

# OVERSEAS MILITARY PRESENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

Prof. Dr. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN

Doç. Dr. Fahri ERENEL

Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU

03 December 2020 | DIPAM YouTube Channel

## Panel Notes

An online panel was held by DIPAM on 03.12.2020 (Thursday) at 19.00 about “Overseas Military Presence and Its Impact on Foreign Policy”. The panel hosted DIPAM Advisory Board Member Prof. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN, Chairman of

EPAM and GÜVSAM in Işinye University Brig. Gen. (R) Assoc. Prof. Fahri ERENEL and Istanbul Aydın University Lecturer Brig. Gen. (R) Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU, moderated by DIPAM Chairman Tolga SAKMAN.

Moderator Tolga SAKMAN introduced the guests, listed the issues that will be discussed in the panel and indicated that they will be discussing the legal framework for establishing military bases and making military deployments overseas and in which conditions and reasons this could be achieved. He stated that military presence overseas will be discussed based on instances and gave the floor to the guests.

Prof. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN started his speech by elaborating on the legal infrastructure of military presence abroad and reminded that the law of the guest country is being taken into account which is a fundamental rule since the Roman Law. He underlined that in both cases of war or peace, the rules of the foreign state whose military existence is accepted within the country will be valid. He drew attention to the Montevideo Convention, trying to clarify the legal conditions of military interventions and the right of sovereign states to use military force in their own territories, and that others should not. He reminded that the court found Finland right in the problem between Russia and Finland.

He argued that a state's military intervention in another state may take place for the purpose of helping that state. He drew attention to the Article 51 of the UN Charter which enables the UN peacekeeping operations and stated that this situation is based on the right of self-defense and collective security in accordance with the Article 51. In such cases, he stated the importance of whether or not there was any infringement of the sovereignty of the receiving state and how the forces sent by the foreign state would be agreed upon this issue. Subsequently, he emphasized

the importance of how the rules of engagement will be and how they will be determined. He stated that legally this situation was not defined as an occupation and therefore the rules of engagement applied by the law should be based on defense. However, he emphasized the importance of whether there is a "Host-Nation" situation between the sending state and the receiving state, and drew attention to the need to make a "receiving state agreement" in the framework of law. He stated that there were exceptions to this situation and he cited the Soviet intervention in Hungary as an example. He said that the essential rule is that when the receiving state is in a difficult situation and when it calls foreign forces' intervention, Article 51 of the UN steps in, and drew attention to the UN peacekeeping force. He stated that currently the main theme of the UN's peacekeeping activities is to focus on rebuilding the deteriorated peace and stability in a short time. Speaking about the role and responsibilities of the UN in conflict zones, he stated that he closely observed both humanitarian activities and developments in the region. In order to exemplify the UN's such activities, he gave various examples around the world as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He added the important roles Turkey has undertaken for UN and NATO peacekeeping as in the cases of Bosnia, Kosovo and Somalia.

Assoc. Prof. Fahri ERNEL first emphasized the importance of diplomacy in such processes and drew attention to the role of contemporary diplomacy as it was in the past. Based on the diversification of diplomacy, he underlined the increasing significance of defense diplomacy and stated that it is actively used by decision makers. He stated that defense diplomacy

has become an important element of soft power. He summarized the current situation of Turkey in terms of peacekeeping with Atatürk's sentence "Peace at home, peace abroad".

He stated that the legality of the military presence to be sent abroad must be ensured. And indicated that all of Turkey's foreign operations so far were held according to both national and international laws. He stated that Turkey's overseas operations were generally in accordance with the UN, East Timor and NATO Missions and with bilateral agreements with different countries, and named instances for such issues. He argued that Turkey's presence in Azerbaijan based on bilateral agreements, in Iraq and Syria as peacekeeper due to national rights and interests, in Cyprus as a guarantor must be hand in hand with foreign policy and strategy. He added that Both Turkey, the UN and NATO have a common mission and that they are a significant and determinant power in conflict zones. He also underlined that this discourse was not only voiced by them, but also by the officials of the UN and NATO with whom he worked. He stated that such activities should be framed under the name of defense diplomacy.

Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU stated that having military assets abroad has become a tool directly related to the national interests of the countries. He stated that while countries form their own policies in the geopolitical power struggle, one of the most important tools is that they act in direct proportion to the troops they keep outside the country. He stated that USA has around 800 bases overseas and a budget of 100 billion dollars was spent for this. He highlighted there are US soldiers in approximately 180 countries by giving

examples from US bases and number of soldiers deployed around the world. He stated that USA attaches particular importance to the Middle East and elaborated on its presence in the Middle East. He additionally asserted that the US is trying to control and direct its military power in line with its own national interests.

