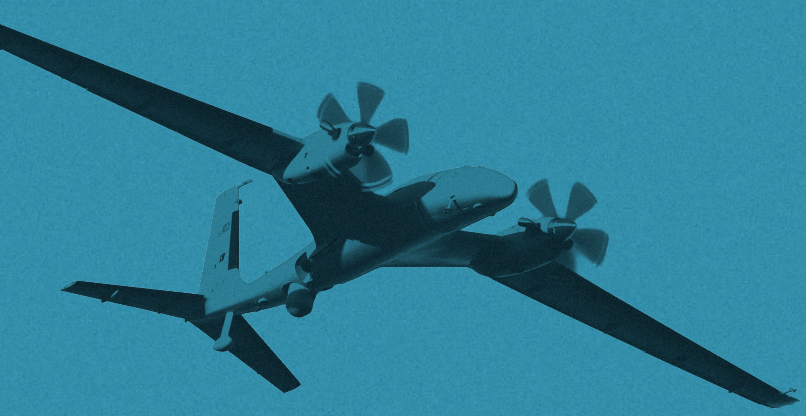


Özdemir

BAYRAKTAR

An *Akıncı* Passed Through This World



Özdemir

BAYRAKTAR

An *Akıncı* Passed Through This World

—

1 February 1949 – 18 October 2021

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BAYRAKTAR
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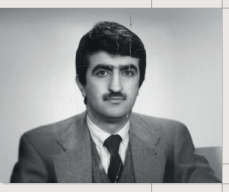
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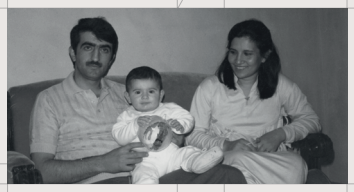
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Foreword

In the Footsteps of an Akıncı...

The book you hold in your hands is not merely the life story of an engineer, an entrepreneur, or a father. These pages are the testimony of a life lived with the soul of an Akıncı — a life that stretched from the restless waves of Garipçe to the sheer cliffs of Gabar, from a windowless workshop room in İkitelli to the boundless blue of the open sky.

These lines are the logbook of a father, a husband, and a man of conviction — one who walked straight on, heedless of the storms, along the truth he believed in and the rightful path he knew.

We — his life's companion Canan, and his sons Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet — knew him not only as the pillar of our home but as our guide, our source of inspiration, and our closest companion on the road.

When Özdemir Bayraktar set out saying, "Let us strike a single spark; this fire will catch. It does not matter who lit it — we will have done our duty," he was kindling not merely a leap forward in technology, but the self-belief of our nation's young people. And we, sustained by our mother's inexhaustible patience, her prayers, and her steadfastness, stood shoulder to shoulder with our father in those workshops, working through the night until morning broke.

Özdemir Bayraktar consecrated his life — and every breath that Allah had granted him — to the fully sovereign and powerful future of our country. He was never a father who left for work in the morning and clocked out to come home at the end of the day. For us, "father" meant the smell of cutting oil in the workshop, milling and turning lathes operated together on weekends, drawings that ran on through the night, and an inexhaustible will to struggle. He never separated his home from his work, his family from his country. Because for him, the turning of a lathe was not a commercial act — it was a struggle for national survival.

His was not a temperament that could be controlled, that could be made to fit any mold. Wherever there was a Gordian knot deemed impossible to untie, wherever there was a task pronounced "undoable," wherever there was a bureaucratic wall to be reckoned with — there he had to be. Our father was, for us, an icebreaker who shattered the icebergs ahead and opened the way. He taught us that what truly mattered was not winning the victory but being on the campaign — that the sanctity lay not in success but in the struggle itself.

He had kneaded into the dough of his being the seafarer's courage he received from his father, Lütfü Reis; the discipline he received from his mother, Emine Hanım; and the ağabey ethos — that older-brother culture of looking out for those behind you — he absorbed at Kabataş Boys' High School. He was a man of heart, who passed on this rich leaven to us, and to the hundreds of young engineers he raised.

In our school years, his deep anguish — captured in his lament, "We raise them here, and they go off and lay their eggs in some other nest" — was, in truth, the purest form of his love for the country. Today, the gleam in the eye of every child who reaches out to touch an aircraft at TEKNOFEST is the most living legacy of his dream and his last testament: "Let one child come, and let them touch an aircraft."

