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Türkiye–Israel Tensions in Syria: The US Tries to Create a New Balance

The fact that Israel's military activities in Syria and Türkiye's security policies in the region are becoming closer has created a new risk of conflict. For this reason, the United States is trying to create a communication mechanism between Türkiye, Israel, and Syria to prevent a direct conflict. Washington's goal is not mainly to bring the sides closer together, but to prevent military activities from being misunderstood and turning into a direct conflict. One of the main reasons for the tension is Israel's military operations in Syria. Israel attacked the Abu Duhur airbase in Syria on August 18. Tom Barrack, the US Special Representative for Syria, said that Israel did not inform Washington before the attack. Israel, however, argued that the necessary information had been given to the United States. These different statements show how sensitive military activities in Syria have become. The problem is bigger from Türkiye's perspective.

While Ankara is trying to increase security and military cooperation in Syria, it is concerned that Israel's operations in Syria are getting closer to the areas where Türkiye is active. Israel, on the other hand, sees Türkiye's military presence in Syria as a risk to its own security. As a result, although there is no direct war between the two countries, the possibility of them coming into conflict in the same area is increasing.

For this reason, the United States' role as a mediator is important. Washington wants to consider Israel's security concerns while also avoiding damage to its relations with Türkiye. Increasing instability in Syria could also negatively affect the interests of the United States in the region.

The talks between Syria and Israel on August 24, which were mediated by the United States, showed that diplomatic channels have not completely closed. The main goal of the talks was to reduce tensions and create the conditions for a wider security agreement between the two sides.

Overall, the developments in Syria show that Türkiye–Israel relations are no longer only an issue between the two countries. For this reason, the United States is also getting involved and trying to establish communication between the sides. In the coming period, the balance between Türkiye's military presence in Syria, Israel's operations, and US mediation efforts will be important for regional security.



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Achilles' Shield: Greece and Israel's Strategic Air Defence Partnership

Greece and Israel are preparing to officially sign a €3.1 billion air defence project called “Achilles’ Shield” in Tel Aviv on Monday, 31 August 2026. The Greek government approved this strategic project on 23 July. It is an important part of the “Agenda 2030” defence strategy, which aims to make the Greek army more modern and technology-focused. According to Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias, the system is expected to become operational in stages within 35 months after the agreement is signed. The main goal of the project is to combine Greece’s existing Patriot systems and drone capabilities with advanced Israeli defence systems. Israeli-made SPYDER, Barak MX and David’s Sling systems will be added to the Greek military. In this way, Greece will create a multi-layered air defence network. An artificial intelligence supported system will collect and analyse information from different radars and sensors. It will identify possible threats and help choose the most suitable and cost-effective response. Another important part

of the agreement is technology transfer and the participation of Greek defence companies. The source codes of some important software will be transferred to Greece, and Greek companies are expected to have at least a 25% share in the project. Around 12 Greek defence companies are expected to receive contracts worth more than €700 million. This could increase employment and improve the technological capabilities of the Greek defence industry. From an international relations and regional security perspective, the project shows that military and defence cooperation between Greece and Israel is becoming stronger. The new AI-supported network is expected to protect Greece against ballistic missiles, kamikaze drones and conventional air attacks. Therefore, Greece aims to strengthen its defence capabilities in the Eastern Mediterranean and increase its ability to deter potential threats. The main goals of Greece and Israel in this strategic initiative are to protect the rich natural gas reserves and energy routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, create an AI-supported and low-cost air defence system in line with modern warfare, and balance Turkey’s growing advantage in drones and missiles in the region. With this agreement, Athens aims to modernise its army under the “Agenda 2030” plan and reduce its dependence on foreign defence technology by receiving critical software source codes. Israel, on the other hand, aims to gain greater military and strategic depth in the Eastern Mediterranean through an ally that is a



member of the European Union, expand its airspace training activities through military exercises, and create a major reference in the European defence market worth billions of euros and based on NATO standards.



Bangladesh's Interest in the Mecca Pact: Is There a New Regional Security Balance?

