ÇOBANBEY

AZAZ

MANBIJ

AFRIN

TEL RIFAAT

MARE

AL-BAB

EUPHRATES RIVER

(Figure by author)

## Figure 5. Operational Approach of Operation Euphrates Shield

## Strategic and Operational Approaches: A Pragmatic Assessment

**Strategic approach.** The situation that developed from the Syrian civil war dictated that Turkey employ a proactive strategy with offensive character to intervene in the terrorist threat from just outside its boundary. Decision-makers at the highest level frequently referred to this strategy in their discourses.[18] Thus, in accordance with Turkey's rights based on international law, the TAF carried out a series of operations to eliminate the security risk caused by irregular immigration and terrorism at its source.[19]

At the onset of operations, there were two terrorist groups—Daesh and the PKK—with different motivations, organizations, and methods. In accordance with the purposeful nature of the pragmatic Turkish strategic culture, the TAF followed a phased strategy that was intended to neutralize Daesh in the first phase and the PKK in the second phase. In OES, mainly Daesh terrorists were eliminated. Since its operations

commenced, the TAF has inflicted the heaviest casualties on Daesh in the world.[20] In OOB, Operation Claw-1/2/3, Operation Claw-Eagle/Claw-Tiger, and OPS, mainly PKK terrorists were eliminated.

**Operational approach.** The pragmatic proactive strategy based on preventing the terrorist threat outside Turkey's borders first became tangible during OES. The operation developed from the direction of Jarablus to the south and then headed in the direction of Al Bab, cutting off the terrorists' effort to unite Manbij and Tel Rifat (see figure 5).[21] This solution, which was modified according to the changing situation, met the TAF's operational purpose.

Another operation, OOB, was launched on 10 January 2018. Compared to OES, more emphasis was placed on shaping the battlefield during OOB.[22] Conducted in the mountainous region and in winter conditions, OOB required more coordination than OES. During this operation, in addition to coordination between the forces, it became important to clear out terrorist fortifications and to use unmanned aircraft

systems (UAS) below the clouds. OPS, which was also carried out 9–17 October 2019, was launched to cut the terrorist corridor after the PKK terrorists declared unilateral autonomy in its region.[23]

## Counterterrorism Operations in Iraq

The Syrian civil war also affected the TAF's counterterrorism operations in Iraq because it was necessary to holistically approach the wide operational area between Qandil and Afrin (see figure 6).[24] For example, the fleeing terrorists from the OPS area had to be stopped from infiltrating at another point on the Iraq-Turkey border, not allowed to continue posing a threat from the mountainous Turkey-Iraq b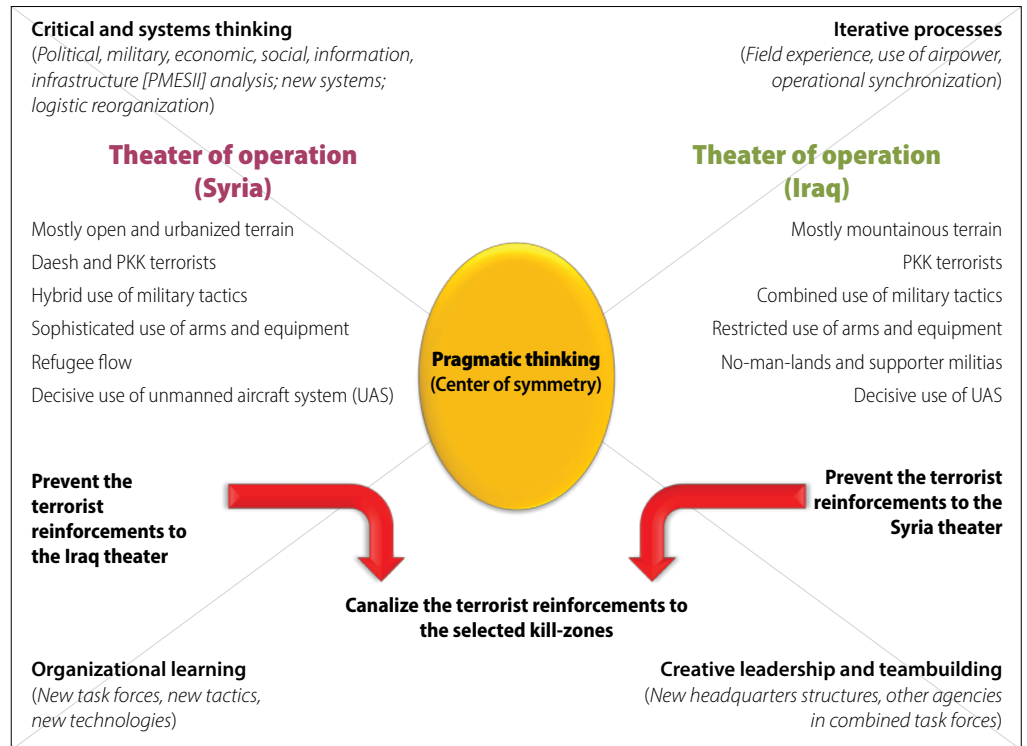order that had become a PKK safe haven since the 1990s. Therefore, Operation Claw (OC) was started, followed by OC-2, OC-3, OC-Eagle, Claw-Tiger, and Claw-Eagle-2 operations.[25] Turkey executed counterterrorism operations in coordination with the Iraqi government and the Kurdish regional government in this area.

