



Achieving qualitative superiority: Greek conscription and the Turkish threat

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Summary

- Greece's peer countries, small to medium sized, affluent democracies in Northern Europe and the Middle East facing significant national security threats (namely Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Israel), feature militarily effective conscript components as core pillars of their national defence.
- By contrast, Greece's main national security threat, Turkey, belongs to that group of authoritarian or illiberal countries which have suboptimal conscription models, featuring evasion of conscript service by the well-educated, inefficient training and harsh, counterproductive treatment of those conscripts who do serve.
- Greece, also due to its post WWII legacies of illiberalism or authoritarianism, and not unlike Taiwan which has a similar legacy, has not infused its conscript component with demanding training and operational standards, roles and missions.
- The time is ripe, due to the resurgence of the Turkish threat and Greece's economic crisis, which has removed many of the country's outdated shibboleths, to modernise Greek conscription, as its peer countries have done, and thus acquire an Army qualitatively superior to that of Turkey.
- By doing so, Greek policy-makers will decisively strengthen Greece's deterrence and produce positive externalities for the conscripts themselves. Indeed, the more effective conscription becomes in operational terms for the Greek Armed Forces, the greater the benefits to be reaped in civilian life.

"In chess... a knight is always stronger than a pawn and two pawns are always stronger than one, whereas in war a battalion can sometimes be stronger than a division, and sometimes weaker than a company."

Prince Andrey Bolkonsky, in Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace

Introduction

Given Turkey's unique regional assertiveness and engagement of its armed forces and /or deployment of its technological capabilities in several battlefields, every aspect of Greece's military deterrence has been exposed to media scrutiny and analysis in the last two years. That said, the main focus has been on the Hellenic Navy's and Air Force's main platforms acquisitions and upgrades, respectively frigates and fighter aircraft, manned and supported solely by professional uniformed personnel.

This paper, by contrast, discusses one of the key elements of the Hellenic Army's (Ελληνικός Στρατός – hence referred as the Army and including, among other branches, Infantry, Armour, Artillery, Corps of Engineers, Special Forces) battlefield effectiveness, namely its conscript component. The conscript component has been discussed mostly in a cursory manner, if at all, following the current government's decision to increase modestly the length of the conscript service. Yet this lack of interest in the conscript component ill-serves the cause of Greece's national defence.

An effective conscript component is indispensable to an effective Army.

Simply put, an effective conscript component is indispensable to an effective Army. Considering Turkey's greater population size, reflected also in the size of the Turkish Army – 400,000 strong to Greece's 93,000 thousand strong according to 2018 data¹ – we consider as integral to the notion of effectiveness, the notion of qualitative superiority. The current Greek Government clearly aims at achieving such qualitative superiority in the air and sea, through upgrades and acquisitions of highly advanced navy frigates and aircrafts, and by vigorously lobbying for the cessation of upgrades and sales of advanced aircraft and submarines, from the US and Germany respectively, to Turkey. In that sense, the meaningful upgrade of the conscript component, which constitutes almost half of the Army's manpower – forty five thousand conscripts to forty eight thousand professional officers and NCO's on current count - is but an extension of this policy priority on the ground².

A meaningfully upgraded conscript component is meant to answer two needs, one relatively novel and one long lasting, respectively cross domain deterrence and deterrence against the possibility, and threat thereof by Turkey, of the persecution of all-out war.

Cross-domain deterrence, or hybrid hostilities short of warfare, call for the utilisation of a wide range of skills that cannot solely be acquired by professional officers and NCOs and can be found in greater abundance among Greece's highly educated, both in the country and abroad, conscript base, cyber-domain skills being but one such example. Indicatively Greece already experienced in 2020 an attempt to violate its land borders by refugee inflows spurred by the deliberate actions of the Turkish government, a gambit

¹ See M. Charalampakis, "Συναγερμός στο «Πεντάγωνο» για το δυναμικό του Στρατού" (Alarm at the 'Pentagon' regarding the Army's potency), *TA NEA*, 6-8.4.2018.

² For a recent account of the balance of forces, including the Hellenic Army's composition see V. Nedos, "Τα Rafale και η ισορροπία δυνάμεων στο Αιγαίο – Η αέναη κούρσα Ελλάδας και Τουρκίας" (The Rafale and the new balance of forces in the Aegean – The ceaseless race of Greece –Turkey), *Kathimerini*, 27.1.2022.

A qualitatively superior conscript component cannot but be created by an overall upgraded Army.

that the country's security forces met successfully and where, we would argue, appropriately skilled conscripts could have meaningfully aided the effort, for example by processing open access data. Moving to classic deterrence, against the initiation of outright warfare, absent an effective Army, with the conscript component making an inescapably decisive contribution to the Army's qualitative superiority over its Turkish rival, Greece's territorial integrity and sovereign rights are overdependent on the inevitably unpredictable and fluctuating willingness of Greece's key allies to put a stop to Turkey's aggression - if and when such aggression escalates beyond a localised 'hot incident'. Naturally, for classic deterrence needs the conscript component is just one among other components of the Army's battlefield effectiveness such as ample provision of advanced weaponry and munitions, the operationalisation of an always evolving doctrine, the nurturing of a meritocratic, highly competent officer corps, ideally tested in the battlefield through participation in challenging peace-keeping and stabilisation missions in third countries, and so on. Be that as it may, when one in two men in uniform in the Army, at any given time, is a conscript, Army effectiveness cannot but be mutually constituted, between professional and conscript, as in the case of advanced training (or the lack thereof) at all unit levels, from the squad to the Corps level, including non-static, combined arms training. Indeed, in the course of our investigation it will also be illuminated that such a qualitatively superior conscript component cannot but be created by an overall upgraded Army. Indeed only such an Army can be relied upon to create a qualitatively superior conscript component.

Today's Turkey is a country that is willing to challenge US and French geopolitical priorities, in Syria and Libya respectively, and which has formally questioned Greek sovereignty over the Eastern Aegean Greek islands.

In terms of the realistic possibility in investing, not least through an upgraded conscript component, in deterrence against all-out war, suffice it to mention that the US was highly ambivalent in 1967 to intervene in the Middle East to stave-off what turned out to be the Six Day War, despite its stalwart support of Israel, due to the increasingly unpopular in the US Vietnam War³. Likewise, the collapse of the Nixon Presidency, among other factors to be sure, circumscribed the ability of the US in 1973-74, to contain the Cyprus crisis, notwithstanding the fact that Turkey's invasion of Cyprus brought to the brink of an all-out war Greece and Turkey, an event that would have completely destabilised NATO's southern flank⁴. In other words, the history of the region teaches us that generalized war cannot sometimes be avoided, even by hegemonic powers that have an interest in ensuring peace but for reasons of their own cannot do so in a particular juncture, so Greece needs to make adequate preparations for such an eventuality.

Complementary, absent a highly effective conscript component, and other related elements mentioned above, which will constitute a qualitatively superior Hellenic Army, Greece operates under a de facto as much as an unstated national defence doctrine whereby it is assumed that a militarised conflict with Turkey will involve mainly components run by professionals, namely Hellenic Navy vessels, Air Force aircraft and those Special Forces units composed solely by professionals. As such this conflict will be short in duration and localised, at least territorially if not in the sea and air space, and will ultimately be stopped by external intervention before it escalates, in time and space, before drawing the core Greek Army units into the battlefield.

³ For a compelling account of the events leading to the Six Day War see M. B. Oren, (2002), Six Days of War-June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East, Penguin.

⁴ For an analysis of US's crisis management in Cyprus see, J. Sakkas, The Greek Military Regime and the Cyprus Question, (2021) in O. Anastasakis and K. Lagos eds, The Greek Military Dictatorship – Revisiting A Troubled Past, Berghahn, pp. 320-339 and A., Papahelas (2021) Ένα Σκοτεινό Δωμάτιο 1967-1974 (A Dark Room 1967-1974), Metehmion.

With such a neighbour, only a defence doctrine and force structure based on the unquestionable combat fitness of all of the main Greek Army formations, composed of professionals and conscripts, will do.

Such a *de facto* national defence doctrine may have been borderline acceptable back in the days where Turkey's foreign and national security policy was, with all its caveats, framed by its good standing as a NATO member-country and its appreciation of the US primacy in the region. It was, indeed, this Turkey, anchored in its bilateral relationship with the US, with all the ups and downs of this relationship, that accepted US mediation in 1996, which put a stop to the escalation of the Imia incident to a generalised war with Greece. Greece, indeed, during this period, did not manage to secure comprehensive security guarantees either from NATO or from the EU, despite its persistent efforts to do so⁵. Still, a combination of Turkey's European vocation, when this vocation was operative, and the US's overseer role in the region, clearly put limits to the escalatory potential of any hot incident with Greece.

By contrast, today's Turkey is a country that is willing to challenge US and French geopolitical priorities, in Syria and Libya respectively, through the direct or indirect (via proxy militias) use of military force, and which has formally questioned Greek sovereignty over the Eastern Aegean Greek islands that are defended by the country's Armed Forces. Partly driven by domestic considerations, partly by the opportunities that the US's partial disengagement in Europe and the Middle East has thrown up, Turkey has been identified as one of those mid-sized powers that are increasingly assertive in a regional context⁶. With such a neighbour, only a defence doctrine and force structure based on the unquestionable combat fitness of all of the main Greek Army formations, composed of professionals and conscripts, will do.