Bangladesh considering joining the Mecca Defense Pact, which was formed between Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, is an important development in terms of the relations between South Asia and the Middle East. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister said that if an official invitation is sent to the country, this option would be considered positively. It cannot be said yet that Bangladesh has joined the pact, but even this statement has started a new discussion in the country's foreign policy. The main purpose of the Mecca Pact is to increase defense cooperation between Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The three countries signed a joint defense agreement at the beginning of August. The agreement says that an attack against one of the countries will also be considered a common security problem by the others.

For this reason, if new countries join the pact, its regional effect may increase. For Bangladesh, the decision is a very sensitive situation. The country has been trying to have balanced relations with China, India, the US and other powers for a long time. Since Pakistan is also part of the pact, Bangladesh's membership will be closely followed, especially by India. India may see closer security relations with Pakistan as a positive development for its own regional security. For Türkiye, this development is even more important. Bangladesh joining the pact could mean that Türkiye expands its security relations not only in the Middle East but also toward South Asia. Türkiye already has strong defense relations with Pakistan. If Bangladesh also becomes part of this pact, it could strengthen Türkiye's diplomatic and defense connections in Asia. However, this expansion also has some risks. As the number of members increases, the security priorities of the countries may become different from each other. Saudi Arabia's security problems in the Middle East and Bangladesh's priorities in South Asia are different. Because of this, new members can increase the strength of the agreement, but they can also make the common decision-making process more difficult. In conclusion, Bangladesh's possible participation in the Mecca Pact is not only a matter of adding a new member. This development is also important because it could expand Türkiye's regional role, strengthen the connection between South Asia and the Middle East, and give the India-Pakistan rivalry a new security dimension.



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SEEBRIG's Return to Istanbul and the Evolving Security Architecture of the Balkans and the Black Sea

The return of the South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) headquarters to Istanbul and Bulgaria's assumption of the rotating command mark an important development in the evolving security architecture of the Balkans and the Black Sea. The move further strengthens military coordination among the region's key NATO members, particularly Türkiye, Bulgaria and Romania, while enhancing regional burden-sharing and interoperability. Although, SEEBRIG was not established as an anti-Russian organization, the current warfare between Russia and Ukraine drastically increased the significance of the organization regarding the security structures of Black Sea. While the member countries constitute the Southeastern European flank of NATO, SEEBRIG's structure allows the member countries to discuss and develop new defensive strategies within a remarkably limited territory without the interference of NATO's administration.

Additionally, this would help the member countries to manage and respond to regional crises and increase their military cooperation on a regional basis which would turn beneficial for NATO in the long run despite the lack of their institutional presence. Yet, since all member countries are also a member of NATO assuming a broad strategical and military autonomy to the organization might be wrong. In other words, despite being two different strategical defence organizations, some degree of strategic and operational coordination between SEEBRIG and NATO can nevertheless be expected. The organization may also provide smaller member states with greater access to the military expertise, infrastructure and operational capabilities of the region's larger armed forces, thereby reducing disparities in regional defence capacity. Moreover, it would not be wrong to assume that the burden-sharing among the members would not be equal, since Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, due to their geographical proximity to the Russo-Ukrainian War, puts these countries into a vulnerable position. However, it can be said that after taking the military capacity of each member of the organization aside from Greece, a similar juxtaposition in burden-sharing would be likely to occur anyway since these are the countries with the highest levels of military expenditures and active military personnel.



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Saudi Arabia-Syria Joint Bank Initiative

The joint banking initiative undertaken with Saudi Arabia during Syria's post-war reconstruction process may signal a period in which regional power balances are being reshaped. The groundwork for this initiative was laid during a meeting between the Governor of the Central Bank of Syria, Safwat Raslan, and a delegation from the Saudi Syrian Business Council led by Mohammed Abu Nayan. The parties reached an agreement to establish a joint Saudi Syrian bank, structured as a partnership involving businesspeople and investors from both countries. This step was complemented by strategic protocols covering road, rail, and air transport, signed in Damascus between President Ahmed al-Shara and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Transport, Saleh Al-Jasser. The timing of the initiative is, of course, no coincidence. Momentum gathered following the US lifting of recent terror-related sanctions and Syria's reintegration into the global financial system. In this context, the first symbolic card payment