armored task forces, most of the combined arms units were formed from commando units.

In keeping with the sophisticated nature of hybrid warfare, armored personnel carriers, tanks, explosive ordnance disposal teams, air defense teams, and engineering teams were organized under the direct command of commando task forces—a significant

**Critical and systems thinking**
(*Political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure [PMESII] analysis; new systems; logistic reorganization*)

**Iterative processes**
(*Field experience, use of airpower, operational synchronization*)

**Theater of operation (Syria)**

Mostly open and urbanized terrain
Daesh and PKK terrorists
Hybrid use of military tactics
Sophisticated use of arms and equipment
Refugee flow
Decisive use of unmanned aircraft system (UAS)

**Theater of operation (Iraq)**

Mostly mountainous terrain
PKK terrorists
Combined use of military tactics
Restricted use of arms and equipment
No-man-lands and supporter militias
Decisive use of UAS

**Pragmatic thinking (Center of symmetry)**

**Prevent the terrorist reinforcements to the Iraq theater**

**Prevent the terrorist reinforcements to the Syria theater**

**Canalize the terrorist reinforcements to the selected kill-zones**

**Organizational learning**
(*New task forces, new tactics, new technologies*)

**Creative leadership and teambuilding**
(*New headquarters structures, other agencies in combined task forces*)

(Figure by author)

### Figure 6. The Holistic Approach to Turkish Armed Forces Wide Area of Operation

Operations in Syria and Iraq provided the opportunity to test the readiness of the TAF under real conditions. From the beginning, the TAF adopted a flexible battle organization that met the needs of an offensive operation, and arranged command and support relations specifically for this task, a significant departure from classical military doctrine. Consequently, combined arms task forces were structured at every level, from brigade to company. In addition to the mechanized and

innovation. In addition to the task force configurations, brigades were also turned into combined arms forces in a brigade combat team structure, with newly developed doctrine created by the TAF. Also, Turkish special forces gained unique field experience by playing a key role in controlling and directing local forces.