True, and commensurately with this radical change in Turkey's regional comportment, Greece has also managed to acquire an unprecedented security guarantee by France, the EU's most consequential geopolitical actor. But this guarantee does not vitiate the necessity of Greece being prepared for all eventualities, and not only because its validity maybe be contingent to changing circumstances in France itself. Sometimes an immovable object does meet an unstoppable force. It may well be the case that the more Greece strengthens the credibility of its deterrence, through its major weapons acquisitions and the strengthening of its international alliances, most prominently with France, the more pressure is created internally in Turkey - where President Erdogan's regime survival is increasingly premised on the narrative of Turkey's regional military hegemony - to prove that all these Greek efforts are for nought⁷.

The probability of an all-out war between Turkey and Greece has never been higher than 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus.

In that vein, Turkey's Minister of Defence has repeatedly asserted that all of Greece's major weapon purchases are useless; the implication being that Turkey is capable of prevailing militarily no matter what⁸. The leader of the Turkish far right party MHP, and coalition partner of AKP, Devlet Bahçeli, in a recent speech said that Greece 'should not rely on French aircraft – we know how to sign with blood yet another victory', raising the spectre of Turkey overwhelming any technological edge that Greece may have acquired with its greater manpower⁹. While such rhetorical excesses do not constitute either Turkish intent or capabilities, they certainly help create popular expectations, within Turkey, of unquestionable military superiority. In a self-reinforcing dynamic, such

⁵ See relatedly P. Tsakonas and A. Tournikiotis, (2003), Greece's Elusive Quest for Security Providers: The 'Expectations-Reality Gap', *Security Dialogue*, 34:3, pp. 301-314.

⁶ See, relatedly "The menace of midsized meddlers", *Economist*, 27.11.2021.

⁷ This is the point that one of the authors of this paper is making at A. Kamaras, (October, 2021), Η Ελληνογαλλική Συμφωνία και η Στρατιωτική Θητεία (The Greek-French Agreement and Military Conscription), *GR Diplomatic Review*, pp. 50-55, October, 2021.

⁸ Newsroom, "Ο Ακάρ επιμένει σε «Γαλάζια Πατρίδα»: «Μάταιο» να εξοπλίζεται η Ελλάδα" (Akar insists on "Blue Homeland": "Futile" for Greece to arm itself), *Kathimerini*, 25.7.2021.

⁹ Bahçeli – "Η Ελλάδα να μη βασίζεται στα γαλλικά αεροσκάφη – Ξέρουμε πώς να υπογράψουμε με αίμα άλλη μια νίκη" (Greece should not rely on French aircraft – We know how to sign with blood yet another victory), *Ta Nea*, 4.1.2022.

rhetoric can certainly lock-in the political personalities and parties that articulate it, into vociferous advocacy of military escalation against Greece. Such rhetoric is bound to reach fever-pitch if, in an initially limited 'hot' incident Greece manages to 'checkmate' Turkey's Armed Forces which the Turkish public has been habituated to perceive as being decisively superior to those of Greece.

We would thus argue that the probability of an all-out war between Turkey and Greece has never been higher than 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus. Relatedly, sophisticated political analysts have identified Turkey as one of the top ten geopolitical risks in 2022. They predict that President Erdogan's 'erratic choices will also fuel concerns about risks of major Turkish overreach in Syria and a conflict with Greece or Cyprus over contested waters'¹⁰.

Last but not least, considering also that all male Greek citizens, including the country's political elites, form their views of the Greek Armed Forces potency on the basis of their conscript service, a meaningfully upgraded mixed composition Army, professional and conscript, is a sine qua non for the country's ability to self-confidently confront and deter Turkey's aggression.¹¹

Taking the above factors on board, this policy paper will assume that a qualitatively superior conscript component, compared to that of Turkey, must be a pillar of the country's national defence doctrine and posture. In turn, the constitutive elements of such a qualitative superiority in Greece's conscript component cannot just be asserted but needs to be identified through analysis, not least of a comparative nature, which seeks to answer the following question: what are the main features of an effective conscript component in the 21st century?

In seeking to answer this question, the paper will in the next, second section, broaden the discussion on Greece's conscript service first by reviewing the choices of countries similar to Greece in developmental terms, in terms of population size and of territorial threat perception. Additionally selected countries will be in regions proximate to Greece and from which Greek decision-makers can most efficiently benefit, in terms of know-how transfer, due to multilateral or bilateral alliance arrangements. These two sets of criteria lead us to examine Scandinavian countries and Israel. This comparative exercise will seek to illuminate Greece's choice to retain its conscript component as well as identify elements which Greece can profitably adopt from this selected peer group of countries.

In the third section, the paper will identify the main features of Greek conscription, as they have evolved over the last two to three decades, focusing on such issues as length of conscript service and quality of conscript training.

In the fourth section, the paper will identify elements in the Greek Army's professionals training and experience, officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), that have a bearing on the quality of Greece's conscript component, focusing on, (a) the integration of advanced battlefield know-how and operations and (b) physical fitness, two crucial components for an Army's battlefield effectiveness.

In the fifth section, the paper will issue a set of recommendations anchored in the rationale of a judicious extension of conscript service, combined with the retention of

¹⁰ Eurasia Group, Top Risks 2022.

¹¹ Point made by E. Maglinis, "Περί ηττοπαθείας ξανά" (On defeatism again), *Kathimerini*, 29. 7.2020.

This policy paper will assume that a qualitatively superior conscript component, compared to that of Turkey, must be a pillar of the country's national defence doctrine and posture.

conscription at the time of choosing of the future conscript. This section will argue that this set of measures can achieve a qualitatively superior conscript component to that of Turkey and thus enhance as well as complete the country's overall deterrence.

The sixth and concluding section will synthesize the paper's key findings and list its policy recommendations.

It is important to note that all of Greece's peer group countries [...] maintain conscript forces, as core elements of their territorial defence.

What others like us have chosen to do?

As we review global trends we have decided to focus on Europe and the Middle East, regions close to Greece, and in countries which are, like Greece, democratic, high income, market economies. We will look at Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Israel, with populations ranging from 5.3 million (Norway) to 9.2 million (Israel), compared to Greece's 10.7 million. We believe that this combination is best suited to generate comparable country cases from which (a) the policy debate in Greece on conscription can mostly benefit, and (b) the Greek national security establishment could most easily gain know-how due to Greece's multilateral or bilateral alliance affiliations.¹²

It is important to note that all of Greece's peer group countries, as defined above, maintain conscript forces, as core elements of their territorial defence. Conscript forces are operative in this group of countries for the following reasons: the labour intensive perimeter defence due to the threats they face from one or more potentially hostile neighbouring states; the need to create a pool of reserves that can be mobilised in case of all-out war with such neighbours; the ability to select and attract to their professional cadres from their pool of conscripts; last but not least the very expensive proposition that constituting such a labour intensive, necessary for territorial defence, Armed Forces would be, if they were to be composed solely by professionals.

Finland and Israel, which face the most acute national security threats, operate, like Greece, nearly universal male conscription regimes.

We note that from this peer group Finland and Israel, which face the most acute national security threats, operate, like Greece, nearly universal male conscription regimes (with Israel also inducting females and Finland considering doing so). Finland is the only Scandinavian country to have an extensive land border with the Russian Federation and was attacked by its predecessor Soviet Union in 1939. Israel has fought wars with all its immediate neighbours, namely Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, since its creation in 1948, and is also engaged in extensive policing and counter-terrorism missions in Gaza and the Occupied Territories. True, Israel, among our peer group, differs in that it has demonstrated the willingness, in the service of its national security imperatives, to initiate offensive operations, to initiate hostilities as opposed to simply seeking to deter them. Still all of our selected countries are comparable in the sense that they have managed as affluent, democratic societies and sophisticated economies, to maintain and evolve the status of conscription as a pillar of their national security strategy – and do so both politically and operationally.

Among the other selected countries, where conscription is for all intents and purposes voluntary, it is worth briefly examining the case of Norway¹³. Norway, due to its geographical position, was even back in the initial post-Soviet period the most concerned

¹² Denmark, Finland and Sweden are fellow EU member countries, Denmark and Norway are fellow NATO member countries and Israel and Greece have developed a deep and diverse defence partnership.

¹³ See relatedly, M. Petersen, and H.L. Saxi (2013) Shifted Roles: Explaining Danish and Norwegian Alliance Strategy 1949-2009, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36 (6), pp. 761-788.

It is possible to motivate citizens to become conscripts even in increasingly individualistic and wealthy democracies, such as Norway and Israel.

among Scandinavian, NATO-member countries, about threats to its national security emanating from the successor to the Soviet Union Russian Federation. Norway operates a system of selective conscription, drafting on the basis of motivation and fitness, for 19 months, an 9,000-strong cohort of both men and women which is mainly employed in the country's land forces entrusted with territorial defence. This essentially volunteer conscript force, to put things in context, is more than 30% of the compulsory Greek conscript force, relative to population totals (Norway's overall population, at 5.3 million, is half that of Greece), and for a country that only has a tiny land border with its main security threat, the Russian Federation.

All in all, we can conclusively assert from the review of these examples that Greece is not the exception but rather the rule, in its peer category in Europe and the Middle East, in terms of having a conscript component which is integral and not marginal to its national defence.

What are the pointers of these diverse models for Greece's conscript component? We would identify two main ones.

Policy makers in both Scandinavian countries and Israel, effectively relay to conscripts that service can lead to the acquisition of skills and/or status that can facilitate career advancement subsequently.

