

HELLENIC NATIONAL DEFENCE  
GENERAL STAFF  
STRATEGY AND POLICY BRANCH  
18 NOV 2020

## INTRODUCTORY BRIEFING ON THE HELLENIC DEFENCE POLICY

Ladies and gentlemen,

**(SL 3)** I am Brigadier General Antonios Panidis, and for the next ten minutes, I will present an overview of the Hellenic National Defense Policy, which will cover **(SL 4)** the topics shown on the screen.

### HELLENIC DEFENCE STRUCTURE AND MISSION

**(SL 5)** The Hellenic defense policy, which is constantly adapted to meet today's and future challenges, sets the conditions for safeguarding Greece's integrity and **national** sovereignty and protecting the national vital interests by establishing, maintaining and further promoting security and stability **in our region** and beyond.

**(SL 6)** The National Defence of the country is determined in the framework of a broad institutional, political and military concept. The national defense policy is planned by the Hellenic Government and implemented by the Ministry of National Defence, through the organizational framework that is depicted on the screen.

**(SL 7)** The International Treaties, such as Lausanne Treaty (1923) and Montreux Treaty (1936) on the Straits, Lausanne Peace Treaty (1923) and Paris Peace Treaty (1947), form the Legal Framework which defines the area of responsibility of the Chief of Defense, while any action is taken in consonance with International Law and the inherent right of Self Defense. The Legal Framework also, regulates the level of the Use of Force in peacetime or conflict.

### THE GEOSTRATEGIC POSITION

**(SL 8)** The south eastern part of Europe, including East Mediterranean, possesses a unique geopolitical position in the global equilibrium of power and arguably draws the attention of key geopolitical players, who seek to build up their presence within it.

In the northern part of Greece, the port and the airport of **Thessaloniki**, supported by the equivalent of **Alexandroupolis**, are the main entrances to the major land routes leading to Central Europe and East Europe, providing the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the reception, staging, onward movement and integration of troops moving from south to north and vice versa.

Strategically placed, the island of Crete is key to the strategic control of the area, while Souda bay's military bases and facilities are considered as the spearhead for national and allied operations, training and support.

## SECURITY CHALLENGES

**(SL 9)** On this slide you can see the so called “Southeast Instability Arc”.

It is evident that Greece, located well within this arc, is a pillar **of stability** for the whole area.

**(SL 10)** The key issues of concern related to this Instability Arc are shown on the screen.

**(SL 11)** Regarding irregular migration, it constitutes a longstanding challenge for Greece and a potential asymmetric threat for its national as well as for the regional security.

**(SL 12)** The routes as well as the statistics regarding the last eleven years of the migration crisis, are shown on the screen.

Recently, Greece became a target of an organized attempt to have its land and sea borders violated by mass illegal migration movements but withstood the onslaught with a high degree of success. This mass movement of people, that embodies elements of hybrid threat against an Ally, was coordinated by Turkey with the sole purpose to threaten our security and undermine our country’s resilience and social cohesion.

**(SL 13)** The greatest concern for Greece, regarding the security in the area, is Turkey’s long standing provocative behavior regardless of political party in power. More specifically, after WW II, Turkey started to implement the policy of constantly increasing contentions and claims, including among others unjustifiable sovereignty issues (**Αναμονή 3’**)

**(SL 14)** The last seven years the situation is as shown on the screen. Every day we experience AIR INCIDENTS over the Aegean Sea with Air Traffic Regulations Infringements, Hellenic Airspace Violations, Hellenic Territory Over-Flights, Dog Fights, as well as MARITIME INCIDENTS with Non-Innocent Passages (Territorial Water Violations) challenging Greek sovereignty over Greek Aegean islands.

**(SL 15)** But what strikes us most is their depiction of what they call Mavi Vatan i.e. “The Blue Homeland”, which clearly contains our islands and our territorial seas.

Turkey, in the effort to materialize the geopolitical concept of “The Blue Homeland”, signed a MoU with Libya about the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the Med Sea. Turkish illegal claims are against the UNCLOS convention of the sea and against the interests of many countries in the basin of Mediterranean Sea.