Additionally, the TAF aimed to minimize collateral damage to civilians, historical artifacts, and infrastructure. In fact, this was determined to be the most important success criterion from the very beginning. It was achieved, and the operation was performed "without breaking eggs," despite the rhetoric of the terrorists.[26]

Figure 7 (on page 125) and table 2 (on page 126) model the third phase of the design after the addition
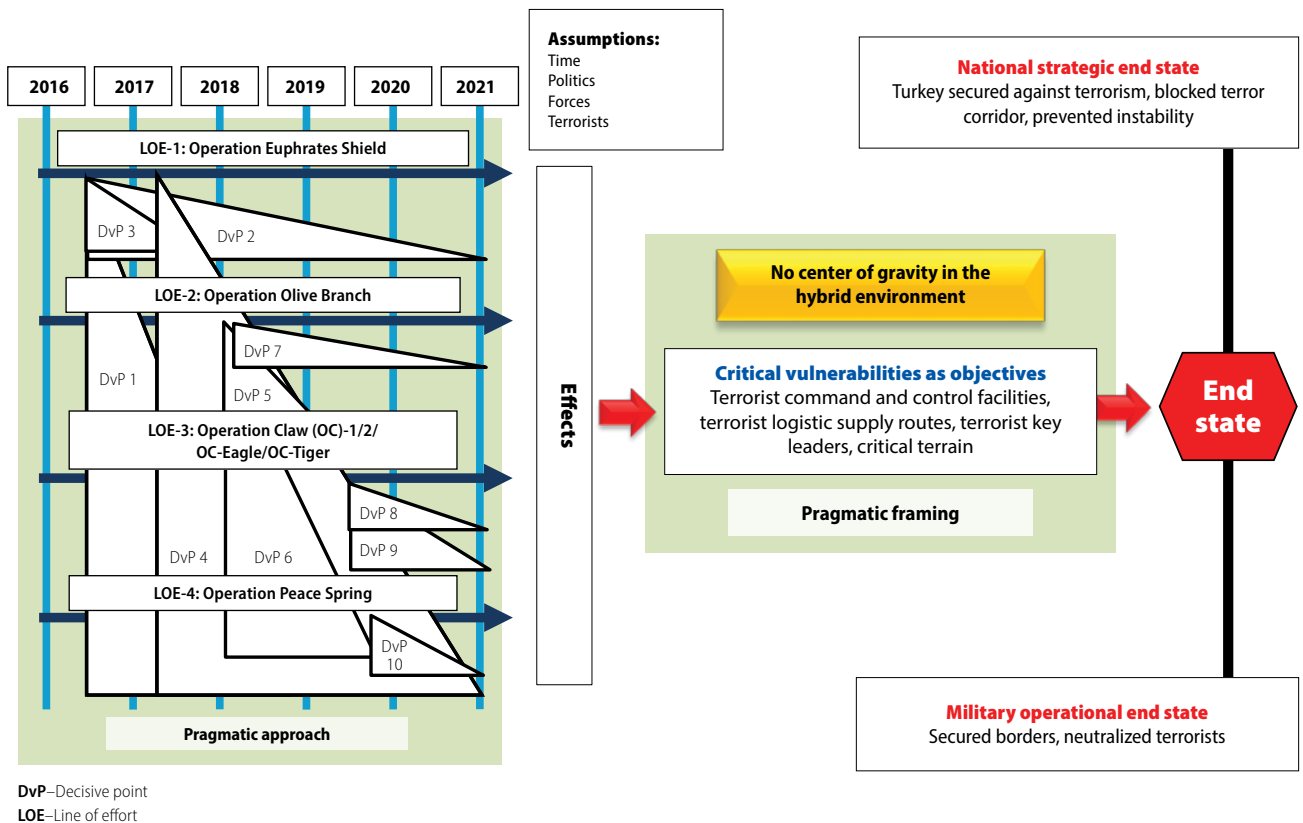
Figure 7. Phase 3: Operational Approach

of operational approaches. Lines of effort were established for each operation within overall TAF operations. (Lines of effort can also be created using functions such as military operations, strategic communication, and compliance with the law.)