Emphasizing the importance of hard power, he talked about its effect on soft power and stated that the US is moving in this direction and therefore it is a global power. He quoted that Russia's annual defense budget was at most 66 billion dollars as of 2019, although the US budget spent only on military assets abroad was 100 billion dollars. By making such a comparison, he claimed that this situation will continue in the name of protecting global power. He indicated that the Article 51 of the UN, which was mentioned by other speakers, was not taken into consideration by the US and other global powers. In particular, he claimed that the principle of "what belongs to me belongs to me, what belongs to you is open to negotiation" had been applied in foreign policy by the US and other powers is currently valid. In terms of setting an example for this thesis, he gave the example that the US decision to recognize Israel's capital as Jerusalem did not comply with any UN and NATO resolutions. Likewise, he added that the same situation is valid for the Golan Heights.

He gave examples of Turkish military presence under UN missions and underscored that Turkey is keeping hard power for its national interests. Likewise, he evaluated the situation in Cyprus and Azerbaijan in the same way.

He drew attention to Russia's increasing military presence abroad by expressing that Russia developed a US-style policy and this situation became more evident especially during Putin's period. He stated that the US was trying to increase his military presence abroad with the allies under the umbrella of NATO against Russia and China, and gave the coalition forces in Syria as an example which was also the case in the Gulf. He claimed that NATO many times did not abide Article 51 of the UN Charter and defined this situation simply as a show. Emphasizing the importance of the defense budget in all these processes, he stated that the US will allocate approximately 780 billion dollars for defense budget in 2021 and stated that all NATO members have increased their defense budgets. On the other hand, he mentioned that countries such as Russia, China and India have a much lower defense budget than the US; China with approximately 250 billion dollars and Russia with 65 billion dollars. He pointed out that, despite the overwhelming difference of US defense budget compared to Russia, Russia was able to establish a balance of power with the US in Syria and Libya. Likewise, he cited Saudi Arabia as an example and asserted that it has a defense budget of approximately 62 billion dollars. So, although Saudi Arabia has the same defense budget as Russia, it has failed in Yemen and cannot even provide its own security and the security of the region according to Dr. BABÜROĞLU. Based on this, he claimed that defense budget and technology are essential, but having educated populations and mentality is more important. He assessed Turkey's defense budget and highlighted TAF's activities from past to present and its significance. He argued that proxy wars via terrorist organizations have become

common and will even increase more with an expected parallel increase in defense budgets. He asserted that countries like Turkey can't preserve its own national interests without sustaining military presence abroad and he announced Turkey's military presence in geographies such as Syria, Iraq and Libya as indispensable.

Stating that the military presence overseas is the most important tool of diplomacy, he also touched on the cost and reminded that everything is interconnected.

Moderator Tolga SAKMAN asked Prof. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN the main purpose of the countries which contributed to and sent troops for the UN's protection and establishment of peace operations, and questioned the intentions of these countries. Then, he asked about the reflections on the foreign policies of the countries involved in the process and the pressure on them.

Prof. Dr. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN explained that the global and regional powers act for their own interests and stated that the participating countries also seek their own interests. He especially emphasized the importance of showing the countries' flag. He stated that national and international law was not applied in many cases and named some past massacres as an example. He pointed out that despite these massacres, no trial was made against the perpetrators. To emphasize the importance of soft power as well as hard power, he reminded the relations between the Vatican and the USSR in the Stalin period. He mentioned Russian Wagner Group as an example for mercenaries which sprouted recently and added that the state which sent the mercenaries were not put on trial.

Moreover, he argued that the state which sends troops became acquainted with the local geography and population which may be seen as a crucial aspect. He underscored that it may greatly contribute to war-planning and to psychological warfare capabilities of the country for the following years.

While emphasizing international legitimacy in maintaining peace, he also criticized the absence of a military branch of the UN. Highlighting the importance of spreading the culture of conflict-prevention and having a peacekeeping culture in conflict zones, Prof. CAŞIN listed the primary duties of the actors involved in the peace process.

Moderator Tolga SAKMAN directed Assoc. Prof. Fahri ERNEL the question about the sales of defense industry products and to what extent this trade affects the relations between countries.

Assoc. Prof. Fahri ERNEL listed the areas of usage of Turkish defense products which holds a significant share in the market and are used in military exercises and trainings abroad. He said that the weapons used in military operations gave a new perspective to the operation and added that this situation was expressed by the US-based Washington Post newspaper. He mentioned that he believes the defense industry is an important instrument in foreign policy, is a significant element of national power and emphasized its prominence for defense diplomacy. He claimed that especially weapons of Turkish origin, the ones used by the TAF have become more popular in the international market. He talked about the trust in the weapons that the TAF finds successful and uses it, and emphasized the decisive role of the TAF's satisfaction from the weapons and its importance in sales.