Beyond being the father of our family, Özdemir Bayraktar was our closest comrade in the cause. When we found ourselves at a technical impasse, he lit our way with his engineering genius; at the difficult turns of life, he lit it with the principle of walking straight on. The greatest testament he left us was neither the factories nor the aircraft. His true testament was this: never turn back from the path you know to be right. Living, in every moment, the surrender of "From Him we came, and to Him we shall return," he etched into our minds the conviction that the work we do is not the pursuit of worldly ambition but the search for divine acceptance and service to the nation.

He was a serdengeçti — one of those who go forth having already given up everything for the cause — who refused to live in his comfort zone. When he saw, at a forward base, soldiers melting snow for drinking water, he made it his own burden, did not wait on the bureaucracy, and had a water line laid to that base. He dipped his spoon into the same mess kit as the soldier. He shaved his moustache and put on camouflage so that he could work in the regions of the counter-terrorism campaign. He was a Civilian General.

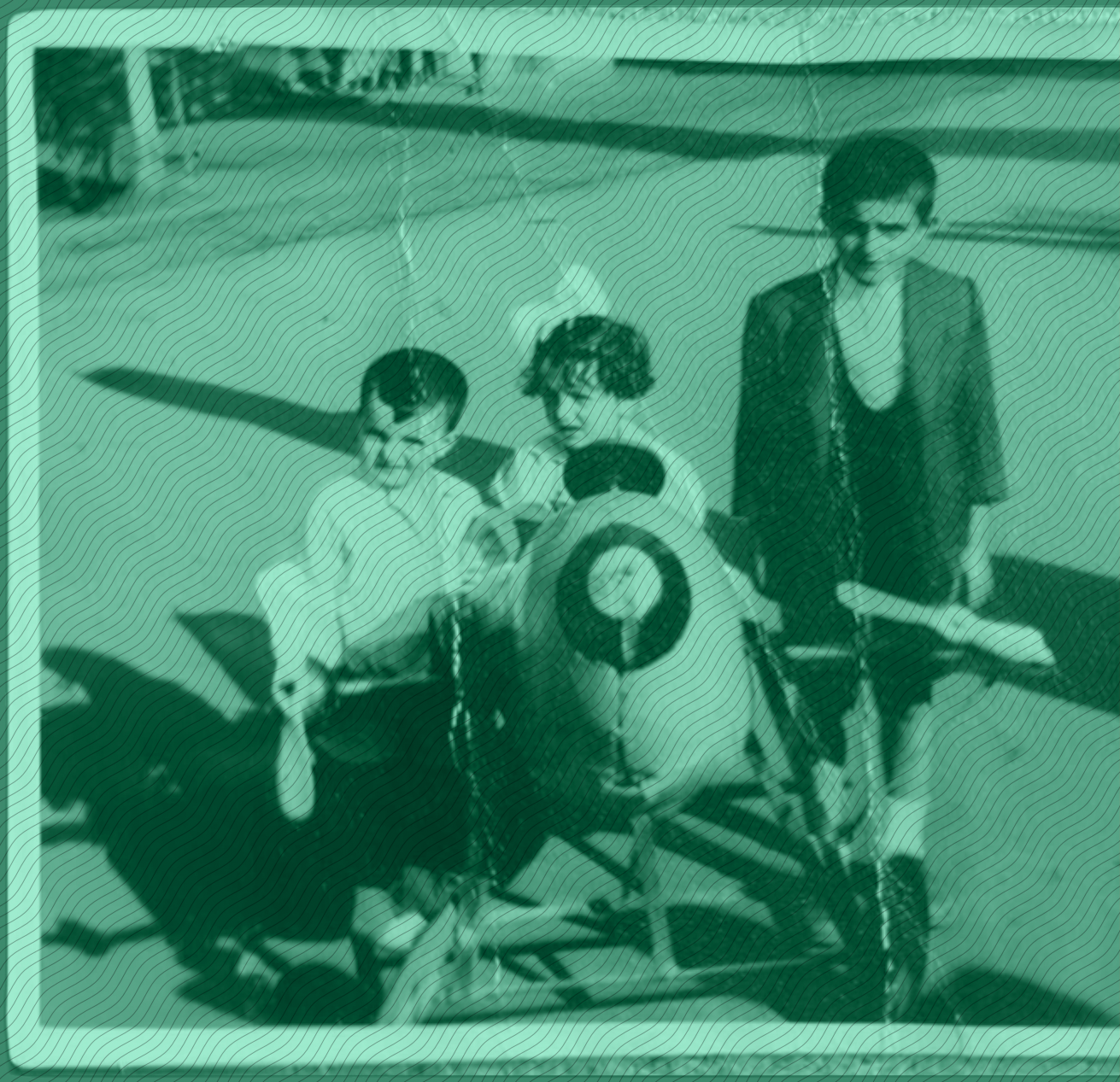
Even during his illness, our father never tore himself away from his factory. He moved his hospital bed into the workshop. With the technical analyses and drawings he labored over until his last breath, he bequeathed to us a fierce will to work. The designs we found on his computers after he passed were the silent but most powerful witness to the resolve he had described in saying, "I do not focus on victory; I focus on the campaign." Though he is no longer physically among us, his principles — penetrating to the depths of every matter — will continue to guide us as we walk the path of the National Technology Initiative.