First, it is possible to motivate citizens to become conscripts even in increasingly individualistic and wealthy democracies, such as Norway and Israel. Clearly the corollary of effective motivation are Armed Forces that offer high quality training and equipment to their conscript soldiers and provide an effective meaning of their service anchored in adventure and risk taking. In a country like Norway motivation is demonstrated through the act of effective volunteering of its conscripts to join the Armed Forces whereas in Israel such motivation, in the context of obligatory service, is demonstrated through choice of unit, with the more highly motivated conscripts opting to enlist in elite combat formations. Indeed it has been shown that Israeli conscript cohorts that belong to affluent socioeconomic segments and are extrovert-oriented, i.e. they relate to cultures, practises and countries which are unlike Israel in terms of Israel's 's national security challenges and lengthy conscript service, see service in such units as an act of self-actualisation and age-related emancipation¹⁴. Other studies on Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have shown that support of the country's reserves system, which of course rests on conscript service, actually rises with higher educational levels. In effect, Israelis which are socioeconomically privileged demonstrate greater trust in the country's institutions, up to and including the reserves system of which they are part, whereas socioeconomically less privileged cohorts, notwithstanding their more nationalistic, anti-Arab outlook, are more distant from the IDF's reserves¹⁵.

Second, aligned with the previous observation, clearly policy makers in both Scandinavian countries and Israel, effectively relay to conscripts that service can lead to the acquisition of skills and/or status that can facilitate career advancement subsequently. The corollary of this promise is high tech forces that systematise the transfer of skills and are able, through the selection and induction processes, beginning in high schools, to identify conscript skills and aptitudes that can be utilised and developed through conscript service. We must underline here that the status established through rigorous selection and training, regardless of whether it is associated or not with marketable skills in the civilian job market, can be as impactful for a civilian career: by signaling to prospective employers that an ex-conscript is a risk-taker, has an aptitude for

¹⁴ See E.Adres, P. Vanhuysse and D.R. Vashdi,(2012) The Individual's Level of Globalism and Citizen Commitment to the State: The Tendency to Evade Military Service in Israel, *Armed Forces & Society*, 38 (1), pp. 92-116.

¹⁵ G. Ben-Dor, A. Pedahur, D. Canetti-Nism(2008) I versus We, Collective and Individual factors of Reserve Service Motivation during War and peace, *Armed Forces & Society*, 34 (4), pp. 565-592.

These underperforming conscription models tend to be present in less wealthy countries with an authoritarian-prone tradition, such as the Russian Federation and Turkey.

initiative, has demonstrated a high degree of commitment to a task he or she has undertaken, and in particular to the cause of national defence which enjoys high degree of legitimacy both in the private sector and in public life. We note in that regard not only the case of Israel, where service particularly in elite Army units is a passport to both business and political careers, but also Scandinavian countries where parents have been observed to lobby for their offspring's induction to the selective draft¹⁶.

Thus, Scandinavian countries and Israel have demonstrated that it is possible to field highly motivated conscript components, even more so from privileged socioeconomic cohorts, in high income countries, and that such conscript components can be and are core to their national defence posture – not least due to the high quality of the conscription intake¹⁷. Crucially for the purposes of our investigation, this cohort of countries is believed to represent exemplars of successful conscript armies, worldwide¹⁸.

At the other end of the spectrum are conscript forces that feature conscript engagement in mind-numbing and nonessential tasks, widespread conscript hazing and the tendency of the higher socioeconomic segment to avoid conscription. These underperforming conscription models tend to be present in less wealthy countries with an authoritarian-prone tradition, such as the Russian Federation and Turkey¹⁹. We highlight in Turkey key features that render its conscript component distinctly inferior to the examples mentioned above: university educated conscripts are allowed to either serve for only six months or to buy their right not to serve at all, a right which they have exercised en masse; corporal punishment is extensively used to discipline the less well-educated with a provincial background and/or ethnically Kurdish conscripts, who serve for twelve months; the Turkish Armed Forces has either sent in the past undertrained conscripts in counter-guerilla operations in the Turkish South East or have deployed only professionals in expeditionary missions outside Turkey²⁰.

Adequate training and equipment of mixed Ground Forces, are eminently achievable for high income countries to field.

In conclusion, there are available and attainable models to follow for Greece, from countries which, like Greece, are both affluent and democratic, in the pursuit of building an effective conscript Army component which is qualitatively superior to that of its Turkish counterpart.

¹⁶ For an examination of the strengths and high status of conscription in Scandinavian countries see, E. Braw (October, 2019) Competitive National Service: How the Scandinavian Model Can Be Adapted by the UK, Royal United Services Institute.

¹⁷ Israel also operates a scheme whereby high-performing high school students are drafted later, after the completion of their university studies, and serve longer, in elite high tech and intelligence units, see G. Baram, and I. Ben-Israel (Autumn, 2019) The Academic Reserve – Israel's Fast Track to High-Tech Success, *Israel Studies Review*, 34 (2). pp. 75-91.

¹⁸ See the following for an analysis of successful and unsuccessful conscript models, "Call on me - The military draft is making a comeback", *Economist*, 2.10.2021.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ On these features of Turkey's conscript component see, O. Kara,, (12.2..2019), Conscription Reform and the future of military manpower in Turkey, Strife, M. Gurcan(3.7. 2018) Young Turks with enough cash seek to skip military service, Al-Monitor, M. Engin, (March, 2016), Evaluation of Compulsory Military Service in Turkey using a population representation model, Naval Postgraduate School, A., Ozgur Peker Dogra, (September,2007) The Soldier and the Civilian: Conscription and Military Power in Turkey, New York University, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis and N.Mater, (2004) Το Βιβλίο του Μεχμέτ – Οι στρατιώτες που πολέμησαν στην Νοτιοανατολική Τουρκία αφηγούνται (The book of Mehmet – the soldiers who served in Southeastern Turkey narrate), Katarti.

Where is the Greek conscript force today and why? The issue of realistic, rigorous, versus perfunctory, training

Adequate training and equipment of mixed Ground Forces, are eminently achievable for high income countries to field. They can thus be in a position to affect battlefield outcomes either by exacting significant casualties even on the most capable professional forces internationally or by prevailing over similar mixed Armed Forces which are, however, less well-trained and equipped, such as that of Turkey. As it is put aptly, what needs to be evaluated is the disposition of skills in armed forces, acquired through effective training, orchestrated by a competent, meritocratically selected officer corps, and not just the disposition of military technology.²¹ In turn, the disposition of skills is both a) an issue of resources whereby there needs to be a balance between training and acquisitions of weapons systems in budgetary allocations, and b) an issue of the presence of political will that may advance or hinder a nation-state in converting such resource allocation into battlefield effectiveness.

The two defining features of the Greek conscript component relate to both the length of the conscription service as well as to the quality of conscripts' training regardless of the length of service.

Breaking down the prerequisites of constituting a battlefield efficient Army, comprised of professionals and conscripts, it is worth quoting at length the key markers:

“Which skills are emphasised in training?

What size units engage in training exercises? Is it small-unit, or are there efforts to practice coordination of large-unit activities?

Is training rigorous and intensive, or largely perfunctory? Does specialised training occur?

Is training realistic? How closely does it mirror the battlefield environment? Are there live fire exercises?

Does the content of training remain static, or does it evolve in response to new information from the battlefield?

Are training commands run by experienced and competent officers?”²²

Looking at the experience of Greek conscription, in order to evaluate whether the above prerequisites have been met, the two defining features of the Greek conscript component relate to both the length of the conscription service as well as to the quality of conscripts' training regardless of the length of service.

In particular, analytical focus has been placed on the effects on the conscripts' battlefield efficiency due to the progressive reduction of the length of conscript service, accelerating in the 2000-2020 period, with related concerns being heightened after its reduction below the year and a half threshold.

Experienced analysts have identified the following effects in these sequential reductions in length of service.²³

²¹ See S. Biddle (Fall, 1996) Victory Misunderstood – What the Gulf War Tells Us about the Future of Conflict, *International Security*, 21 (2), pp.139-179.

²² C. Talmadge (2015) *The Dictator's Army-Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*, Cornell University Press, p. 18.

The quality of training regardless of the length of service has arguably always been an issue.

- The undermanning, in the early 2000s, of front line units at the Evros land border (IV Army Corps) and in the islands of the eastern Aegean (ASDEN), below their 50 % full complement which made their battlefield worthiness, on a purely quantitative basis, questionable.
- The further reduction of the battle worthiness of frontline units as the commensurately greater burden which fell on fewer professional and conscript soldiers further reduced opportunities for battlefield training.
- The initiation of a vicious circle whereby the de facto devaluing of conscript service through the reduction in time under service led the professional leadership to invest even less in conscript training in terms of specialties acquired, occurrence of shooting practice and so on.
- The further weakening of the reserve force and thus of the deterrence value of mobilisation as the reduction in time and quality of training meant that future reservists have a very thin base of expertise that can be profitably deployed in battlefield conditions.

Still, the quality of training regardless of the length of service has arguably always been an issue. In a rare interview, an ex-Greek Special Forces conscript, who served the reduced nine-month term in 2012, and who subsequently joined a professional Canadian light infantry unit, underlined how the limited time available included non-essential tasks and the resulting waste thereof. We highlight the following comparison-based observations²⁴:

Our interviewees agreed that approximately 10-15% of Special Forces conscripts came from volunteers from privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, testifying to the inherent ability, in Greece too, of units with elite reputations to energise conscription.

