

Alliance of France and Greek states demonstrates first results

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On 18.02.2024 it became known, that France, Greece, and Cyprus at a meeting of the EU Council's Political and Security Committee blocked the financing of Turkish-made *Bayraktar* UAVs and artillery shells for the needs of Ukraine.

In relation to this, some Western commentators have suggested that France has no interest in competing in the arms market, while Greece does not want to spend its taxpayers' money for fueling the Turkish military-industrial complex.

These assumptions seem quite credible.

It is known that France is one of the main suppliers of artillery shells of various calibers to Ukraine. Now, almost all French ammunition production lines are operating at their maximum capacity. Thus, it is undesirable for Paris to share its profits from the supply of shells with anyone else, moreover, since the Fifth Republic is one of the main financial donors of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. In mid-February 2024, president Macron signed a decree on providing Kiev with another tranche of €3 billion for military needs. This action caused a storm of protest among the opposition, which stated that it was highly irrational to “grant” Ukraine such amount; while the French Republic Government is unable to “scrape together” €150 million to subsidize the protesting French farmers.

However, Macron's decision can hardly be called irrational in the context of the French global political and economic interests. It is obvious that Ukraine will receive the promised €3 billion in exchange for the obligation to spend it on French orders. Thus, the money will remain and will be invested on the ground, giving a new impetus to the development of the local military-industrial complex. At the same time, Paris will also strengthen its political weight and image as one of the main financial sponsors of the anti-Russian front.

However, in addition to the listed political and economic motives, the blocking of the Turkish arms deal has another important component for France and, particularly, the Greek states. The joint veto at the meeting of the EU Profile Committee “materialized” the forecasts of some experts that a new “intra-bloc” alliance is being formed within NATO, and its main purpose is, first of all, to contain Turkey's ambitious policy and aspirations for hegemony in the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, a qualitatively new level of military-political interaction between France, on the one hand, and Greece and Cyprus, on the other, which has been discussed quite a lot over the last 2-3 years, is bearing its first tangible results. It must be noted that we are talking about the announced alliance, which plans, according to some sources, include further expansion beyond the “NATO framework” along the West–East axis, with the prospect of including Armenia and India. And this is already a quite serious challenge for those countries that underestimated the viability of a geographically dispersed alliance, and first of all, Turkey.