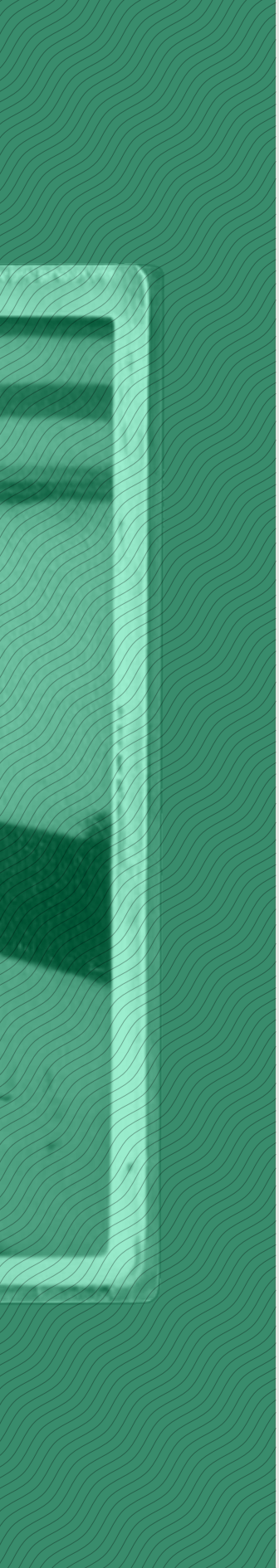
The lines you will read in this book are the projection of a life lived by the maxim: "There is no honor in the self; the honor lies in the work you do." Our father, Özdemir Bayraktar, passed through this world as an Akıncı. He left behind aircraft, technologies — but, above all, millions of young believers who now say, "We, too, can do this."

Without ever letting the standard fall, we will go on walking in your footsteps, toward the Kızıl Elma — the Red Apple — that you set before us.

May your place be in paradise, and may your soul rejoice...

THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY





01

WHILE A STORY TAKES ROOT
(1949-1972)

From Within the Turbulent Sea





Where does a story begin?

How is the seed of long journeys and monumental struggles planted?

As every new beginning, every first step taken, extends into the future with resolve and courage — is what sets a story in motion merely hopes, passions, enthusiasms, losses, and sacrifices?

How does the exhilaration of starting over each time — with the stubborn refusal to give up under any circumstance — arise, grow, and mature at the very moment the story first takes root?

Where exactly did Özdemir Bayraktar begin his own story — and Türkiye's destiny in the skies?

And now, where shall we begin the entire story?

↖
A Bosphorus photograph taken in the 1880s by Sebah & Joaillier in Sarıyer Yenimahalle.


BLACK SEA
GARİPÇE
SÜRMENE
TÜRKİYE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA



BAYRAKTAR FAMILY

MIGRATION MAP

↘
These two photographs from 1918 are rare images documenting the location of Garipçe village and its fortress along the Bosphorus shoreline.





The Roads Branching from Bukhara to Garipçe

THE STORY OF THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY BEGINS IN BUKHARA, MOVES TO SÜRMENE, AND FINALLY REACHES GARİPÇE.

This is a thrilling yet challenging journey that stretched from Bukhara to Trabzon three hundred years ago. At one point, the road branches and finds its way to Garipçe. This should come as no surprise, for with its climate, its people, and its vibrant life, Garipçe evokes Sürmene. Those who migrated from Sürmene to Garipçe carried with them the customs, traditions, and dialect of their homeland. Resting in the shade of enchanting trees and struggling against the fierce sea, the villagers of Garipçe made their living from fishing. Hüseyin Bey, who made his living as a boatman, and Abdurrahman Bey, a fisherman who had also migrated from Sürmene, searched for their sustenance in the same waters—unaware of their shared destiny. This sea and this kinship would, in time, mark the beginning of another story.