- Three months of basic training in the Canadian unit was physically intense, involved training in all weapons employed by the infantry squad, first aid training and combat techniques in counterinsurgency, ambush setting, urban warfare, reconnaissance day and night, orientation and so forth.
- By contrast, in Greek Special Forces, basic training was not as wide-ranging and systematic in imparting the necessary fighting skills and the limited time available was not efficiently used.
- The emphasis of basic training in the Canadian unit was on undertaking of initiative by inductees with inductees encouraged to even challenge their trainers, as in the most adequate positioning of a squad's light machine gun.
- Nine out of ten trainers in the Canadian unit have had battle experience gained in missions such as those in Afghanistan (the issue of battlefield experience by professionals, and the resulting impact on conscript training and overall operational competence, will be dealt extensively in the following, fourth section).

²³M. Iliadis, "Η επιβεβλημένη μετεξέλιξη των Ενόπλων Δυνάμεων" (The necessary evolution of the Armed Forces), *Kathimerini*, 04.10.2021; T. Dokos and M. Iliadis "Policy paper on military service and defence", ELIAMEP, 27. 01.2019; S.D. Vlassis "Θητεία και εκπαίδευση κληρωτών: Ούτε καν τυφεκιοφόρους;" (Conscription and draftees training: not even riflemen?), *doureios.com*, 3.10.2021.

²⁴ "Συνέντευξη με έναν Έλληνα σε ξένο στρατό, - Βασική Εκπαίδευση Πεζικού" (Interview with a Greek in a foreign army – basic infantry training), *Doureios Ippos*, , (June-August 2019), Volume 38, pp. 48-53.

We have sought to contextualise the above literature, commentaries and testimonial through four interviews with Special Forces reservists, three of whom have served in Greece's Special Forces during the 1990s when conscript service was 18 months and one in 2005, as a paratrooper, when conscript service was 12 months. We opted for Special Forces reservists, which in the case of Greece have the operational status of elite light infantry (as opposed to highly skilled professional corps such as the UK's SAS or the US's SEALs), and as such have better equipment and more rigorous training than the Army's general infantry units. Thus any suboptimal patterns identified by Special Forces reservists would surely be present in the less elite Army Infantry units.

This is what they told us:

- Basic training was focused mostly on instilling a 'soldierly spirit' through drill and some amount of hazing.
- There are contrasting accounts on the level of training in various tactical skills such as reconnaissance, orientation, ambush setting and the like. On the one hand, we have been told that there was no attempt made to engage the conscript mentally and explain to him the purpose of the training he received and what it meant to accomplish. On the other hand, there was satisfaction with the training received, even in various tactical scenarios, given what are perceived as the unavoidable resource constraints of the Greek Armed Forces.
- One interviewee noted that there were officers and NCOs, even at Special Forces, which treated conscript training in a perfunctory, checklist, minimum-effort manner rather than substantively. Another was impressed with the caliber of all professional officers and NCOs he came into contact with, in the Special Forces.
- For one interviewee emphasis was placed on 'performative' skill, as in running an obstacle course, in demonstration units, as opposed to the acquisition of realistic, tactical knowledge. By contrast, one reservist we interviewed was impressed with the professionalism and thoroughness of his training, regarding his paratrooper jump.
- It was reported to us that equipment was unexceptional while advanced telecommunication instruments stayed at the warehouse, during training exercises, lest they get damaged in training exercises.
- In one case anti-armour training with live rounds (with Milan anti-tank weapons) did take place but was static and was not integrated in realistic tactical scenarios.
- The opinion was expressed that Greek Special Forces may have higher morale and esprit de corps than regular infantry units but the emphasis was on deployability and willingness to engage with the enemy, rather than on superior ability to do so, grounded in realistic training.
- Encouragingly, in view of our cohort examples of section two, our interviewees agreed that approximately 10-15% of Special Forces conscripts came from volunteers from privileged socioeconomic backgrounds, testifying to the inherent ability, in Greece too, of units with elite reputations to energise conscription. Relatedly, one of our interviewees mentioned that he was motivated to join the Special Forces paratroopers both due to the physical challenge involved as well as in order to strengthen his CV ahead of his applications for advanced graduate study in the US.

If we can draw a conclusion is that clearly the Army has the nucleus necessary to meaningfully improve the quality of conscript training as well as the operational competence of units comprised of both professionals and conscripts - but is not there yet.

We reiterate that these anecdotal impressions relate to Special Forces conscript experience and not to those of the bulk of the Army's units. If we can draw a conclusion is that clearly the Army has the nucleus necessary to meaningfully improve the quality of conscript training as well as the operational competence of units comprised of both professionals and conscripts – but is not there yet.

Typologically, Greece seems to resemble Taiwan where the same consequences have been observed due to an even more drastic reduction in time under arms served for conscripts, to only four months.

In terms of our typology of conscript models, established in section two, while Greece has abandoned the counterproductive disciplinarianism still evident in conscript components such as those of the Russian Federation and Turkey, it has not yet migrated to the model of a modern, conscript-based Army which invests and motivates the majority of its conscripts through thoughtfully rigorous training and delegation of responsibility. We note here the diversity of responses in our four Special Forces interviews, possibly indicating the lack of uniformly high standards, across time and units, even within the Army's Special Forces. We also highlight that the lack of investment and thought on conscripts' training and performance has fed into both popular and elite perceptions, with influential opinion leaders typically arguing, despite international evidence to the contrary such as presented in this policy paper, that conscription, in this time and age, has become a waste of time and is thus of little use to Greece's national defence²⁵:

Typologically, Greece seems to resemble Taiwan where the same consequences have been observed due to an even more drastic reduction in time under arms served for conscripts, to only four months. Such a short conscript service has degraded the operational preparedness of professional soldiers that have to carry the main burden of routine activities due to overall unit under-manning and has rendered conscripts' training perfunctory. We note that Taiwan faces an even graver threat to its national security with the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) having, for decades now, as a top national goal the annexation of Taiwan, either peacefully or by the force of arms. Additionally PRC has built armed forces that the US now consider as a 'peer competitor', due to their increasing technological sophistication. The US has also strongly pressured Taiwan to strengthen its conscript-based reserves so as to deter the PRC with the prospect of a prolonged war of attrition, in case of invasion of the island, a war of attrition which would also afford to the US the time to come to Taiwan's assistance²⁶.

We note that the combination of Greece's nearly ten-year long economic crisis, and Turkey's unremittingly aggressive behavior provide the political conditions for an ambitious reform of Greek conscription.

We speculate that the similarity between these two high income countries, Greece and Taiwan, which share acute national security threats and have fielded underwhelming conscript components – unlike our model countries from Scandinavia as well as Israel – may have to do with their recent authoritarian past. Greece in the post WW II period, and right up to the collapse of the junta in 1974, experienced undue influence of the military in public life and highly discriminatory treatment of ideologically 'suspect' conscripts, in the heightened anticommunist tenor of the times. Similarly, the Kuomintang regime, represented by the Nationalist Party or KMT, after its defeat in mainland China imposed single party rule in Taiwan which repressed, through state mechanisms, including the national security apparatus, indigenous Taiwanese as well as

²⁵ See indicatively S.Kasimatis, "Δύσκολο αλλά αναγκαίο" (Tough but necessary), *Kathimerini*, 19.12.2019, S. Theodorakis, "Ποιος λοιπόν θέλει και άλλους φαντάρους;" (So who wants more conscripts?), *Kathimerini*, 13.12.2021.

²⁶ For analyses of the Taiwanese Armed Forces, including its conscript component, and the wider context shaping their evolution see R.C. Bush (2021), *Difficult Choices – Taiwan's Quest for Security and the Good Life*, Brookings Institution Press, P. Huang (15.2.2020), Taiwan's Military Is a Hollow Shell, *Foreign Policy* and M.A. Hunzeker and A. Lanozsa, (November, 2018) A Question of Time-Enhancing Taiwan's Conventional Deterrence Posture, Schar School of Policy and Government – Center for Security Policy Studies.

other oppositional elements. With democratization in Greece, and particularly the rise to power of the socialist PASOK party, any hint of hazing was deligitimised and became career threatening for professional officers. Inevitably, opponents of conscript service could pressure risk averse civilian leaderships, so as to deligitimise not only hazing but also physically rigorous training. It may well be the case that in Taiwan, which democratised even later than Greece, namely in the 1990s, and where such authoritarian memories are even fresher, the length and the quality of conscript service may also have suffered from such 'guilt by association'.

That being said, we note that the combination of Greece's nearly ten-year long economic crisis, and Turkey's unremittingly aggressive behavior provide the political conditions for an ambitious reform of Greek conscription. The crisis, we would argue, has undermined ossified, long past their sell-by date, legacies of Greece's transition to democracy, expanding the perceived limits of the politically feasible. Turkey's comportment towards Greece has legitimised the rise of defence spending, has brought to the fore the need for Greece to acquire a technologically advanced defence sector and even (more of which below) created the political opening for the Greek government to send in harm's way professional officers and NCOs, in demanding missions in third countries. The reform of conscription should thus be perceived in this political juncture. Additionally, there is no reason why Greek youth, in sufficient numbers, would not endorse such a reform, as an opportunity for self-actualisation and positioning in the labour market, just like their peers in the Scandinavian countries and Israel we have examined.

A key factor bearing on the quality of conscript training, both at the tactical and combined arms level, is simply the lack of exposure in ground combat of Greece's Army.