Due to the size and complexity of the operational environment, "unmanned maneuver" has become a pragmatic method for Turkey. The UAS has been one of the most effective tools in dealing with threats and opportunities that appear in the wide area of operation by avoiding enemy air defenses. It would be appropriate to add the unmanned maneuver as a pragmatic effect when defining the effects in this operational design. However, I limit my determination to this and leave Turkey's UAS success, which has attracted attention in the international media, and the detailed analysis of the unmanned maneuver approach to another research effort.

Finally, one must consider Turkey's cross-border operations in terms of effects. While the operations in Syria are mainly in coordination with the maneuver of local legitimate forces, operations in Iraq depended on TAF maneuver. Based on this determination, after considering pragmatic effects, the final state of the operational design became as shown in figure 8 (on page 127).

## Conclusion

In this article, I have put forward a model for explaining Turkey's cross-border counterterrorism operations caused by *bad neighbor* instability from another state. Such behavior engenders the need for new strategic behavior and the needed application of operational art by the states in the region attempting to mitigate the effects of bad neighbor instability.

Domestic political instability is fed first by internal conflicts that can set the conditions for a rise in international terrorism by enhancing the capabilities of terrorist networks due to the safe havens instability provides them.

The Syrian civil war has led to a noticeable change in Turkey's strategic behavior. At the beginning of the war, Turkey followed a reactive approach, which considered

## Table 2. Lines of Effort (LOE) and Decisive Points (DvP)

| LOE | DvP | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **LOE-1**<br>Operation<br>Euphrates Shield | DvP-1 | Deployment to the operation area |
| | DvP-2 | Attack by fire on terrorist command and control facilities |
| | DvP-3 | Taking control of migration and destruction of terrorist targets |
| | DvP-4 | Ensuring security in the area cleared of terrorists, the return of civilians, and the destruction of terrorist targets of opportunity |
| **LOE-2**<br>Operation<br>Olive Branch | DvP-1 | Deployment to the operation area |
| | DvP-5 | Shaping the battlefield and attack by fire on terrorist command and control facilities |
| | DvP-6 | Destruction of terrorist targets and terrorist fortification |
| | DvP-7 | Protecting the civilians and securing the Hatay border |
| **LOE-3**<br>Operation<br>Claw-1/2 | DvP-1 | Deployment to the operation area |
| | DvP-8 | Destruction of terrorist targets |
| | DvP-9 | Protecting the civilians and ensuring security in the area cleared of terrorists |
| **LOE-3**<br>Operation<br>Peace Spring | DvP-1 | Deployment to the operation area |
| | DvP-5 | Shaping the battlefield |
| | DvP-6 | Destruction of terrorist targets |
| | DvP-10 | Protecting the civilians, preventing terrorist structures, and cutting the terror corridor |

(Table by author)

international indifference, became even more arrogant. Consequently, Turkey has abandoned that approach in favor of a proactive approach based on preventing the threat by engaging it beyond Turkey's border and draining it at its source.

One problem for Turkey that emerged was that this approach was interpreted differently by other states, some deeming it to be illegitimate. However, conducting operations against international terrorists within twenty miles of Turkey's border was not strange nor illegitimate as it was in compliance with international law. This ambivalent interpretation by others has been disappointing to Turkey. As a state adjacent to two of the world's most troubled regions, Syria and Iraq, Turkey believes it is its most natural right to take measures to maintain stability by countering terrorist threats outside its border that have attacked Turkey and confining them to their source. It cannot be expected that, for the first time in history, terrorists would have a state of their own, and Turkey would calmly accept that state on its border.

In this article, using an operational design model, I have explained how Turkey's military operations accomplished its purpose. The crisis-resolution model used reveals the pragmatic character of Turkish strategic culture.

One of the unique innovations of Turkey's proactive strategy was its use of special operations forces units to create task forces. In Turkey's hybrid-environment operational areas, the usual mechanized or armored task forces of the classical operational approach were replaced by commando task forces. In addition, the formation of brigade combat teams is emerging as a new task force structure.