One of the three children of Abdurrahman Bey and Hamide Hanım, Lütfü Bey completes primary and middle school before traveling daily from Garipçe village to graduate from Kabataş Boys' High School. Though he wishes to continue his education afterward, he must carry on his father's profession of fishing.

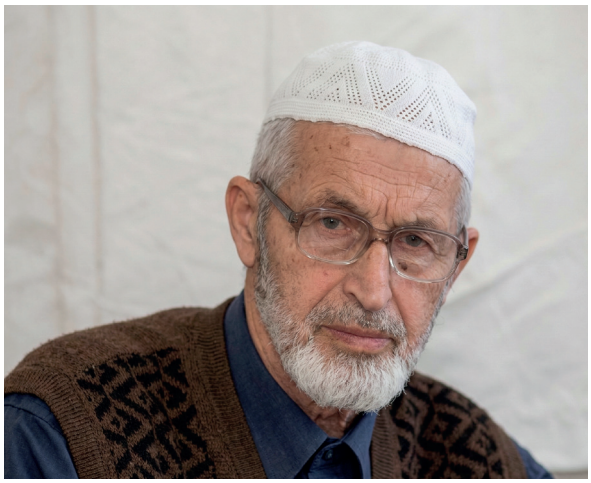
Because of its proximity to the Black Sea, he continues to live in the village of Garipçe at the northern exit of the Bosphorus. Thus begins the seafaring life that Lütfü Bey would carry on for the rest of his days.

Not long after, Lütfü Bey's father, Abdurrahman Bey, and Emine Hanım's father, Hüseyin Bey, marry their children. From the window of the three-storey wooden house by the sea, where he lives with his siblings, Lütfü Bey looks out at the weather and the waves; descending the steep stairs step by step, he makes his way toward the sea some twenty or thirty meters ahead. With each voyage, he prepares himself for a new and lengthy journey.



↘
Özdemir Bayraktar's mother, Emine Hanım, and his father, Lütfü Bey.

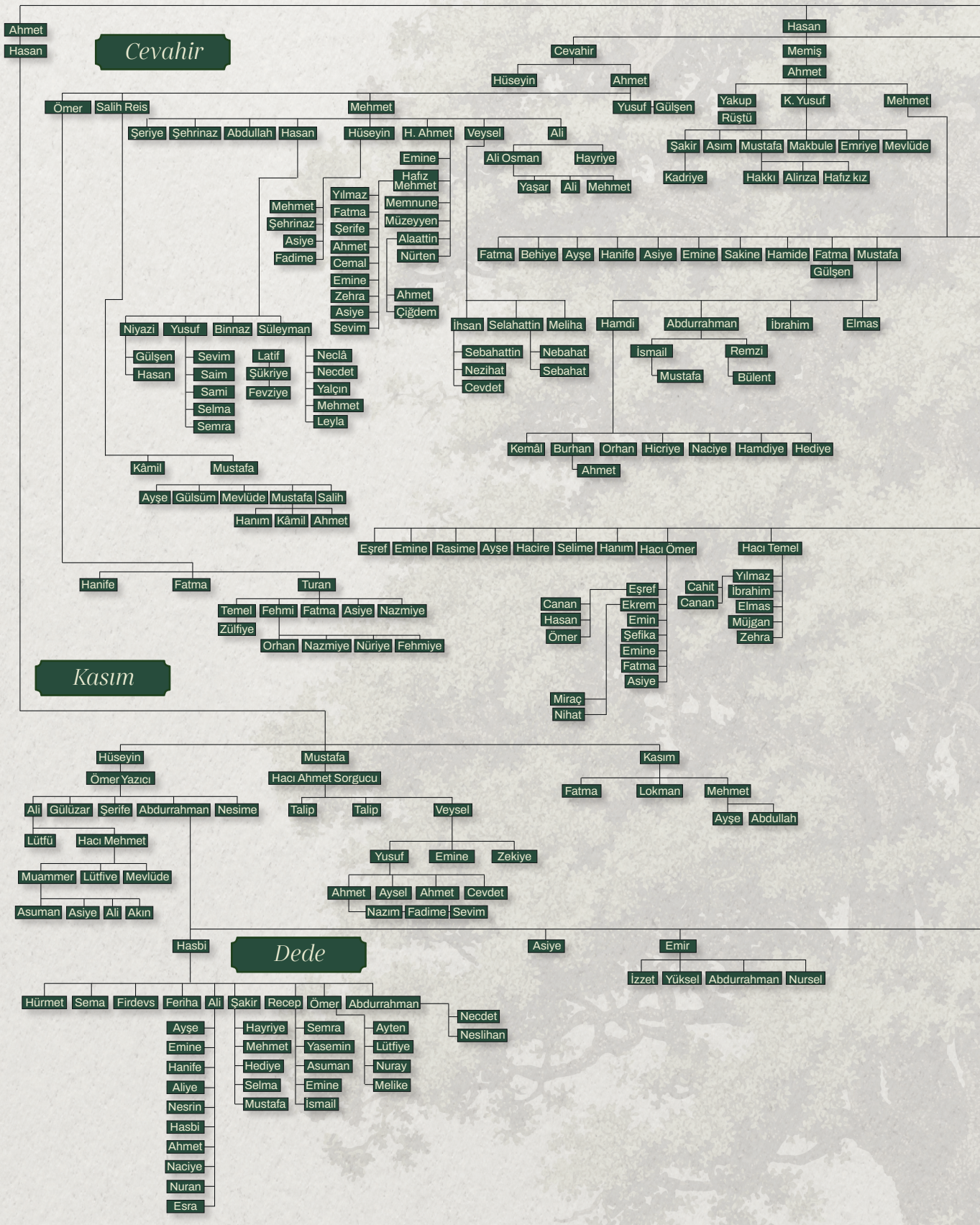
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Özdemir Bayraktar's father, Lütfü Bey.