Professionals and Conscripts

Conscript training and performance is integrally dependent on their interaction with professional officers and NCOs. Professional officers and NCOs in turn are shaped, in their interaction with conscripts, by the ultimate responsibility of the civilian leadership to secure for them highly advanced battlefield experiences and demanding operational standards. We examine this interaction through the lenses of the two key ingredients. First, of battlefield experience gained in peacetime, only by professional officers and NCOs, through participation in expeditionary missions in third countries. Second, of physical fitness mastered jointly by professionals and conscripts through structured and professionally guided physical exercise.

A key factor bearing on the quality of conscript training, both at the tactical and combined arms level, is simply the lack of exposure in ground combat of Greece's Army, with the last major conflict in which Greek ground troops participated being the Korean war in 1950-1953 (during the Cyprus invasion by Turkey in, in 1974, a Greek Army battalion engaged in combat with Turkish troops for three days).

In the post-Cold War period Greece's political leadership, indisputably due to political risk aversion, avoided sending frontline troops in any of the major conflicts and / or missions that its allies or fellow NATO members engaged in, starting with the Gulf War and then moving to the stabilisation missions of Iraq, Afghanistan (where Greek troops were sent but were not allowed to operate outside the capital, Kabul) and the Sahel. We know that these major opportunities for Greek professional officers and NCOs to gain battlefield experience that would then be diffused, via changes in doctrine, operations and training, involving the totality of a country's Armed Forces, were actually pursued

A very good example of the qualitative edge accruing from participation of units of the Greek Armed Forces in realistic operations, is the everyday engagement of Interception Wings of the Hellenic Air Force in confronting the challenges posed by Turkey's Air Force from 1974 to today.

with great effect by other countries similar to Greece.²⁷ We examine below the potentially transformative effect that battlefield experience gained by professional officers and NCOs can have in the emblematic domain of drone-led warfare.

A rare, in its frankness, interview with a retired Special Forces officer is highly relevant in its observations on the repercussions of such lack of combat experience in the battlefield effectiveness of Greece's Army, all of which have a bearing on the quality of training of its conscript component²⁸:

- Inability to grasp, by professional army officers, how unit composition needs to be altered considering modern battlefield conditions.
- Unrealistic battle training, even down to the level of shooting practice, as in the use of black and white shooting targets as opposed to camouflaged shooting targets.
- Lack of recurrent change in doctrine, operations and training on the basis of experience gained in the battlefield.
- Sliding of the Army's leadership into formulaic and predictable patterns of operations and emphasis on noncombat activities, namely the 'parade army' syndrome.
- Inadequate equipment quality, compared to the peer competitor, Turkey, and limited evolution of tactical doctrine, as in the case of the sniper role.

We would be remiss, however, in not mentioning that important steps have been taken lately in the opposite direction. While Greece has not sent detachments to conflict situations - although it is considering doing so at Sahel, in the context of the recently signed mutual defence agreement with France – there is a considerable rise in the occurrence of high-quality training of the Army's professional components with US and other forces, primarily involving Armour, Army Aviation and Special Forces units.²⁹

We investigated the status of physical fitness training in the professional component, our assumption being that weaknesses pertaining to professionals will be compounded for conscripts.

Certainly, the possibility exists for this greater training intensity to improve the overall training of mixed units, professionals and conscripts. As in the examination of the case study of drones we would still argue however that actual battlefield experience acquired by professional officers and NCOs – with the current most significant opportunity being the sending of a Special Forces contingent to the Sahel – is critical to the complex of changes needed. Changes that can both upgrade the quality of conscript training and actually offer the opportunity to Greek conscripts, across the range of roles, skills and techno-scientific knowledge, to make a full contribution to a qualitatively superior Army to that of Turkey. A very good example of the qualitative edge accruing from participation of units of the Greek Armed Forces in realistic operations, albeit involving only professionals, is the everyday engagement of Interception Wings of the Hellenic Air Force in confronting the challenges posed by Turkey's Air Force from 1974 to today. In this area, of the design and execution of air superiority missions, the Hellenic Air Force has won the admiration and recognition of highly skilled allied Air Forces which have

²⁷ For the geopolitical as well as operational benefits, deriving from Greek Armed Forces participation in demanding missions in third countries see A.Diakopoulos, "Έχει δουλειά η χώρα μας στο Σαχέλ;" (Has our country any business at Sahel?), *Kathimerini*, 17.10.2021.

²⁸ LOK (April 2015), "Η άποψη ενός απόστρατου των Ειδικών Δυνάμεων" (The view of a retired officer from the Special Forces), pp. 105-115.

²⁹ For a review of the increasing tempo of such exercises see S.D. Vlassis, "Γιατί οι Ειδικές Δυνάμεις δεν είχαν χρόνο να «ασχοληθούν» με το θεατρικό του Πολυτεχνείου" (Why the Special Forces had no time to 'busy themselves' with the theatrics of the Polytechnic), *Doureios Ippos*, 26.11.2021.

jointly participated in large exercises such as INIOHOS³⁰.

Turning to physical fitness, we underline that it is a domain in which the best armies in the world invest a great deal of thought and resources, as it is considered a sine qua non for the ability of a soldier to perform his/her tasks in highly demanding battlefield conditions; not only physically but also cognitively, as physical fitness improves cognitive ability under high stress conditions. Indicatively, the US Army's new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), just like the old, is institutionalised through 'train the trainers' and trainer validation schemes, provision of the necessary physical fitness equipment, guidance to all personnel so that they can meet the test, and rigorous annual physical fitness tests, based on the implementation of the relevant Executive Order. The roll out of the ACFT has been delayed due to COVID 19 but its broadly positive reception bears testimony to the centrality of a suitable physical fitness regime for the world's most advanced Army.³¹

As a proxy for evaluating the state of physical fitness of the Greek conscript component, we investigated the status of physical fitness training in the professional component, our assumption being that weaknesses pertaining to professionals will be compounded for conscripts.

Encouragingly, all the indicators now are pointing to a positive direction.

An interview with a professional involved in the fitness regime of Greek Armed Forces has highlighted the following:

- Physical fitness tests in the Greek Armed Forces, such as the Cooper Test employed by the Hellenic Air Force, are outdated (the Cooper test is fifty years old).
- The prevailing attitude among officers above 40 years old – typically the age of a lieutenant colonel in the Greek Ground Force – is that physical fitness is not relevant for high-ranking officers.
- Physical fitness tests that professional officers and NCOs are called upon to pass are often perfunctory and may lack integrity.

Considering the above, it does not come as a surprise that there is neither any thought given to improving the physical fitness of Greece's conscript component nor any provision made for a physical fitness regime and instilling of nutritional habits, that would improve their capacity to perform effectively in combat – and that happens in a country which already has one of the most obese adolescents and early youth cohorts in the EU-27³².

On the positive side, we note the highly advanced knowledge, in Greece's Armed Forces, on the intersection of physical fitness and cognitive ability, as in the case of advanced research undertaken which involves Greece's elite Navy Seals (known as OYK by their Greek initials).³³ Homegrown expertise built in Greece's academic community, decades

³⁰ We owe this observation to a retired, high ranking Hellenic Air Force officer.

³¹ For the physical requirements of the modern battlefield see, C. Thomas, "What are the physical requirements for the modern battlefield?", *The Cove*, 9.11.2021. For the institutionalisation and intelligent adjustment of the ACFT fitness regime see J. Rozman, and E. Irby (6..2020), The Army Combat Fitness Test is exactly what the Army needs – as long as these challenges are addressed, Modern War Institute at West Point.

³² For childhood obesity in Greece, see K.D. Tambalis D.B. Panagiotakos, S.A. Kavouras, A.A.Kallistratos, I.P.Moraiti, S.I., Douvis, P.K., Toutouzas, LS. Sidossis LS (2010) "Eleven-year prevalence trends of obesity in Greek children: first evidence that prevalence of obesity is leveling off", *Obesity (Silver Spring)* 18(1), pp.161-6.

³³ See indicatively, S., Moutrakos, G. Vassiliou, Ch. Papageorgiou, et al. (2021), "Resilience of the Hellenic Navy Seals assessed by heart rate variability during cognitive tasks", *Physiology and Behavior*, 239, pp. 1-6.

in the making, on physical fitness and nutrition, means that once the political will manifests itself, Greece's Armed Forces will be well-capable of deploying an evidence-based, highly effective physical fitness regime both for its professional and conscript component. Additionally, Greece's high rates of obesity coexist with a body fitness culture which is typical for a high income country, meaning that Greek youth are, to a meaningful degree, habituated to advanced physical fitness techniques.

We cannot but fail to notice the common thread that runs through the unwillingness of Greece's political class, of all hues, and ultimately of the Greek society, only now reversed under the duress of Turkish aggression, to do 'what it takes' to build an effective, mixed professional and conscript, Army. Avoiding sending professional officers and NCOs in harm's way, in expeditionary missions, and not ensuring that both professionals and conscripts possess the absolutely necessary prerequisite of battlefield effectiveness, physical fitness, which can be acquired at no physical risk: these are just two indications, at the opposing ends of the risk spectrum, of the decades-long unwillingness to overcome political cost considerations and societal prejudice, in order to secure for the country a military deterrence built on an indisputable qualitative advantage over the much larger Turkish Armed Forces.

Conscripts would have strongly related to the demands of drone-led warfare due to their affinity with a technology emblematic of their generational upbringing.

