

Türkiye and the unmanned revolution in the sky



Due to its geographical location, Türkiye is either a neighbour or very close to troubled regions of the world. Due to its proximity to conflict zones and its long history of combating terrorism both within and beyond its borders, Türkiye has had its own unique needs. The Kurdistan Workers' Party, recognised as a terrorist organisation by the US and the EU, is a separatist militant group that has been carrying out armed attacks against civilian and military targets in Türkiye since August 1984.

By the 1990s, air superiority had become increasingly important in the Internal Security Operations conducted against the PKK. The increasing number of general purpose and attack helicopters were used for both personnel transport and armed reconnaissance flights. Attack helicopters proved very useful in the region, but they also had their own drawbacks. The combination of the region's high mountains and high summer temperatures reduced the helicopters' performance. Their time spent in the mission area and the loads they carried were decreasing.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) activities were becoming increasingly important for gaining control of the area. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) were needed to monitor critical geographical areas such as gorges, passes and valleys used by PKK militants as transit routes, sensitive transportation routes and PKK camps both domestically and abroad.