made by Shara within the country using Visa infrastructure, a move carrying symbolic and diplomatic significance, serves as visual confirmation of Syria's reentry into the international financial architecture. The role of the joint bank is also of strategic importance. As emphasized by Raslan, the Governor of the Central Bank of Syria, the aim is to develop money transfer mechanisms and open direct banking channels between the two countries. This is intended to facilitate fund movements linked to investment projects and accelerate the flow of financing for real estate, tourism, and reconstruction initiatives. In post-war economies, reconstruction financing often faces a confidence gap regarding foreign capital. In this context, the joint bank model can be viewed as an attempt to bridge this confidence gap through an institutional channel by directly linking Riyadh's capital strength to Syria's reconstruction needs. In the first half of 2026, Syria welcomed 3.5 million visitors, more than double the figure from the previous year. As stated by Omar Al-Hosari, head of the Syrian Civil Aviation Authority, the primary objective of these agreements is to reintegrate Syria into the Arab world and its regional neighborhood. Indeed, the fact that the Damascus administration settled its debts to the World Bank in May 2025, with the support of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, demonstrates that this reintegration process begins with the repair of relations with multilateral institutions.



Ultimately, the joint banking venture offers a classic example of economic instruments becoming tools of foreign policy. for Riyadh, an opportunity to expand its regional sphere of influence through financial dependency; for Damascus, a tangible lever to consolidate its international legitimacy.



Russia's Threat Against the UK: Is the Ukraine War Entering a New Stage?

Russia's statement on August 27 that it could target military targets in the United Kingdom once again shows that the war in Ukraine is no longer only between Russia and Ukraine. The main reason for Russia's reaction is Ukraine's use of Storm Shadow long-range missiles provided by the United Kingdom in attacks against Russia. Russia sees the delivery of these weapons to Ukraine as a sign that the United Kingdom is becoming more involved in the war. The most important point here is that Russia's threat is not limited to British military forces in Ukraine. Moscow said that British military targets could also be targeted outside Ukraine.

This statement has brought back the possibility of NATO countries becoming direct targets of the war. However, this does not mean that Russia will immediately attack the United Kingdom. Instead, it can be seen as a strong deterrence message directed at London. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, is determined to continue its support for Ukraine. Despite Russia's threats, the British government says that it supports Ukraine's right to defend itself. France also supports the development of Ukraine's long-range missile capabilities. This situation is increasing tensions between Russia and European countries. This development is also important for NATO. Since the United Kingdom is a NATO member, a possible attack on British military targets could create a serious security problem for the alliance. For this reason, Russia's statement also shows the risks that European countries may face while providing weapons to Ukraine. Overall, Russia's statement against the United Kingdom is increasing the pressure of the Ukraine war on European security. As Western countries send more advanced weapons to Ukraine, Russia's response is also becoming stronger. Therefore, the most important issue in the coming period will be how long European countries will continue their military support for Ukraine and how Russia will respond to this support.



Sweden and Finland's Changing Security Partnership Amid Regional Threats

The security cooperation between Sweden and Finland has become stronger as security concerns in Northern Europe continue to grow. On August 28, Sweden announced that it would send Gripen fighter jets and a warship to Finland to help with the country's territorial surveillance and defence. The support will continue until at least the end of 2026. Sweden may also provide anti-drone systems if needed. This decision shows that the two countries are becoming more closely connected in defence. The decision is mainly linked to Finland's long border with Russia and the security problems created by the war in Ukraine. Finland shares a 1,340-kilometre border with Russia, making developments in the war particularly important for its security. The use of drones has also created new risks for countries in the region. On August 20, Reuters reported that Latvia had identified a drone found in its

airspace as Ukrainian and said that similar incidents had happened in the Baltic region. These incidents show why stronger air surveillance and defence have become more important for Finland. Sweden's support is important because Finland can use its own forces for other security needs while Swedish forces help protect its airspace and territory. The two countries are also now NATO members, which has made their security cooperation more important. Alongside their cooperation within NATO, Sweden and Finland are also strengthening their own military cooperation. This can make it easier for them to respond quickly if security problems increase in the region. The cooperation also shows that Finland's security policy has become more focused on the threat from Russia. On August 25, Reuters reported that Finland's President Alexander Stubb supported Ukraine's use of long-range weapons against targets in Russia. This was criticised by the Kremlin. Finland's support for Ukraine and its closer military cooperation with Sweden show that the country is taking a more active approach to its security after joining NATO. The growing cooperation between Sweden and Finland shows how the security environment in Northern Europe is changing. Finland's border with Russia and the new risks created by drones have made military



cooperation between the two countries more necessary. At the same time, Sweden's decision to support Finland directly shows that regional security is becoming a shared responsibility. The two countries are also working more closely on defence instead of dealing with these threats separately. This could make Sweden and Finland closer military partners even beyond their responsibilities within NATO.