**(SL 16)** As you already know, on July 21<sup>st</sup>, Turkey announced its’ intentions to conduct seismic surveys, in an area part of which fell within Greek Continental Shelf. Using as an excuse the recent Greece-Egypt agreement, Turkey extended consecutively the conduct of illegal seismic surveys to areas lying south of Megisti island complex and east of Rhodes, Kasos and Karpathos islands. Regrettably, this pattern of Turkish provocative behavior flagrantly violating Greece’s sovereign rights, is a recurring phenomenon and constitutes major escalation and direct threat against peace and security in the area.

**(SL 17)** In this slide you can see an extrapolation to the future, as it was envisioned by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

## STRATEGY IMPEMENTATION

**(SL 18)** Taking the above into consideration, Hellenic National Defense General Staff effectively applies and implements the military strategy, based on three major and supplementary pillars:

- The National pillar,
- The European Union pillar, and
- The NATO pillar.

**(SL 19)** Cooperation through International Organizations and Alliances, as well as through Regional Relationships remains the key tool for successful deliverables and a stable global environment.

**(SL 20)** Greece as a member state of the European Union and the United Nations, contributes to a great number of operations, as shown on the screen.

**(SL 21)** Specifically, Greece contributes with assets and personnel to EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, a military Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Operation deployed in the Mediterranean Sea that aims at contributing to achieve peace and stability in Libya.

The primary task of the Operation is the implementation of the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council. By contributing to stemming the flow of weapons into Libya, the Operation will help create the conditions for a permanent ceasefire in Libya.

As secondary tasks, the Operation:

- Contributes to the implementation of UN measures to prevent the illicit export of petroleum from Libya through monitoring and surveillance activities;
- Provides capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in law enforcement tasks at sea;
- Contributes to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks.

**(SL 22)** In addition, Greece as a NATO member participates in respective Allied operations, missions and standing forces, as depicted on the screen.

**(SL 23)** As we become more extrovert.

We fully support North Macedonia on the way for full integration in NATO. We provide Air policing in bilateral framework.

One Frigate escorted Charles de Gaulle Task Group during operations in East Med.

We are working closely with Saudi Arabia for the deployment and integration of one PATRIOT battery to the Saudi IAMD.

**(SL 24)** Towards this direction, the **East Med Quad Cooperation Initiative** between **France-Italy-Greece-Cyprus** was launched as a non-binding agreement with a view to enhancing their naval presence at East Mediterranean.

It is not an operation and its main aim is to protect the freedom of navigation in the area and implement the International Law.

The area Z3 was included and other countries in the area that share the same values with the four participating countries.

**(SL 25)** In the context of Regional Relationships, apart from the cooperation with the countries that participate in the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Greece has launched significant initiatives on a bilateral, trilateral and multilateral basis.

Moreover, in the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, the Navies of Greece, Italy, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia are working together to promote interoperability through the Adriatic - Ionian initiative, known as “ADRION”.

**(SL 26)** Finally, the nine established multinational entities located in our country, offer opportunities for enhancing the military cooperation and stability in the region.

In addition, taking into consideration the existing NATO Missile Firing Installation’s capabilities and experience, Hellenic National Defense General Staff has taken the initiative to establish a NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defense Centre of Excellence, in Crete.

#### **GREECE – US RELATIONS (SL 27)**

**(SL 28)** Besides NATO, the bilateral cooperation with the US has been significantly enhanced during the last years under the framework of:

The Strategic Dialogue, inaugurated in 2018, in Washington D.C. The Strategic Dialogue covers issues pertaining to the sectors of regional co-operation, defence and security, law enforcement and counter-terrorism, trade and investment, energy, and people-to-people contacts.

The second Strategic Dialogue was held in Athens, last October. The U.S. Department of Defence and our Ministry of National Defence have agreed on the “Roadmap for Cooperation”, which sets the wider framework of our bilateral cooperation in Defence and Security, and gives us the opportunity to plan and explore new areas of cooperation.

