



## Greece Modernises its Armed Forces and Strengthens its International Defence and Security Collaboration

Let me start by saying that conditions in the wider geopolitical environment are changing, requiring planning and flexibility to meet the demands of the circumstances. I would like also to point that the economic crisis left the Greek Armed Forces without reinforcement in major equipment for at least 10 years. The maintenance of the existing equipment was respectively problematic and for those reasons our government took immediate actions towards

those directions. The initial measure was an increase in the Budget of the Ministry of National Defense from a total of 3.35 billion for Defense in 2020, to 5.44 billion for 2021 and to 6.39 billion for 2022. These increases resulted mainly due to the front-loading payments for contracts for the acquisition of the three «Belharra» Frigates and also the 24 Rafale Fighters, which we started receiving in record time from the signing of the contract.

We are also working constantly to reorganize the structure of the Armed Forces, with an emphasis on increasing the availability of manpower. Also the acquisition of new weapon systems, that overall upgrade the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces, it's not based on impressions, but in the best value for money basis, fitted exclusively to our operational needs and planning.

Modernization programs for the existing and still with great operational value, also started from 2020, with the most emblematic been the F-16 Upgrade Programs (VIPER's and Blk 50+ ADV), for a total of 121 Fighters (83 + 38). We also achieved to conclude major Follow-On Support agreements, for

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the majority of our equipment and our weapons inventory (such as Mirage 2000-5, SCALP missiles etc.).

We are implementing a series of initiatives to strengthen the Armed Forces Personnel. In 2021, we proceeded to recruit approximately 2,600 conscripts per year for the next five years. Our ultimate goal is to achieve the goal of strengthening Human Resources by 15 thousand people in a five-year horizon, contributing to the age renewal and quality upgrade of the staff. We are next to the Military personnel of the Armed Forces with various ways and actions.

At the same time, we secured credits that concern, among other things, the granting of special compensation for night work to military personnel. We have resolved the matter concerning the salary progression of EMTs and OBAs in order to harmonize it with the service and grading progression provided for by law 4609/2019. We are also settling the outstanding issue concerning the allowance of special working conditions for the crews of warships on mission, while the Personnel Welfare Bill is under consultation.

The construction of the International Flight Training Center in Kalamata is progressing, a project that strengthens the strategic relationship between Greece and Israel, which has been developing continuously, in several domains, in recent years, while the issue of the Continuous Support of the C-27s has also been resolved.

Our government also continuously looks for the future of our Armed Forces. The imminent F-35 acquisition program is one of the greatest military projects that took place in the last 40 years. In order for us to begin the delivery of the first four Fighters in 2028, the USG will of course have to respond to the relevant proposal of the Air Force, to settle some technical details that could also mean the involvement of the domestic defense industry in the program.

At the same time, the last two «Vosper» type Missile Patrol Boats were finished to strengthen the Greek Navy, the construction of the new FDI HN "Belharra" Frigates is progressing and the delivery of the first three ROMEO type anti-submarine helicopters is underway within 2023. For the first time in a long time period, thanks to our efforts and consistency, the military power balance between Greece and Turkey begins to change in favor of the Greek side.

However, as it happened with the Frigate Program, we are still waiting for the best offer and for the Corvette Program. Here there is an informal competition between the two «finalists», the French and the Italian side. We are looking continuously primarily to meet needs of the Navy as it defines them. We discussed the French proposal with the French Minister of Defense. And with my Italian counterpart there is an improved Italian proposal. Both proposals as they currently stand are roughly equivalent and attractive. In the final decision, the delivery schedule will be taken into account, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the possibility of building ships in a Greek shipyard. Both companies have made their own special proposal regarding the construction in Greek shipyards and the decision will be decided in the details. At this moment in any case the involvement of the Domestic Defense Industry in the construction of the Corvettes is non-negotiable not only through the shipyards but also through other defense industry companies.

At the domain of defense diplomacy, after the strategic agreement with France and the amendment of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement with the USA, we must underline the agreement we concluded with Egypt on Search and Rescue and which delimits the Areas of Responsibility, and therefore of our own maritime zones.

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