

# **TURKISH AIRFORCE**

## **Competes With The Ages**

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Celebrating hundred years of Turkish Air Force, the air force command was keen to organize a festivity which would be remembered by. Conferences of European Air Chiefs (EurAC) and the Global Air Chiefs (GAC) were part of this festivities, but the air show in Izmir 4-5<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 became the leading event of the celebrations.

### **IZMIR ONCE AGAIN**

At the huge air base of 2<sup>nd</sup> Main Jet Base Command /Çiğli, Turkey performed well in organizing one of the largest shows of this kind in the world. In words of the Chief of Staff; 'hundred years of existence is a milestone'. The last big air event was the 90 years Turkish Air Force in 2001, also from Çiğli, Izmir. All efforts were undertaken to make from Türkiye-2011 even a bigger demonstration. Within the meaning of 'Turkish Air Force competes with the age' also the idea was included to show the quality of he systems, weapons, aircraft and personnel and the professionalism within Turkish Air Force achieved today and Turkey did this with eagerness. The idea was born in 2006, leading to first steps in 2008 and eventually Izmir, which city has experience in organizing a major event and plays an important role in NATO's structure, was chosen again. Totally 146 airplanes attended the show with a participation of 56 countries. Some 40 countries displayed in the air, solo or with on of the eight aerobatic teams. Many of the accompanying transport aircraft were on static exhibition which was highly approved by the public. However 'the party' concerned Turkish Air Force or in Turkish language; Türk Hava Kuvvetleri, also units of Navy and Army joined the two-day event which attracted 80.000 visitors every day and involved active duty of 3750 personnel.

### **SURPRISE FROM THE EAST**

On display and exhibition were some seldom seen aircraft in Western regions which highlighted the show. Especially the appearance of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) F-16's and JF-17 Thunders were surprising. Pakistan was awarded with a main role in the display programme demonstrating both types which was above all expectance. When asking the Pakistani crews to compare those two types, they pointed the JF-17 Thunder as a favourite and better performing aircraft. Frankly speaking, this was probably because Pakistan develops and produce the JF-17 itself in cooperation with China. The JF-17 use modern avionics from Western companies but has a Russian made Klimov RD-93 engine, which is an upgraded RD-33 engine used in the Mig-29. The performances in speed are just a fraction below the F-16, but in manoeuvre ability the JF-17 shows very good in the air with a mighty appearance. Turkey and Pakistan express both their warm relationship which is felt as brotherhood and beside

participation in air shows also those relations have lead to mutual participation in Anatolian Eagle and Indus Viper exercises. A special treat for those who were spotting the aircraft on departure, one day after the show, was the appearance of one of four PAF's Ilyushin IL-78 Tankers. The PAF flew their fighters first to Saudi Arabia and secondly to Jordan before heading to Izmir. Pakistan itself watched the organizing activities closely and hopes in future to play for such an event host itself.

## **SOLO TÜRK**

Turkey presented on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> an air parade with participation of almost all types aircraft in the inventory which is something you won't see easily again. Also present, but commonly seen on other air events were the NF-5's of the Türk Yıldizlari or Turkish Stars. They were joined by the aerobatic teams of the USAF Thunderbirds, the French Patrouille de France, the English Red Arrows, the Italian Frecce Tricolori, the Polish Bialo Czerwone Iskry or Team Iskry, the Spanish Patrulla d'Àguila and Krila Oluje or Croatia Wings from Croatia. Something which makes Turkey particularly very proud is their own F-16 display called Solo Türk. The demonstrations are realized with a solo F-16C block 40 aircraft. Apart of the smoking devices on the outer tips of the wings there are no other modifications fitted on the aircraft which is painted in splendid black and cold colours. According Fatih Barmaz, being one of the three pilots flying the solo demonstrator, the Solo Turk project started one year ago at the 411 Filo 'Wolff Squadron' in Ankara. They made a trip to Netherlands and had a meeting on Leeuwarden Air Base to discuss aspects about the mentality of displaying aircraft in the air and the aerobatic characteristics of the F-16 with experienced people from the Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF). Back in Turkey the Turkish Air Force trained their three men ship itself which required 2-3 months intensively aerobatic exercising.

## **AIRBASE ROLE**

Base Commander Taşçi of Çiğli said; We want to inform the people about Turkish Air Force which this Türkiye-2011 event is a very good occasion for it. While aviation is improving in popularity, he realizes that besides military aviation also civil aviation is starting to develop in Turkey and so he said we will find a way near future create more abilities in festivities. Today the Turkish Stars perform all over Turkey during national days in about 6-7 performances. Turkish Air Force also will during 2011 participate in four outside shows including air fetes in France and the Netherlands, Sanicole Belgium and RIAT in Fairford, U.K. While he was worrying if parallel subjects such as enough first aid ability or enough playground activities for the children were meeting the expectance, he almost forgot that all efforts in organisation lead to one of the best organized shows in the last decade. To accept the mass of public spectators and to house the visiting aircraft at Çiğli, Izmir, the Turkish Air Force had to remove many of the aircraft normally operating from the base to other airfields. Which aircraft normally occupies the base one must find in the item learning how to fly. Izmir is a main training base. Students leaving the air force college receiving a health check and after a ground check they start with 16 sorties on the SF-260 Marchetti with a follow-on of 80 sorties on the Cessna T-37. This latter aircraft will be

replaced by the KAI KT-1, a turboprop aircraft from South Korea in the same class of the Pilatus PC-9. Then two separations are possible. One can choose to be a helicopter pilot and continuing with another trajectory or stay on the base for a 1.5 year period with 80 sorties on the T-38A Talon to become a jet Pilot. The T-38 Talons were a few years ago modernised by Turkish Aircraft Industry (TAI) with upgraded avionics to be a better lead-in for modern combat aircraft.

## **SPECIAL FORMATION**

On this special occasion the A-400m was present, especially because TAI is a manufacturer of some components of this aircraft. Also TAI is related to the JSF project which was signed by the company in a letter of intent (LOI) with Northrop Grumman ISS. TAI is particularly interested in producing fuselages. A mock-up of the F-35 Lightning was to found in the industrial area. One of the most touching moments was on Friday before the air fete. There was a spontaneous action when the leaders of six aerobatic teams and the Solo Turk aircraft decided to fly together in a never seen formation. When talking to the PR-Officer of the Frecce Tricolori he said that everyone is so experienced to fly together in formation, so why not trying a mixed formation. This was a gift to the town of Izmir. The formation flew far outside the so-called 'dynamic Alan', where normally displaying aircraft should be in. It was a stunt to attract the people of Izmir to come to the show and great fun to do. Once again underlining that aviation rush in the blood and creates high feelings of contentment either with pilots or with enthusiasts on the ground.

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**Kees Otten, Wim Das & Koos Heemskerk**

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