Encouragingly, all the indicators now are pointing to a positive direction. The raised tempo in training, particularly with highly advanced partner forces, investment in training facilities and acquisitions of materiel, as mentioned above, demonstrate a transition for the professional component from the perfunctory to the substantive. Participation in the Sahel is a necessary next step, in this process, which the Greek government seems ready to take. To the extent that these trends maintain themselves, the professional Army officer corps and NCOs will certainly be highly capable of creating a well-trained conscript component and will themselves become the most forceful advocates for a fit-for-purpose Army in all its facets – including that of physical fitness which we highlighted.

The Missed Opportunity, for a modernised Greek conscript component, of mastering drone-led warfare in the battlefield³⁴

Drone warfare is par excellence the example where Greek Armed Forces, due to the lack of battlefield experience, had failed to keep pace with the Turkish Armed Forces in the last twenty years and are only now catching up. Participation in combat zones has meant that drone-led operations have been well integrated in a variety of Armed Forces, be they mixed professionals and conscripts, as in the case of Israel or Sweden, or of fellow NATO-member countries, with all volunteer forces, such as that of Italy, which does not even face a threat to its territory like Greece does.

Greek Armed Forces operated in Afghanistan with small contingents, at a safe remove from the battlefield and did not participate at all at the Sahel in the last twenty years. By contrast Italy operated in Afghanistan while Sweden operated in both Afghanistan and the Sahel with larger contingents, which were deployed on the field and where

³⁴ This segment is based in the following publications, A. Kamaras " Turkish drones, Greek challenges", ELIAMEP, Policy Paper, 5.3.2021; S. Borg (2020), "Below the radar. Examining a small state's usage of tactical unmanned aerial vehicles", *Defence Studies*, 20:3, pp. 185-201; S. Borg(2020) Assembling Israeli drone warfare: Loitering surveillance and operational sustainability, *Security & Dialogue* and F. Cottiglia, and F.N. Moro, (2016) Learning from others? Emulation and change in the Italian Armed Forces since 2001, *Armed Forces & Society*, 42:4, pp. 696-718.

Such a conscript component, either through skills development of younger conscripts or skills deployment of older ones, will both fit the Army's needs and actually provide the social capital and/or experience which conscripts can make use of in the civilian job market, subsequent to the completion of their enlistment.

they were engaged, primarily in Afghanistan, in the battlefield.

For both Italy and Sweden these experiences proved to be catalytic in terms of their ability to modernise their operations and doctrines and upgrade their equipment. Drone surveillance was blended with other sources of intelligence and improved the effectiveness of tactical deployments, modernising the concept of operations. Political leaderships back home were compelled to secure the necessary resources so that units in the field would be adequately protected. National contingents participated in the formation of a common operation picture, acting together with the highly capable US Forces, in the case of Italy in Afghanistan. The battlefield interoperability imperative as well as the imperative of strengthening force protection, through effective use of drones, accelerated drone deployment programmes and improved Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities in the core of the Italian and Swedish Armed Forces.

By contrast, during the same twenty year period, initial advances on drone experimentation and deployment failed to gain momentum in Greece and drone fleets were neither expanded nor renewed, so that they could become integral to operations at all levels (indicatively as way back as in 2006, in the second Lebanon war, there was not a single contact between Israeli Defence Forces and Hezbollah, where IDF units were not supported by real time information provided by drones). This is despite the fact that, in the same period, Turkey made great strides in manufacturing drones of its own and deploying them in several battlefields either directly or through client states and other proxies.

Were Greece to have followed a different path, it is a given that its Army would have embarked in a comprehensive effort to revamp its doctrine, assets and structures. Consequently, conscript training, at the tactical and combined arms level, would have been shaped by the lessons of drone-led warfare. The lessons of drone-led warfare would have shaped the training of a conscript, providing stimulation by engaging the conscript soldier in demanding physical and cognitive tasks, from camouflaging and providing protection against drones to engaging in the distribution of drone-generated intelligence. Furthermore, such training would have led to the acquisition of relevant conscript skills, with applications in the civilian job market, and utilisation of conscript knowledge and skills gained either through post-secondary education and/or the civilian job market, prior to the enlistment of older conscripts. Last but not least, conscripts would have strongly related to the demands of drone-led warfare due to their affinity with a technology emblematic of their generational upbringing. Greece's status as a high-income country means that conscripts are both well-prepared to develop drone-related skills and to transfer such skills and expertise to the Army. Drones are typically an affordable gift to a middle-class child and drones are extensively used in such occasions as weddings by usually young operators. Drone technology is well-developed in Greece's universities and many Greek start-ups, established by young entrepreneurs, in the agricultural sector, as much as other professional domains such as cinematography, urban planning and environmental management employ drone technologies. Greeks studying abroad both at the undergraduate and graduate level, who will end up doing their conscript service in their mid to late twenties, also get acquainted with advanced drone-related technologies.

Achieving Quality in order to deter Quantity: longer conscript service, paid for and whenever the future conscript decides

Analysis has demonstrated that individuals in their mid-twenties, both physically and cognitively, make better soldiers.

While, as we have demonstrated above, time served in conscription is substantially allocated to suboptimal training of conscripts, we still believe that conscript service should be meaningfully increased, mainly for two reasons.

First, so that frontline units are fully manned and are able to focus adequate time to high quality training. Second, so that there is enough time for conscripts with the suitable undergraduate and graduate education to deploy their skills in technically demanding Army competencies (e.g. cyber) while not being necessary for them to be absorbed in front line units (due to the greater number of conscripts made available, at any given time, by the conscript service extension we recommend).

We believe that such a conscript component, either through skills development of younger conscripts or skills deployment of older ones, will both fit the Army's needs and actually provide the social capital and/or experience which conscripts can make use of in the civilian job market, subsequent to the completion of their enlistment. Greece can learn how to survey the annual intake even while at high school, from both the Scandinavian countries and Israel's selection systems, so that it can better match aptitudes with positions. Encouragingly, the current Greek Government has been reported to move in this direction³⁵.

How much should conscript service be extended? This is a technical discussion that this policy paper cannot undertake. We can only identify the criteria that successful, judicious extension of conscription should meet and these should be to meaningfully improve the goals of manning, conscript training and, in case of older, highly trained and educated conscripts, the utilisation of conscript expertise by the country's Armed Forces. Indeed, with regard to conscripts who are educated at the graduate and post-graduate-level in highly relevant technical subjects, we would argue that many of them would be useful to the Navy and Air Force as well, thus reversing the current policy of phasing out of conscript intakes to these two branches.

The increasing complexity of conflict situations commensurably requires from the Greek Armed Forces to systematically tap expertise from its conscript component.

Second, and not just so that we make a virtue out of political necessity, conscript service should retain its voluntary nature, in terms of the choice of time in which a future conscript can choose to enlist. While our political system has found it impossible to implement obligatory service at 18, we believe that this has revealed a highly positive unintended consequence: namely a steady stream of highly educated conscripts, both in Greece and elite academic institutions abroad, at either the undergraduate or graduate level, often at advanced technical subjects. We note here that the US Marine Corps leadership has decided to 'mature the force', i.e. transition from enlisting mostly teenagers to enlisting individuals in their twenties as analysis has demonstrated that individuals in their mid-twenties, both physically and cognitively, make better soldiers³⁶.

This unintended consequence, of enlisting conscripts in their mid to late twenties, however needs to be systematised through a tracking system in a future conscript's education and training, so that at the time of induction the conscript gets channeled at

³⁵See K.P. Papadiohos, "Με «Μοντέλο Ισραήλ η αξιοποίηση των στρατευσίμων» (With an 'Israel model' the utilisation of the conscripts), *Kathimerini*, 28.6.2021.

³⁶According to related evidence of the US Marine Corps physical performance is actually peaking in the mid-twenties and the youngest Marines, in their late teens, account for a disproportionate percentage of various mishaps, see General D.H. Berger,, Commandant of the Marine Corps-U.S. Marine Corps, (November, 2021) Talent Management 2030 .

the most appropriate unit, be it in front line units, support units or at critical functions at the Ministry of National Defence.

Such systematization of graduate and post graduate skills, combined with an increased in length conscript service, can provide a qualitative advantage to the Army (and in the case of Ministry of National Defence functions to all branches of Greece's Armed Forces) over its Turkish counterpart. The two main drivers of utilising older, highly educated and/or trained in a civilian setting conscripts are the imperatives of cross-domain deterrence and of the ceaseless modernisation of the Armed Forces' 'back office' operations.

Both the Scandinavian countries reviewed here and Israel use conscription as an enrollment mechanism for professionals.

Cross domain deterrence, as we mentioned in the introduction, refers to the inclusion in conflict situations of domains other than land, air and sea, indicatively the cyber, space and information domains³⁷. The increasing complexity of conflict situations commensurably requires from the Greek Armed Forces to systematically tap expertise from its conscript component, as such varied expertise cannot realistically be provided only by professional officers and NCOs. In effect such a utilization would strengthen the Army's ability to possess a qualitative edge not only at the level of the break out of all-out war but also at all other levels, and crises, short of/or preceding such an eventuality. The modernization of 'back office operations' refers par excellence to dual use functions, such as logistics, finance, warehouse and component parts management, the increasing efficiency of which can have a material impact on the battle-worthiness of the Greek Armed Forces. Here too, highly educated and/or trained conscripts can make a meaningful difference in performance. A critical mass of Greek conscripts are routinely educated and trained, prior to conscription, so as to be effective in complex, civilian corporations (e.g., a twenty seven years old conscript, with a degree in Economics and an MBA, and a two years job experience, under his belt) while advanced militaries and advanced corporations have always cross-pollinated each other³⁸.

