# Turkey's Evolving Defence Industry: Advancements in Drones and Fighter Jets



\*\*Turkey’s advancement in defense technology manifests through an array of notable unmanned and manned aerial assets. Noteworthy projects include Baykar’s Bayraktar TB-2, Kizilelma, Akinci, and Turkish Aerospace Industries’ Anka-3. These advanced drones feature sixth-generation tactical military aviation capabilities by operating within the loyal wingman concept.

The manned fighter jet, Kaan, formerly known as Milli Muharip Uçak, showcases Turkey's evolving prowess in the defense sector. Conducting its maiden flight in February 2024, the Kaan highlights both advancements and dependencies, such as its reliance on F-110 engines, similar to F-16 fighter jets.

Turkey’s strategic collaborations are pivotal. The Bayraktar TB-2 has played significant roles in conflicts such as the Nagorno-Karabakh War and Ukraine's defense against Russia, fostering military ties and joint manufacturing with Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Turkey's drone capabilities have attracted deals in NATO and non-NATO countries, including Poland and Romania.

In terms of high-end drones, the Akinci high-altitude long-endurance drone, fitted with advanced weapon systems, exemplifies Turkey's expanding market influence. Cooperation deals, like with Saudi Arabian Military Industries and the UAE's Edge Group, reflect significant steps toward localized production and international collaboration.

The geopolitical landscape sees Turkey's air power projects, including drones and the Kaan fighter jet, as balancing forces against global competitors. The Kaan, although not directly competing with the F-35, aims to be an attractive alternative in markets such as Pakistan and Gulf nations, further intensifying military export competition.

Turkey’s defense industry trajectory underscores a mix of substantial successes and challenges, particularly in engines and high-end configurations. The ongoing development in both unmanned and manned sectors will shape Turkey’s defense and geopolitical strategies in the near future.\*\*