For many decades, Turkey has struggled with the asymmetric threats produced by the instability in Iraq
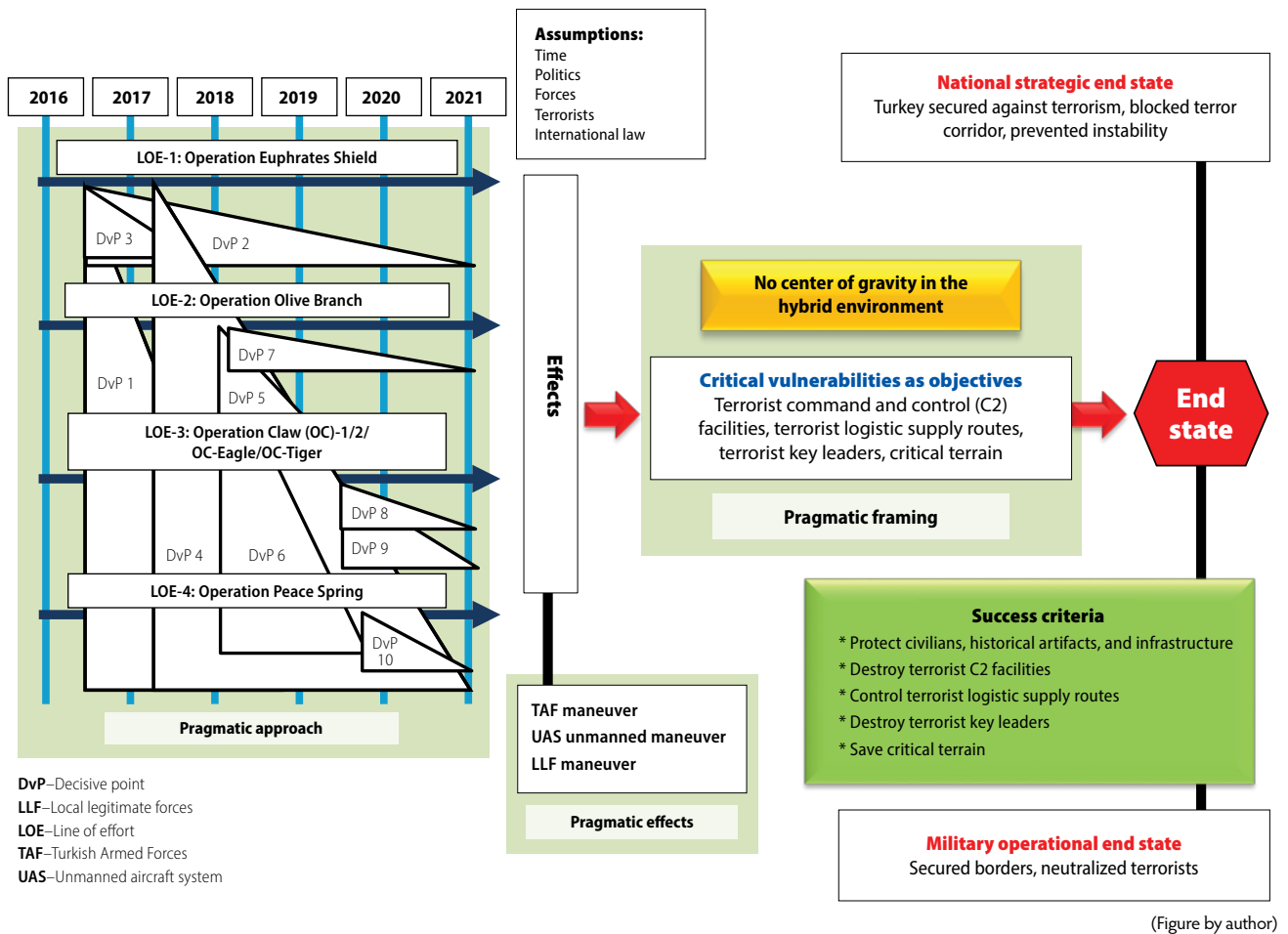
terrorism a matter for domestic law enforcement mostly within its borders. But, the terrorists interpreted this as a sign of Turkey's weakness, and emboldened by