Both in Scandinavian countries and Israel frontline postings, particularly in elite formations, are coveted and attractive across the socioeconomic divide.

While we appreciate the concerns of highly reputable retired Army officers that anything other than a strict rule for service at units at the land border with Turkey and the islands in the Eastern Aegean will be abused, we believe that such strict rules, on their own, always end up being undermined by clientelistic pressures which create, in due course, various loopholes³⁹. By contrast, the best guarantee that conscripts will be, by and large, efficiently utilised by the Army, and other Service Branches, lies in the overall successful modernisation of Greece's Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence.

Additionally, Greek policy makers can and should experiment with introducing the option to particularly valuable conscripts, in terms of their technocratic and/or scientific expertise, to serve longer as either professional uniformed or civilian Ministry of Defence personnel. Both the Scandinavian countries reviewed here and Israel use conscription as

³⁷ For an introduction into the concept of cross-domain deterrence see J.R. Lindsay and E. Gartzke Introduction: Cross-Domain Deterrence, from Practice to Theory in J.R. Lindsay and E. Gartzke, eds. (2019) Cross-Domain Deterrence – Strategy .in the Era of Complexity, Oxford University Press, pp.1-23

³⁸ This historical fact was illuminated to one of the authors of this policy paper when, back in 1990, and while serving at the Ministry of National Defence, he got to meet conscripts with UK MSc degrees in Operations Research, assisting in the budgeting process of the Ministry. Of course Operations Research as a discipline was established during WW II driven, among other factors, by the need of the UK's and US's military leaderships to calculate the effect of the bombing campaign on Germany's war effort. In the post WW II period operations research was widely used by large, private-sector corporations.

³⁹ See for a powerful advocacy of such a strict rule the position of the ex-Chief of the General Staff, General (ret) Mihalis Kostarakos in "Τι πρέπει να γίνει για να ωφεληθούν έμπρακτα οι Ένοπλες Δυνάμεις από την αύξηση της θητείας" (What needs to be done so that the Armed Forces benefit practically from the raise in the conscript service.), *Ta Nea*, 28.1.2021:

Both symbolically and operationally, the politico-military leadership should prove that it highly values the conscript human capital at its disposal, and is willing to commit the thought and means necessary so that conscript morale is not undermined, and conscript time is not wasted, in redundant routines.

Greece should emulate the Scandinavian model of an effectively voluntary draft for women [...] women conscription plays to the durable strengths of the Greek polity and society that simply cannot be emulated by the Turkish state and government.

an enrollment mechanism for professionals⁴⁰. Other countries also appreciate that their Armed Forces need regular infusions of civilian expertise to grapple with particular operational and technical challenges⁴¹. For example the Ministry of National Defence could develop career tracks for promising conscripts, in such fields as cyber, thus making an additional three to five year stint as a professional a promising career step for highly skilled in IT and other highly technical domains conscripts. Modest levels of salaried pay, based on state employees' pay scales, could be compensated subsequently by employment opportunities in a private sector appreciative of the level of responsibility and sophistication placed at the disposal of these ex-conscripts. Defence-related innovation in Greek private firms could be particularly appreciative of the expertise gained through such career trajectories which could very well boost their own innovative capacity.

We also believe that there should be no differentiation for length of service between conscripts involved in front line units and those in support units or Ministry of National Defence directorates. Service on both types of units should be demanding and rigorous to be worthwhile to the Army and to the conscript. Nor in an overall high quality mixed Army, of professionals and conscripts, should a frontline posting in the Evros region or the Eastern Aegean islands be considered disadvantageous. We have seen how both in Scandinavian countries and Israel frontline postings, particularly in elite formations, are coveted and attractive across the socioeconomic divide. We have noted above anecdotal evidence that this is also the case in Greece's Special Forces, where socioeconomically privileged conscripts volunteer to serve. We fully expect that an upgraded training regime in all of the frontline arms, Armour, Artillery, Infantry including Special Forces, but also in technically demanding functions such as logistics and signals, to rapidly acquire the same status among Greece's conscripts. In fact we fully expect that service in well-equipped, well-trained and increasingly reputable Army units located in the eastern border and islands, as well as in those Special Forces units and the 71 Airborne Brigade located in the mainland, to be appealing to privileged, mostly urban socioeconomic segments. Such service after all (a) closely resembles the prior to conscription engagement of these socioeconomic segments with competitive sports and their recreational exposure to the Greek countryside and (b) appeals to the strategic use of prestigious conscription service, by these socioeconomic segments, for career advancement purposes in highly competitive, CVs-driven, job markets, domestic and international, e.g. banking, management consultancy and the like.

Relatedly, it is a necessity to judiciously invest resources in both front line and rear units so that necessary but routine tasks, such as guard duty, are massively reduced. Indicatively, guard duty can be replaced through the installation of cameras and control rooms – surveillance technologies that can now be acquired at little cost - and improved garrison fencing. Both symbolically and operationally, the politico-military leadership should prove that it highly values the conscript human capital at its disposal, and is willing to commit the thought and means necessary so that conscript morale is not undermined, and conscript time is not wasted, in redundant routines. Capital investment and efficiency drives in other such activities, as facilities management, provisioning, cooking, can also save up on conscript time while imparting applicable skills to conscripts in such civilians sectors as the dominant tourist sector.

⁴⁰ See G. Baram, and I. Ben-Israel, (Autumn, 2019) The Academic Reserve – Israel's Fast Track to High-Tech Success, *Israel Studies Review*, 34 (2). pp. 75-91.

⁴¹ See relatedly the Australian Defence Forces scheme for enlisting civilians as uniformed personnel in key functions even mid-career, A. Vlachos" Benefits of Australian Defence Recruitment System", *Kathimerini (English Edition)*, 15.11.2020.

We also recommend that conscripts receive a monthly stipend.

We would include in these expenses the creation of a single basic training center for the totality of the Army's conscript intake [...] co-located with a newly-constituted Center for Initial Military Training.

Third, Greece should emulate the Scandinavian model of an effectively voluntary draft for women by surveying the aptitudes of all female potential recruits and relying on their voluntary volition to join the country's Armed Forces. By an effectively voluntary draft we mean that the Ministry of National Defence should define the number of female conscripts it needs and attain this enlistment number by recruiting among all potential female conscripts those who evince the sufficient degree of motivation. Such a scheme should enhance the availability of highly motivated conscripts, thus allowing allocation to be implemented on skill and aptitude to a maximum degree and not driven by the imperative to have fully manned frontline units. Enlisting graduate or post-graduate women conscripts, with university graduate and post graduate degrees in such subjects as IT, engineering, finance, could make a particular meaningful contribution. As with all other facets of Greek conscription that we reviewed above, women conscription plays to the durable strengths of the Greek polity and society that simply cannot be emulated by the Turkish state and government: a solidly grounded equality of the sexes in the Greek and EU legal order and fast evolving social mores that are in alignment with this order. As for the criteria and utility of women's participation in the Greek Armed Forces we could no worse than quote a pragmatic Israeli source "There is a wide variety of extremely meaningful positions – including combat positions - that do not require the soldier to carry 70 kilograms on her back for 50 kilometers. The rule should be that women can hold any position unless there are objective prerequisites that women cannot fulfill, and that only then it is justified to refrain from integrating them into such positions"⁴². Naturally the more successful a voluntary women conscription is, the better able the Army will be able to have the conscript intake that can fulfill all three main goals, and none at the expense of the other, namely of (a) adequate manning of frontline units, (b) a satisfactory in its duration training cycle and (c) access and utilisation by the Army of a wide range of skills necessary for cross domain deterrence and 'back office' operational modernisation.

We also recommend that conscripts receive a monthly stipend. Indicatively 300 euros per month that would put a monetary and thus tangible value in the state's appreciation of the vital contribution that conscription makes to national defence. Such a modest but still decent amount, as a meaningful recognition of the valuable service to the nation that the conscript provides it could also boost the claims that the state has on the conscript's dedication and diligence while in service. As this allocation will mostly boost demand in Greece's eastern border regions, year-round, it can be balanced with other region-specific claims. Rationalisation measures, in terms of units consolidation, closing garrisons surplus to requirements and so on, could partly make up for this additional expenditure.

Such a judicious investment in the conscript service, in terms of personnel selection, skills acquisition, skills and expertise deployment, assumption of operational responsibility, can very well make conscript service of comparable as well as complementary value to vocational training and/or higher education. We mention here that conscript service is elite combat units and special high tech operations in the Israeli Defence Forces has been evaluated as being more important to career prospects in the Israeli tech industry than academic degrees⁴³.

⁴² P.S.Baruch, "What is the Appropriate Model for Female Service in the IDF?" in M. Elran and G.Sheffer, eds (September, 2016) Military Service in Israel: Challenges and Ramifications, Institute for National Security Studies, Memorandum 159, pp.77-93.

⁴³See relatedly O. Swed, and J.S. Butler (2015) Military Capital in the Israeli High-tech Industry, *Armed Forces & Society*, 41 (1), pp. 123-141.

This distribution of skills [...] is not innate to the Greek nation but rather can only be a product of deliberate, sustained reforms and innovations, regarding Greece's conscription model.