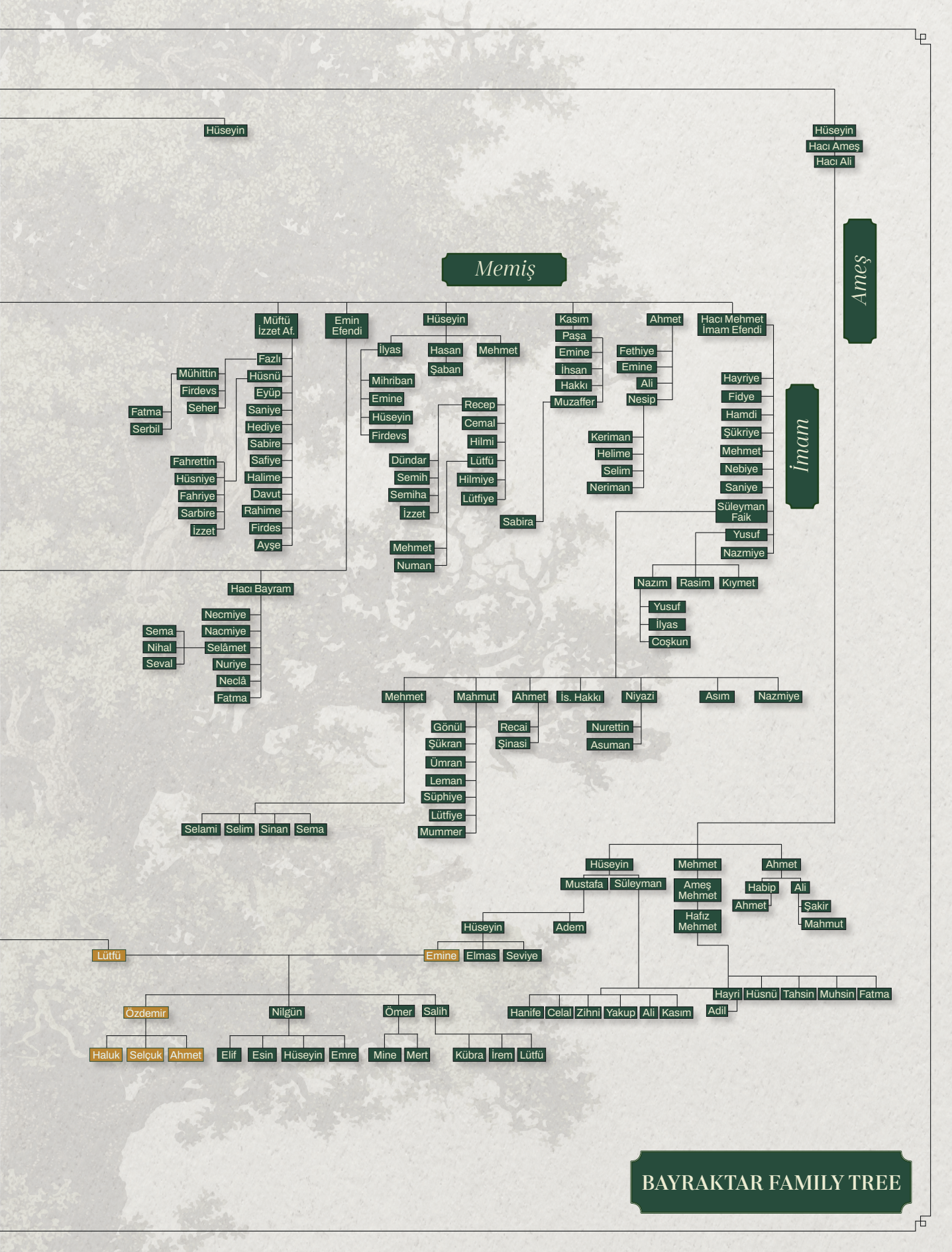


IF THE BOAT WERE TO SINK...

Out on the Black Sea, a great storm. The boats are wooden. The crew numbers twenty. Lütfü Bey, as captain, stands at the helm, steering into the waves. At that very moment, the keel strikes hard against a wave, splits, and begins taking on water. The crew, in desperation to avoid sinking, begin frantically bailing water from the boat. One of the crew members approaches the helm in tears and speaks to Lütfü Reis: *"I have children. If we sink now, who will look after them?"* Lütfü Reis frowns, places his right hand firmly on the man's shoulder, and says: *"Don't you worry. I will look after them."* The man calms down and goes back below deck, throwing himself into the work of bailing water with renewed determination. Those words — revealing Lütfü Reis's composure and sense of responsibility — make the crew forget, if only for a moment, that if the boat were to sink, they would all sink together.

Bayraktar *(Alemdar)*





BAYRAKTAR FAMILY TREE

The Climate of Özdemir's Childhood

"We waited forty days for you!"

Years later, whenever the women of Garipçe see Özdemir, they repeat these word Because Emine Hanım's first two children had died in infancy, the village women prayed for forty days and forty nights while she was pregnant with her third child, awaiting his birth on February 1, 1949. When he was born, it felt as though not only a child but hope itself had entered the world. The memory of that waiting never leaves him; every encounter in the village turns into a playful reminder: "Özdemir, we waited forty days for you!" Throughout