**Figure 8. Phase 4: Operational Design**

and Syria. However, through the innovative proactive strategy it formulated to deal with the threat, Turkey took advantage of new creative tactics and operational art together with new technological progress to successfully achieve operation objectives in support of its larger strategy. Moreover, contrary to what many states have argued and despite all the difficulties inherent in these operations, Turkey carries them out completely in accordance with the law. Objective evaluations would validate and give real credit to these efforts. ∎

## Notes

1. Luisa Blanco and Rubin Grier, "Long Live Democracy: The Determinants of Political Instability in Latin America," *Journal of Development Studies* 45, no. 1 (January 2009): 76–95.

2. M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011). Hanioğlu, who defines Atatürk as "literatus," focuses on the enculturation processes of Atatürk on the one hand, and on the other hand, with the definition of literatus, claims that he pragmatically instrumentalize his intellectual accumulation for his strategic behavior; Hikmet Kırık and Oya Morva, *Cumhuriyet ve Pragmatizm: Yazılmamış Kuram* [The republic and pragmatism: unwritten theory] (Istanbul: Doruk

Publishing, 2016), 109. Kırık and Morva explain the period that resulted with the foundation of the Republic within the framework of "pragmatic action theory" based on Atatürk's ideas and actions.

3. Jeremy Black, "Determinism and Other Issues," *Journal of Military History* 68, no. 4 (October 2004): 1217–32.

4. Jack L. Snyder, "The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor," in *Strategic Power: USA/USSR*, ed. C. G. Jacobsen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 7–8.

5. Ibid., 8.

6. Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of Germany Security Policy 1990-2003 (Issues in German*

*Politics)* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 17–18.

7. Malik Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 18.

8. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 147.

9. Jeffrey M. Reilly, *Operational Design: Distilling Clarity from Complexity for Decisive Action* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2012).

10. G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23.

11. Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

12. The terrorist organization *ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām* (Daesh) is known by various other names such as ISIS, ISIL, and IS, but Daesh is what it is normally called in Turkey. Likewise, the terrorist organization PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) has tried to evade legal pursuit and gain legitimacy by using names such as KADEK, KONGRA-GEL, and KCK. Organizations such as PJAK, PYD and YPG are also accepted by Turkey as international extensions of the PKK.

13. "Refugee Data Finder," United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed 22 April 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=6xV7Xk. In 2020, Turkey hosted 3,574,836 refugees from Syria.

14. For example, see "Kilis'e Dusen Roket Mermileri, Kontrollu Imha Edildi" [Rocket shells dropped on Kilis, destroyed in a controlled manner], Haber Turk, 13 March 2016, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.haberturk.com/yerel-haberler/haber/10695196-kilise-dusen-roket-mermileri; Esber Ayaydin, Salih Bilici, and Sema Kaplan, "YPG/PKK Rocket Attacks Injure 16 Civilians in SE Turkey," Anadolu Agency, 10 October 2019, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/operation-peace-spring/ypg-pkk-rocket-attacks-injure-16-civilians-in-se-turkey/1609031.

15. "Deadly Attacks in Turkey in 2016," BBC, 1 January 2017, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38481521. In 2016 alone, many of Turkey's cities were the scenes of bloody terrorist attacks. Prominent incidents include the following: on 17 February 2016, twenty-eight people died in an attack on a military convoy in Ankara; on 13 March 2016, thirty-seven people were killed by the PKK in a suicide car bombing in Ankara; on 28 June 2016, Daesh organized a gun and bomb attack on Ataturk Airport in Istanbul and killed forty-one people; on 20 August 2016, Daesh organized a bomb attack on a wedding party in Gaziantep and killed at least thirty people; on 10 December 2016, the PKK organized twin bomb attacks outside a football stadium in Istanbul, killing forty-four people.