Moderator Tolga SAKMAN claimed that even in the post-Gulf Crisis context and the current tense political climate, many countries with military bases in Qatar do not have any difficulties in their relations with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, on the contrary, some of them are establishing closer relations for a while. And he asked Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU despite the tense relations between Qatar and the UAE and Saudi Arabia, how bases in Qatar were used.

Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU argued that 1/3 of Qatar's territory was occupied by a US base. He underlined that there were 8 to 13 thousand US soldiers during this year. He also stated that the US has various military presence in other Gulf countries. He reminded that a Turkish base (Combined Joint Force Command) was present in Qatar thanks to the bilateral relations; but also added that it was too small compared to the US base. Nevertheless, he finds Turkish flag's presence in Qatar extremely significant in terms of military trainings and the export of defense industry commodities. He reminded that the economic burden of the military presence of the US in the Gulf countries for the budget is quite modest because all the expenses of these bases were covered by the hosts and in this way, the US is able to both export arms to these countries and conduct military exercises. Dr. BABÜROĞLU reminds us these assumptions were based on his professional experience in the region.

Finally, this military presence which is about to reach its climax is likely to stagnate. However, according to Dr. BABÜROĞLU what is important is the ability to reflect the gains which have peaked thanks to military power, by using effective soft power.



DİPLOMATİK İLİŞKİLER ve POLİTİK ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ  
CENTER for DIPLOMATIC AFFAIRS and POLITICAL STUDIES

+90 216 310 30 40    info@dipam.org  
+90 216 310 30 50    www.dipam.org  
Murat Reis Mahallesi Gazi Caddesi No:69  
Üsküdar/İstanbul

#### ABOUT DISCUSSANTS

**Brig. Gen. (R) Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fahri ERENEL** successfully completed the department of economics in 1980 and graduated from the Military Academy as an Infantry Officer and from the Military Academy in 1991 as a Staff Officer. He graduated from the Armed Forces Academy in 1993. In 1996, he received training in the planning and implementation of Peace Force Operations in the USA. He completed his master's degree in Education Management and Supervision at Beykent University in 2003, in Occupational Health and Safety at Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2017, his PhD in Human Resources Management at Istanbul University in 2006, and his BA in Sociology at Istanbul University in 2018. Between 1980 and 2010, he served at various levels of the Turkish Armed Forces. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 2005. Approximately 8 years (Şırnak, Hakkari, Ağrı and Tunceli), he worked as a practitioner and planner in the fight against terrorism. He served on the front line in Cyprus for 2 years. He took part in the planning studies for the security strategy of Azerbaijan and gave training to Azerbaijani officers in Azerbaijan. He took part in border security studies, especially in system and material procurement and contract management. He took part in public procurement legislation studies and Planning-Programming and Budgeting processes. He received training on search and rescue activities at the AKUT Search and Rescue Association and performed applications. He is a class B occupational safety expert. He has many works in the field of Occupational Health and Safety. In 2017, he became Associate Professor in Management and Strategy. He has been teaching Defense Resources Planning and Management and Security and Strategy for 10 years at the National Defense University Atatürk Strategic Research Institute.

**Brig. Gen. (R) Dr. Naim BABÜROĞLU** graduated from Kuleli Military High School in 1977 and from the Military Academy in 1981. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1992 and the Armed Forces Academy in 1995.

After graduating from the 1992 KHA as a staff captain, he served in the Hakkari Mountain and Commando Brigade Command. Later, he continued his duties as a lecturer and Plan officer at the Military Academy. He graduated from the Armed Forces Academy in 1995. In 1996-1997, he served as the United Nations military observer officer in Kuwait and Iraq representing the Turkish armed forces.

Naim Babüroğlu worked at the General Staff Headquarters between 2001-2004. In 2004-2006, he served as the Van Border regiment commander responsible for the approximately 300 km border between Iğdır and Yüksekova. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 2006 and was appointed as the Commander of Manisa 1st Infantry Training Brigade between 2006-2009. Between 2009-2011, he served as the Deputy Chief of the Operations Staff of the Aegean Army and the Headquarters Officer at the General Staff.

In 1996-1997, he served as a Military Observer at the United Nations Observer Mission in Kuwait and Iraq. Between 1998-2001, he served as a Force Plan officer at NATO Headquarters in Mons-Belgium. He retired in 2011 while holding the rank of Brigadier General. He completed his Master's Degree in Human Relations at the University of Oklahoma, USA, and a PhD in History from Necmettin Erbakan University.

**Prof. Dr. Mesut Hakkı CAŞIN**, is Member of the Law Faculty of Yeditepe University in Istanbul

Member of the Turkish Presidential Security and Foreign Policy Board. In addition, he teaches in international law and international relations disciplines at some universities, especially National Defense University.

He continued his education with American Constitutional Law at Texas San Antonio College and completed his (PhD in 1994) on "International Security Strategies and Disarmament" at Istanbul University Faculty of Political Sciences.