his life, Özdemir loves recounting this phrase and joking about it. From the marriage of Emine Hanım and Lütfü Bey come four children: Özdemir, Nilgün, Ömer, and Salih. Whether because their talents show early or not, the two sons grow up mischievous, strong-willed, inclined to follow their own path rather than simply obey their mother.



↗
The first time Özdemir Bayraktar touched an airplane — with his siblings Nilgün and Ömer.



↗
From left to right: Özdemir Bayraktar, Ömer Bayraktar, and their cousin Hüseyin.

FOR THE BAYRAKTARS, BEING TOGETHER AND LEARNING TOGETHER — STANDING SIDE BY SIDE, SHOULDER TO SHOULDER — WILL ALWAYS BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT THEY ACHIEVE OR WHAT THEY DO.

They frequently quarrel over trivial childhood matters: “You ate more cheese; I ate less cheese!” Growing up through tumbles and scrapes, embarking on countless little adventures together, Ömer and his brother Özdemir — four years his senior — fill their days with the sweet vitality of childhood. Later, their younger brother Salih is born. The nearly ten-year age difference ensures that Salih always feels the protective affection of his older siblings. Teaching him new things becomes the way Özdemir, Nilgün, and Ömer spend time with him. When Özdemir teaches Salih how to row, he swims alongside him to support him. Years later, when Özdemir attempts to swim across the Bosphorus, Ömer follows him in a boat. For them, being together and learning together — standing side by side, shoulder to shoulder — will always matter more than what they achieve or accomplish.

“ÖZDEMIR! YOU AGAIN?”