16. Nilay Kar, "YPG/PKK Replaces Flag with New One in Syria's Tal Abyad," Anadolu Agency, 22 September 2019, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/ypg-pkk-replaces-flag-with-new-one-in-syria-s-tal-abyad/1590408; "Eight Killed in Turkish Border Town in YPG Attack - Governor's Office," Reuters, 11 October 2019, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-security-turkey-nusaybin-idAFKBN1WQ2DI.

17. "30 Kasim 2016 Tarihli Toplanti [Meeting Dated November 30, 2016]," Presidency of the Republic of Turkey: Secretariat-General of National Security Council of Turkey, 30 November 2016, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.mgk.gov.tr/index.php/30-kasim-2016-tarihli-toplanti; "28 Mart 2018 Tarihli Toplanti [Meeting Dated March 28, 2018]," Presidency of the Republic of Turkey: Secretariat-General of National Security Council of Turkey, 28 March 2018, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.mgk.gov.tr/index.php/28-mart-2018-tarihli-toplanti; "30 Mayis 2019 Tarihli Toplanti [Meeting Dated May 30, 2019]," Presidency of the Republic of Turkey: Secretariat-General of National Security Council of Turkey, 30 May 2019, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.mgk.gov.tr/index.php/30-mayis-2019-tarihli-toplanti.

18. "Statement by President Erdoğan on Terror Attack in Istanbul," Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 1 January 2017, accessed 27 April 2021, https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/69626/statement-by-president-erdogan-on-terror-attack-in-istanbul.

19. The legal basis of Turkey's military action is the "right of individual or collective self-defence" regulated in article 51 of the UN Charter; the UN Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014), and 2178 (2014) on the fight against terrorism; and the Adana/Ankara Agreement. Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic signed a memorandum of understanding in Adana on 20 October 1998 in order to develop cooperation against terrorist organizations, especially the PKK, and registered and arbitrated this memorandum with the "Joint Cooperation Agreement against Terrorism and Terrorist Organizations" signed in Ankara on 21 December 2010.

20. Doğan Şafak Polat, "Türkiye'nin Suriye'nin Kuzeyindeki Askerî Harekâtının Amaçları ve Sonuçları" [Objectives and results of Turkish military operations in the north of Syria], *Journal of Security Strategies* 16, no. 33 (March 2020): 68, https://doi.org/10.17752/guvenlikstrtj.719968.

21. Ibid., 64–78.

22. Ibid., 66–67.

23. "Milli Savunma Bakanlığından 'Barış Pınarı Harekatı' açıklaması" [Statement of 'operation peace spring' from the Ministry of National Defense], İhlas Haber Ajansı [İhlas News Agency], 31 October 2019, accessed 3 May 2021, https://www.iha.com.tr/haber-milli-savunma-bakanligindan-baris-pinari-harekati-aciklamasi-809347/.

24. Brian J. Tyler, *Operational Intelligence and Operational Design: Thinking about Operational Art* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2014): 67. The author produced the figure using the design framework of Tyler. According to Tyler, critical and systems thinking, creative leadership and team-building, and iterative processes and organizational learning have long been part of strategy formulation and planning processes.

25. "30 Mayis 2019 Tarihli Toplanti" [Meeting dated May 30, 2019].

26. Terrorists spread false news on this issue through social media, but the TAF shared clear and accurate information with the world public opinion at every stage of the operation and nullified the manipulative efforts of terrorists. See for example, *Fake News on Turkey's Afrin Operation*, YouTube video, posted by "TRT [Turkish Radio and Television]," 2 February 2018, accessed 5 August 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=241ic9T46KM; "PYD/PKK Continues to Use Fake Pictures on Social Media," Anadolu Agency, 7 March 2018, accessed 5 August 2021, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/todays-headlines/pyd-pkk-continues-to-use-fake-pictures-on-social-media/1082085.