Romania's Growing Role in European Integration Regarding Moldova and Ukraine's Strategic Importance

According to the recent statements made during the meetings between Romanian President Nicușor Dan and Moldovan President Maia Sandu, Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine are expected to further develop their cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, energy, and security. Statements from the Romanian president demonstrate the growing role of Romania as an active agent in the EU Enlargement process regarding the candidacies of Moldova and Ukraine. It can be argued that Romania expects to establish a stronger base for expanding its

political, economic, and strategic cooperation with both Moldova and Ukraine following their potential accession to the EU. Therefore, considering their individual role along with their institutional history as a both EU and NATO member country, Romania would be quite beneficial in the integration processes of Moldova and Ukraine. However, it should be reminded that despite the EU Commission's determination to successfully complete the accession processes of Moldova and Ukraine into the union, without the active involvement of Romania and other regional actors, the EU's efforts to manage these multifaceted accession processes could face significantly larger political and strategic challenges. As one of the countries likely to assume considerable responsibility during both the negotiation and subsequent integration processes, Romania could provide the EU with an important regional assistance capable of facilitating the political, institutional integration of Moldova and Ukraine. Furthermore, Romania's increasing involvement in Moldova and Ukraine should also be considered within the broader context of Eastern European and Black Sea security. As a both NATO and EU member located on the eastern flank of both organizations, Romania holds a particularly significant geopolitical position between the European Union, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Black Sea region. Since the Russo-Ukrainian War has increased the strategic importance of this position, particularly in the



field of security and energy sector, Romania's support and strategic importance becomes a necessary for the EU Commission to undertake such a multifaceted process.



From Civilian Use to Military Use and the Problem of Dual-Use Data

The growing connection between civilian data and military technology shows how mundane information can become a security resource. The Pokémon GO controversy is an example of this problem. Players used the game to scan real-world locations, creating data that helped Niantic develop its mapping technology. Niantic Spatial later partnered with Vantor, a US geospatial intelligence company, to develop technology that can help drones identify their location without GPS. This does not prove that Pokémon GO data was sold to the Pentagon, but it shows how civilian data can become connected to military technology. This issue is becoming more important as militaries increasingly use large datasets to develop AI systems. On August 24, the United Kingdom and Ukraine signed an AI defence partnership based on a Ukrainian

database containing around five million images collected mainly from drones and sensors during the war. The data will be used to improve AI systems that can identify military targets. The case shows how battlefield data can support new defence technologies. On August 26, The New Humanitarian reported that the EU had opened its Horizon Europe research programme to dual-use technologies that can serve both civilian and military purposes. This shows that the connection between civilian research and military technology is also becoming part of government policy. The problem is not limited to data collected directly from battlefields. In May, Reuters reported that commercially available location data had been used to identify and target US military personnel in war zones. Information normally collected for commercial purposes can reveal where people live, work or move. This creates a security risk because people may provide location data without expecting it to be used for warfare. On July 29, Reuters reported that the US Central Command warned that photos and videos shared online by US troops could help Iran assess the results of attacks on American bases. In one case, a video recorded with Meta smart glasses showed where a US service member had taken shelter during an Iranian attack. This shows that even personal devices can produce information that becomes useful for military intelligence. The main problem is the lack of control over how data is used after it is collected.



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A person may use a game, a mobile application or civilian service without knowing that their data could later become useful for military purposes. Once data is shared between companies or institutions, it can be difficult to know who may use it and for what. This creates a difficult balance between developing useful technology and protecting users from possible security risks. The wider concern is therefore not simply the military use of AI or civilian data. It is the growing connection between technologies that were created for civilian purposes and military systems. These examples also show the growing importance of dual-use technologies, which can serve both civilian and military purposes. As this connection becomes stronger, the boundary between civilian and military technology becomes harder to maintain. This could make data protection an increasingly important part of national security, not only personal privacy.