



From the Baltic to Lebanon and Somalia: How Turkey Confirms Its Global Leadership

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In recent years, and particularly evident during this **2026**, the Republic of **Turkey** has consolidated an **ambitious geostrategic doctrine** that far exceeds the traditional boundaries of the **Eastern Mediterranean** and the **Middle East**. Leveraging its pivotal position within the **Atlantic Alliance (NATO)** and balancing it with an audacious **autonomous diplomacy**, Ankara is extending its sphere of influence along an axis that stretches **from the Baltic Sea to the Levant and the Horn of Africa**, directly intersecting the hottest quadrants of **global security**.

From the Baltic to Eastern Europe: NATO Air Patrol

Turkey's projection of power and military reliability extends well beyond regional borders, reaching the northeastern flank of Europe. Recently, the **Turkish Ministry of Defense** formalized a significant operational deployment at the airbase in **Ämari, Estonia**.

From **August 1 to November 30**, five Turkish multirole **F-16** fighters and their support personnel are deployed in the Baltic area as part of the NATO mission of **Enhanced Air Policing**. This move not only represents a technical contribution to the collective commitments of the Alliance but also projects Turkey as a **leading guarantor** of security in the northern European airspace, ensuring **24/7 rapid reaction shifts**. As stated by the ministry spokesperson **Zeki Akturk**:

“Our units will contribute to the security of the Baltic airspace as part of NATO's joint air defense activities, performing rapid reaction tasks 24/7”.

The Middle East and the Levant: Turkey's Ambition in Lebanon

While overseeing the Baltic skies, Ankara decisively targets the southern Levant, exploiting the security gaps left by regional geopolitical shifts. In a high-profile institutional meeting held in Ankara, Turkish President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** and Lebanese President **Joseph Aoun** outlined the guidelines for strengthened cooperation.

The talks focused on the future arrangement of **Lebanon** in the context of the progressive withdrawal of the United Nations contingent **UNIFIL**, whose disengagement is expected to begin at the end of the year and be completed by **2027**. Erdogan unequivocally declared Ankara's intention to assume an **active role** in protecting Lebanese sovereignty:

“Following the withdrawal of the current international force, Turkey wishes to play an active role in all initiatives aimed at safeguarding Lebanon's sovereignty”.

This move aims to consolidate **Turkish influence** on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, positioning Ankara as an **indispensable interlocutor** for Beirut and balancing the historical and competing regional influences in the land of the cedars.

The Projection in the Horn of Africa: The Strategic Model in Somalia

The African piece sees **Somalia** as the undisputed pivot and the most advanced model of Ankara's geopolitical and economic projection. What began in 2011 as a humanitarian response to famine has evolved into a structured system of **strategic, military, and energy control**.

Turkey's presence rests on deep pillars:

- **The TURKSOM Base:** In Mogadishu, Turkey manages its largest overseas military base, where thousands of soldiers and special forces of the Somali National Army are trained.
- **Enhancement of the Military Device:** The Turkish Parliament has approved the extension of the mission until **2028**, alongside the terrestrial presence with the deployment of advanced air assets — including F-16 fighters and T129 attack helicopters deployed in Mogadishu — and naval units to protect the coasts.
- **Energy Resources and Blue Economy:** Leveraging economic and defense cooperation framework agreements, Turkey has initiated significant offshore energy explorations with the drilling ship **Çağrı Bey** in the deep Somali blocks. Simultaneously, through strategic joint ventures like *SOMTURK* (led by the armed forces pension fund OYAK), Ankara coordinates maritime governance, route security, and the management of exclusive economic zones.

Conclusions: A Global Range Geopolitics

Turkey's actions clearly outline the profile of a **global middle power** with pronounced multidomain capabilities. From NATO-led air policing missions in the cold **Baltic**, through strategic and energy engagement in **Somalia**, to the ambition of filling the geopolitical voids left by UNIFIL in **Lebanon**, Ankara's leadership demonstrates the ability to weave a dense network of interconnected interventions. This strategy not only aims to ensure national security at the borders but seeks to **redefine Eurasian, African, and Mediterranean power relations**, placing Turkey at the center of the crucial dossiers of the 21st century.