The children set up the goalposts with two heavy stones before the sun had yet reached the hilltop above Garipçe. The evening before, as they were heading home, they had agreed on a match *“for soda”* — the classic neighborhood wager. Women hanging laundry, fishermen returning home with buckets in hand, elders chatting at their doorsteps — everyone had surrendered to the ordinary rhythm of the day. The children, thinking of nothing but the neighborhood match they would play, gradually gathered on the vacant lot where the forest began. A coin toss decided which team would start. The children from the lower neighborhood swaggered forward and claimed the ball. The goalkeeper hurled it high into the air — and the match began. But it was such an exuberant start that a single enthusiastic kick sent the plastic ball flying out of bounds and onto the roof beside the lot. The midday stillness of Garipçe was shattered by the children’s cries of disappointment. As the goalkeeper rushed with the same momentum to retrieve the ball from the roof, something unexpected happened: the ball suddenly came rolling back down. At that very moment, the roof of the abandoned house beside the lot had another guest besides the plastic ball. A boy was up there with a paper airplane he had launched too far — trying to find a way to climb back down without being scolded, eager for another flight attempt. Soon enough, the gruff voice of the elderly neighbor was heard:

“Özdemir! Is it you again?!”



↗
An illustrative drawing inspired by a childhood memory from Garipçe.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar with his mother, Emine Hanım.

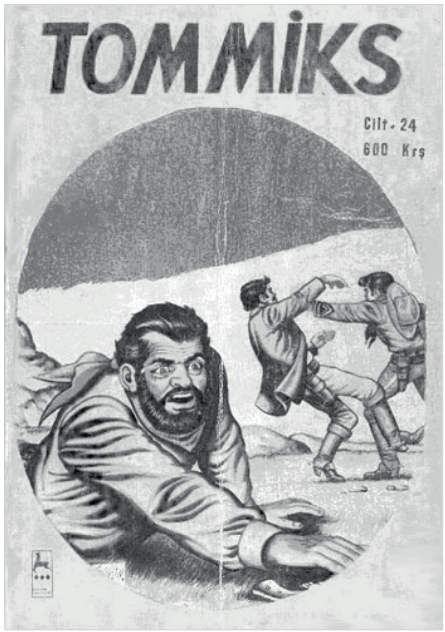


When Lütfü Bey set out to sea and remained away for long periods, the children's upbringing and education fell largely to their mother. Emine Hanım was affectionate, but also hardworking and disciplined. She raised her children within clear boundaries and followed their education closely. If she gave her word, she kept it — without exception. This consistency would play an essential role in shaping the children's character. She attached great importance to evening meals and made sure everyone was present at the table. The foundations of unity, family, keeping one's word, protecting and caring for one another, diligence, effort, and living according to principles were laid in that three-storey wooden house by the sea.

Until Özdemir was eight years old, Lütfü Bey shared the house with his siblings Hasbi, Emir, and Asiye. But as the family grew, it became increasingly difficult to fit under one roof. In 1958, Lütfü Bey and Emine Hanım moved with their children to Sarıyer. Even so, they continued visiting Garipçe, as Lütfü Bey's parents still lived there.

Özdemir begins his education at Garipçe Primary School and continues at Yeni Mahalle Primary School in Sarıyer. He is highly successful in his studies. One day, his teacher in Sarıyer calls Emine Hanım to school. After speaking with her, the teacher asks: “Madam, you speak very properly. Where did Özdemir pick up that accent?” Because Garipçe was almost like a village of Sürmene, Özdemir spoke with a Black Sea dialect. Although he was intelligent and capable, other interests seemed more captivating to him than studying. He continued secretly reading Tommiks and Teksas comic books hidden inside his textbooks, paying little attention to his mother’s warnings. In response, Emine Hanım brought three-year-old Ömer with her to the school. She knocked on the classroom door during lesson time, informed the teacher that her son was reading comic books instead of studying, and complained about him directly.

The teacher called Özdemir to the board and, in front of the entire class, gave him a thorough beating. Little Ömer watched the scene wide-eyed and astonished. On the way home, his mother turned to Ömer and said, “Did you see?” Thus, Emine Hanım had taught not only Özdemir, but also little Ömer, a lesson.



↗
Teksas and Tommiks, first published in Türkiye in 1955, were among the first comic books followed enthusiastically by the Bayraktar brothers.



↗
A photograph of Lütfü Bey on his boat.

↘
Old photographs of Sarıyer's Yenimahalle neighborhood.





NO SPORTS. NO GAMES. HOBBIES.

A Room of His Own

Although he never again read Tommiks and Teksas after that incident, Özdemir continued to pursue his own interests and curiosities. At times he would retreat to his room to tinker with broken electronic devices; at other times he would swim out into the open waters of the Bosphorus His brother Ömer later describes this period: "During my brother's childhood and adolescence, his life revolved around school and his hobbies. He didn't play football outside with the neighborhood kids — in fact, if he saw a ball, he'd probably take it to the police station saying it was a bomb. There was no street game life, no sports life. He had hobbies at home."