We have no doubt, that modernisation of training of the Army, of which the conscript component is a vital part, covers a wide range of expenditure items, from adoption of improved gear, to greater use of advanced equipment, to more intensive and recurrent weapon practice and live fire exercises, and thus a rise in operational costs through accelerated depreciation of equipment, use of ammunition, upgrades of training facilities and so forth. Arguably, these expenses would have needed to be undertaken at any rate for the Army to satisfactorily serve its deterrent role. We would include in these expenses the creation of a single basic training center for the totality of the Army's conscript intake (indicatively the US Army has only four such centers in the whole of the continental US and the UK Army only one) co-located with a newly-constituted Center for Initial Military Training. The idea here is to create a spatial and institutional locus for modern, NATO-standard, constantly evolving basic training, which can achieve economies of scale in terms of the creation and use of advanced training facilities as well as the evolution, accumulation and diffusion of the relevant basic training expertise and standardisation of high quality training to all of the Army's conscripts. Greece's Special Forces are already moving in that direction and it is high time that all conscripts get the high quality basic training that the country's deterrence necessitates. In that regard, the inactivation of the various small and unsophisticated Army Training Centers, which typically featured dormitories, a parade ground and a simple shooting range, may be a blessing in disguise, as long as the decision is taken to return basic training from front line units, to the single, modern, training facility we recommend⁴⁴.

These greater allocations of time, by the conscript, and money, by the state, need to be explicated and integrated in a new national defence doctrine. We have argued that political conditions are now mature for such allocations to be secured. Taking our cues for countries such as Finland, this official defence doctrine would credibly reference the size and quality of the Army's reserve forces that such a modernised conscription service will avail to the nation's deterrence against Turkey⁴⁵: Such a defence doctrine should also commit to making highly educated and/or trained, in a civilian setting, conscripts, integral to (a) the Armed Forces' acquisition of cross-domain deterrence capabilities, as in the case of cyber warfare, and (b) and of the modernisation of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence's 'back office' functions, such as finance, logistics and warehouse management.

Greece's greater socioeconomic and ethnic homogeneity renders the reform of its conscription much more amenable to change than the Turkish one.

Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

Greece, just like all of its peer countries in Europe and the Middle East, small to medium sized, high-income democracies, which face acute national security threats, needs a well-equipped and well-trained conscript component. Furthermore these peer countries provide templates that can be emulated and adjusted so that Greece implements a successful transformation of conscription as a pillar of its national defence. We can hardly emphasise the importance of the fact, particularly at a time when public discourse in Greece is dominated by the acquisition of highly advanced warships and fighter aircraft, that deterrence is not only about the distribution of superior technology but

⁴⁴ For the mission of a sophisticated Center for Initial Training consult the site of the US Army's such organisation, <https://usacimt.tradoc.army.mil/historyandfunction.html>. For more information on the British Army's basic training facility which offers to all Army recruits the standard three and a half months basic training course see <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/our-schools-and-colleges/atc-pirbright/#:~:text=Left%20Right-,Training,when%20they%20join%20the%20Army>. For the upgrade of the training facilities of the Greek Special Forces see S.D.Vlassis, "Εγκαίνια νέου Πεδίου Βολής Κανδηλίου για τις Ειδικές Δυνάμεις" (Inauguration of the new Kondyliou Firing Range for the Special Forces), *Doireios Ippos*, 13.12.2021.

⁴⁵ See Prime Minister's Office-Finland, (July, 2017) Government's Defence Report.

also about the distribution of superior human skills. We thus reiterate that human skills, in terms of competently trained conscript component, can both blunt the military technology employed by an enemy and enhance the impact of military technology employed by the Greek Armed Forces. It needs also to be emphasised that this distribution of skills – the qualitative superiority that is a must for Greece considering Turkey's quantitative superiority – is not innate to the Greek nation but rather can only be a product of deliberate, sustained reforms and innovations, regarding Greece's conscription model.

Crucially Turkey's highly problematic conscription model – riven with class, urban-provincial and even ethnic cleavages, allowing highly educated youth to do minimal service or altogether buy out their service obligations, and incorporating such retrograde methods as extensive corporal punishment – means that Greece, by transforming its conscription model, it can turn its conscript component into a key source of qualitative superiority over the Turkish Armed Forces. Simply put, Greece's greater socioeconomic and ethnic homogeneity renders the reform of its conscription much more amenable to change than the Turkish one. Importantly, for the labour-intensive Army, its conscripts are a highly affordable 'homegrown' as opposed to a highly expensive, imported asset, such as fifth generation aircraft, and most of the fiscal expenditure conscripts require, to provide such a qualitative advantage to the Greek Army, support the Greek economy (not least by advancing human capital formation). Critically, the preceding nearly decade-long fiscal crisis has created the political space in Greece to move away from long-redundant perceptions and preferences which were the legacies, often perverted through political contestation, of the post-junta democratization period. No, a scientifically-based, professionally managed physical fitness regime does not constitute conscript hazing by an incorrigibly authoritarian officer corps. Rather, such a regime is both a sine qua non for the battlefield effectiveness of professionals and conscripts alike as well as a foundation for the health and wellbeing of Greece's men and women in uniform. A demanding, in terms of training and participation in operations, conscript service of say eighteen of twenty months, adequately if modestly compensated, in highly modern Armed Forces is not an intolerable and outdated waste of time for 21st century youth in a high income, western country. Rather such a service confers to the conscript accelerated maturity, through the assumption of responsibility over his/her teammates and sophisticated and expensive materiel and provides him or her with marketable technical or scientific skills and crucial social capital.

A reformed conscription model can enhance Greek classic deterrence, either foreclosing the possibility of war with Turkey or, in case of military conflict, providing the ultimate guarantee to the country's territorial integrity. Simply put, a Greek conscript who serves longer, is trained better, is utilised according to his or her unique skills and abilities, and comes from all walks of Greek life, will be a significantly superior soldier to his Turkish counterpart. It is precisely that type of Greek conscript soldier that can give second and third thoughts to an adventurist Turkish politico-military leadership before it escalates from a future, Imia-type, aeronautical hot incident, where it will be most probably checkmated by the increasingly strengthened Hellenic Air Force and Navy, to an all-out ground war. An Army composed of such conscripts soldiers is also one of the strongest guarantees that, through boosting Greece's deterrence, conscripts themselves will never face the horrors of modern battle. In the highly unlikely event that Greece, after thus boosting its deterrence against Turkey, stills finds itself at war with her, it is the Army's conscripts superior training that will ensure that Greece's conscript and reserve forces emerge from such a war with minimum losses, in life, limp and sanity, having first proven the ability to defend their country's sovereignty and sovereign rights.

An Army composed of such conscripts soldiers is also one of the strongest guarantees that, through boosting Greece's deterrence, conscripts themselves will never face the horrors of modern battle.

The right process and place, where this profound shift in the conception of the role of the conscript component of the Army in Greek national defence should take place, is in a formal, publicly available national defence doctrine and force structure.

As importantly, and more certainly, this qualitative superior conscript component, can meaningfully improve the Army's ability, as well as of the other branches and the Ministry of Defence, to execute cross domain deterrence short of war, due to the diversity of high quality skills, acquired in civilian life, that only conscripts can provide. Thus such a conscript component is not just the price we will pay for insuring against a far-off but potentially catastrophic event, namely all-out war – it will also be the reward we will be reaping by managing to our benefit all the crises that for certain will occur and which will challenge our national security and national interests periodically.

We reiterate, on the basis of the above, the top nine recommendations of this policy paper:

1. Systematise unit assignment for all conscripts by surveying conscripts education, skills and training regardless of the age the conscript chooses to enlist.
2. Institutionalise standardization and excellence in conscript's basic training by creating a single basic training center in the whole of Greece where all of the Army's conscripts will get their basic training prior to their unit assignments.
3. Make highly educated and trained conscripts a pillar for the ongoing, ceaseless modernisation of all branches of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), particularly in cross domain deterrence functions and such 'back-office' operations as procurement, logistics, finance, and equipment maintenance.
4. Adopt selective women's conscription in order to boost numerically the conscript component and take advantage of highly talented and motivated women conscripts, including in stereotype-busting, knowledge-intensive domains (e.g. cyber, engineering, etc).
5. Provide a post-conscript career track, whether in uniform or as civilians, in the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence, for particularly accomplished conscripts in key competencies for Greece's military deterrence.
6. Determine the length of conscription service in such a manner that a) all combat units whether in the eastern border with Turkey, the eastern Aegean Islands or in the mainland (Special Forces, 71 Air Borne Brigade) are fully manned b) conscripts participate in the full cycle of training and operations, maximizing their units' effectiveness and cohesion. c) highly skilled conscripts can be made available for cross-domain deterrence operations (e.g., cyber) and critical 'back-office' operations (e.g., logistics, finance, etc).
7. Modestly but meaningfully compensate conscripts to mitigate the burden of conscript service on family balance sheets and boost conscript reciprocity, in diligence and dedication while in uniform.
8. Modernise and rationalise everyday tasks (e.g., garrison protection, facility management), so as to respect conscripts' time and effort and to impart marketable skills to those conscripts who undertake them.
9. Introduce for both professionals and conscripts a robust, science-based physical fitness regime and institutionalise it, so that both professionals and conscripts attain maximum physical fitness.

The right process and place, where this profound shift in the conception of the role of the conscript component of the Army in Greek national defence should take place, is in a formal, publicly available national defence doctrine and force structure. A Turkish leadership that has formally and brazenly questioned the sovereignty of Greek territory defended by Greek Armed Forces demands nothing less than the detailed enunciation and implementation of a commitment to thus strengthen the Army: by decisively modernising the training and mission of its conscript component.