

Country Report of Tunisia

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Tunisia, where we visited for five days in July 2014, plays an important role in the shaping of the politics in the Middle East. The destiny of the country, which constitutes one of the northernmost points of the African Continent landing vertical to Europe, and is riparian to Italy through the Mediterranean, was not different than many Middle East countries for a long time.

The country that remained as a French colony for a long time, gained its independence but lost it to the monarchy, differs from the neighbouring countries as it is the starting point of the Arab awakening. Another point differing Tunisia from the other Arab countries is that in Tunisia, radical Islam is held down under the single party system and women are bestowed with extensive rights. The vast majority of the country is Arabs and Muslims. The relations between Turkey and Tunisia that doesn't undergo any economic difficulty because of its natural energy resources, has been positively progressing for a long time. While the relations

between Tunisia and Turkey, which approached positively to the process called the Arab Spring, increases; the Undersecretary for Defence Industries is signing great successes. Also, the efforts of our Military Attaché in the country in question attract attention.

Issues Regarding Defence Research and Armament Activities

Certified Modernization Activities and Their Implementation; Within the scope of the activities of BMC Company;

a) 20 units of Kirpi vehicles were delivered; a firm sales contract was signed for another 20 units for the next period; delivery of the vehicles is expected.

b) It is stated that the mentioned Kirpi vehicles are used against the terrorists on the Chambi Mountain, the tests for two 6x6 10-ton BMC-380-26-P and one 4x4 2,5-ton BMC-Efe type tactical wheeled vehicles, which were brought to Tunisia on 3 May 2014 and started to be tested when the BMC representatives came on 7 May 2014; the tests will continue for about two months; in

this respect the negotiations with the Ministry of Defence of Tunisia continue.

Within the scope of the activities of ASELSAN Company;

(a) It is heard that a final sales contract was signed for Piton and Boga thermal weapon sights (120 units), Oncu and Gozcu manually portable surveillance systems (202 units) (the contract will apply after the approval of the defence commission of Tunisia), the amount of the subject sale is around 4,5 million US Dollars according to the information received from the company representatives;

(b) the negotiations within the scope of the renovation project for the background of wired and radio warfare systems continue.

Modernization Activities in the Assessment Phase;

The cooperation issues in the field of defence industry in accordance with the courses of action agreed by Tunisia and Turkey in the 18th Military Joint Commission Meeting held between 28 April-1 May 2014 are followed. Within this scope;

(a) it is expected that the

negotiation and cooperation between ARGUS Company and the Ministry of Defence of Tunisia regarding the sale and production of steel vests, steel helmets and bulletproof shield continue,

(b) M&S BROSS Company's studies for establishing a ballistic laboratory and the cooperation continue,

(c) the negotiations and cooperation between METEKSAN Defence Company and the Tunisian Naval Forces regarding the sales of damage control simulator and marine radar have begun,

(d) a response is expected from the Turkish Naval Forces and Ministry of National Defence regarding the delivery of personnel individual equipment for commandos and underwater/surface special forces in the Tunisian Naval Forces,

(e) the studies regarding the promotion of the UAVs and cooperation in this field between TAI and Ministry of National Defence of Tunisia continue.

Annual Defence Expenditure; The amount assigned for the Ministry of Defence of Tunisia

from the 2014 budget increased about 30 percent compared to the previous year and reached to 1.65 billion dinars (about 800 million Euros). 1200 million dinars from the budget in question were projected for current expenditures; and 450 million dinars for modernization needs. It is expected that the Ministry of Defence of Tunisia may provide opportunities for transferring more resources to defence industry projects than the last year, and the resources will be transferred especially to security projects.

Supply Mechanism;
The imports are generally supplied by grants. It is stated that Tunisia started to focus its attention to joint venture with Turkey and other countries in the field of defence industry.

Issues of Basic/Applied Research and Technological Developments

Data on the Basic Research Institutions/Organizations;
(1) The number of the Public Universities in Tunisia is 16. The total number of the higher education institutions is 193. There are 24 research institutes, 160 laboratories, 638 research units in the country. The Ministry of Education of Tunisia gets the largest share from the budget

compared to other ministries. In 2012 3,217 billion dinars and in 2013 3,507 billion dinars (13,5 percent of the budget) were assigned for the ministry of education. The Tunisian universities could not even rank one of the top hundred in Africa. The best Tunisian university ranked 6496th in terms of scientific publication in the Web of Science ranking.

(2) In 2013, a 1,339 billion dinar (around 650 million Euros, 5% of the budget) resource amount was assigned to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Tunisia.

(3) According to the EU Commission's report, 4 thousandths of the active labour force in Tunisia is consisted of researchers. This ratio is 1 thousandth in Turkey and 7 thousandths in France.

(4) The first techno park of Tunisia was established in 2001. It is planned that nine more techno parks to be established in the future. There are 15 cyber parks carrying out R&D studies in the field of informatics. International capital and private sector share in the scientific researches doesn't exceed 35 per cent. These activities are to a great extend carried out by public support.

Basic/Applied Research and Development Activities within the Scope of Defence Technologies and Their Implementations in the Field of Military Operations;

It aims at restructuring the armed forces. It is discussed that Tunisia focused or will focus especially on the border security project studies in order to get the Algeria-Tunisia-Libya border under control and prevent illegal migrations. It is known that the facilities and capabilities regarding R&D and technology are insufficient.

Issues on the Technology Management and Strategy of the Country;
Tunisia is known to use its technological development for increasing the life quality of its people as high as possible, direct its choices to this way. Generally it keeps up with international developments; however it is observed that Tunisia also follows the principle of directing its options to economic growth due to lack of resources and that the external threat level does not affect the daily life. In order to take precautions against the negative conditions regarding the public peace and security recently, it is expected to focus on the projects and studies regarding especially the border security and renovation of the materials and equipment of the security forces.

Issues Regarding the Defence Industry Capabilities

Capabilities of the Defence Industry Companies;
The private sector operates in this field. It is known that they make effort for research and development in relation to joint production with other countries.

Foreign Export/Import Status of the Companies and Foreign Relations;
Commercial relations with French, USA and Germany are developed. It is known to take steps to develop its commercial relations with Turkey in recent years. It is stated that Turkey's export level to Tunisia in 2013 reached to 1 billion. Moreover, many Turkish municipality and company representatives are recently observed visiting Tunisia to see the trade potential onsite.

Personnel and Resource Status;
Education level of the personnel and the number of qualified personnel is high. However, 18,4 percent of the population are unemployed. Recently, there are some evaluations regarding that the education quality has decreased..

Foresight and Visions;
Tunisia is expected to plan purchasing UAVs, target detection radars/thermal cameras, communication systems and attack helicopters because of the acts of terrorism in the rural areas in recent years. 