Besides the strategic Dialogue, our countries have signed a series of bilateral agreements concerning different aspects of our cooperation.

The most important of them all is the Mutual Defence Cooperation Agreement (MDCA), first signed in 1990. The amendment of the Annex of the MDCA, last October (2019), marks an important milestone in our bilateral cooperation as it sets the framework for increased interactions and opportunities of cooperation, including basing and rotational forces activities.

The new agreement provides for the use, by the US military, of new locations in Greece, namely, Larissa Air Base, Stefanovikeio Army Aviation base, Alexandroupolis Port, and Non-contiguous support facilities within Souda Naval Base Marathi area.

Besides the increased opportunities for cooperation, the amendment of the MDCA allows for significant US investments, in infrastructure upgrades, that will support the US forces operating in the area.

**(SL 29)** The number of US aircrafts and ships visiting Greece is a useful statistic that highlights the dynamic of our bilateral cooperation.

Since 2015, eleven thousand five hundred and eighty four (11.584) US Aircrafts have landed in Souda airport. Moreover, seven hundred and forty (740) entries of USN Ships were recorded entering our territorial waters, and/or visiting several ports in Greece.

**(SL 30)** We are also delighted to host in Souda, Crete, a U.S. Navy Special Boat Team, assigned to Naval special Warfare Command.

**(SL 31)** The deployment of 101st Airborne Division of U.S. Army through Alexandroupolis port and airport and Thessaloniki airport is one more proof that our bilateral relation is at its best point ever.

The Hellenic Armed Forces provided Host Nation Support in the Reception Staging and Onward Movement operations. I would like to point out that the 101st AD deployment, would not be possible without the recent amendment of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Our cooperation in the port of Alexandroupolis, and other areas in Greece, is of significant importance for NATO as it will strengthen the military mobility to the North and will contribute to the security and defence of Europe.

**(SL 32)** The 101st CAB will be deployed in Stefanovikeio from the 1st of October until the 31st of March 2021, for winter training, due to favorable weather conditions in the area.

The US personnel will be accommodated in the barracks of Camp Georgoulas in Volos. This is the third time that this deployment is happening, and it's another brilliant opportunity for our Armed Forces to train together and build joint expertise.

**(SL 33)** The newest development which highlights our strategic military cooperation is the USS HERSHEL “WOODY” WILLIAMS change of homeport from Norfolk to Souda, Crete.

We gladly accepted the U.S. proposal to host the ship in Greece and we look forward to any training opportunities with our Armed Forces.

**(SL 34)** The cooperation between U.S. and Hellenic Armed Forces is multifaceted.

We enjoy a frequent exchange of high-level visits, and staff talks at the Joint and Navy-to-Navy level are scheduled annually.

Besides personnel training activities in Greece and the United States, we are currently in the process of signing MOU’s to allow for the posting of Greek liaison officers in US COMMANDS.

**(SL 35)** We take advantage of every available opportunity for our forces to train together and increase their interoperability. Therefore, the opportunities for operational training year-round are many, both in bilateral and multilateral level.

Some notable examples of operational training are shown in the slide.

**(SL 36)** Beside the exercises, we try to integrate Hellenic navy units into Carrier Strike Groups whenever possible, even if it’s only for a brief period of time. This is not an easy task but we can do it and this says a lot about the interoperability of our units with the US Navy.

As you may be aware, the Hellenic Navy and Air Force participated in exercises with the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (CSG 10), from July 24 to 27, 2020.

#### **GREECE – ISRAEL RELATIONS (SL 37)**

**(SL 38)** The bilateral military cooperation between Greece and Israel was initiated in December of 1994 and has been sealed with the Agreement of Cooperation between the respective Ministries of Defence. Since then, 8 more Agreements were signed providing a solid basis to materialize demanding and of high operational value activities.

**(SL 39)** In addition numerous of operational aspects are covered through the annual military cooperation programs agreed between the two Armed Forces, which include series of co-trainings, exercises, meetings, dialogues with the most important of them as shown on the screen.

**(SL 40)** At this point the briefing is concluded and I would like to thank you for your attention.