When Lütfü Bey went out fishing with his motorized boat, the small rowboat left behind in the boathouse — a simple patalya — became the children's toy. Whenever they found the time, Özdemir and Ömer would either chase after some mischievous adventure or take the patalya out onto the sea and drift about.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

One day, despite Emine Hanım's warning — "My son, don't go too far out with that boat, or it won't end well" — Özdemir continued rowing farther out. But the entire family knew: when Emine Hanım said something, she meant it. Taking an adze in hand, she walked down to the shore and drilled a hole into the bottom of the boat. Ömer and Özdemir were not deeply shaken by this punishment. They quickly repaired the small boat and made it usable again.

Continuing his education at Sarıyer Middle School, Özdemir found great pleasure in dismantling broken electronic devices and building radios from their parts. By the age of twelve, he had his own room filled with tools and equipment devoted to these pursuits. The room was usually in disarray, and Emine Hanım constantly warned him to tidy it up. One day, finding the room especially messy, she gathered all the tools and equipment into a sack. Since the sea was right beside their house, she poured the contents of the sack into the water from the balcony. Her punishments were firm. Yet her disciplined consistency and unwavering insistence on keeping her word would later become virtues absorbed by Özdemir and his siblings. How deterrent these punishments were for Özdemir, however, remains uncertain. Because he lived in his own world. He built a steam boiler from medicine tubes and placed it inside a model boat to make it run. He inhabited another realm altogether.

WHEN EMINE HANIM'S FUSE BLOWS

In the relationship between Özdemir and his mother, joy and tension frequently exchanged places. One afternoon, when the household fuse blew, this dynamic became especially clear. Because Özdemir understood electrical systems, the solution was sought from him — though he was only thirteen or fourteen at the time. Since the fuse box was downstairs, he went down and told his mother: *"When I fix it, if the lights come on, let me know."* After inserting and tightening the fuse wire, Emine Hanım called out excitedly from upstairs: *"It's onnn!"* Finding this amusing, Özdemir loosened the fuse wire. From above came his mother's disappointed reply: *"It's offnn!"* Determined to prolong the game, Özdemir continued tightening and loosening the fuse wire. At a certain point, however, Emine Hanım realized what was happening — and gave her son a proper scolding. Years later, Ömer and Özdemir would still laugh remembering the joke: *"Yandı... Söndü... On... Off..."*



↘ Özdemir Bayraktar graduated from Kabataş Boys' High School, following in his father's footsteps.

The Years at Kabataş High School

Always the "Older Brother"

In 1962, when it was time for Özdemir to begin high school, there was only one option before him. Since there was no high school in Sarıyer, he enrolled — like his father before him — at Kabataş Boys' High School. The role he held at home as the elder brother continued there as well. Compared to the fishing families of Sarıyer and Garipçe, Lütfü Bey had attached significant importance to his children's education and did not wish them to pursue fishing as a profession, despite having done so himself out of necessity.

At home and at school alike, Özdemir was always an ağabey — the older brother. When he was not engaged with his lessons or with old machines, he devoted himself to tutoring middle school students. In his final year of high school, he chose to become a boarding student. In doing so, he became a study supervisor — an "etüt ağabeyi" — for younger boarding students. The talent that began to shine in his youth was his ability to grasp the truth behind objects and to understand how machines functioned.



↙
The Bosphorus-facing building of Kabataş Boys' High School from the first half of the 20th century.



↙
A photograph from the youth of Nilgün, Ömer, and Özdemir Bayraktar.



↙
Özdemir Bayraktar
at his brother Salih's
circumcision ceremony.

To explore, to question, to learn — this became his philosophy of life. Since childhood, Özdemir had been drawn to technology, science, and machines. In his youth, he bought a camera and began taking photographs. He developed the photos himself, setting up a darkroom under the couch in the house. He even taught his younger brother Salih how to make prints. Because whenever Özdemir encountered a machine, he first wanted to understand how it worked. And whatever he learned, he always shared.



K
143

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
MİLLÎ EĞİTİM BAKANLIĞI
DEVLET LİSE DİPLOMASI

Adı ve soyadı	Özdemir Bayraktar
Babasının adı	Lütfü
Doğum yeri	Garipçe
Doğum yılı	1949
Okul numarası	1035
İmtihanı bitirdiği öğretim yılı ve dönemi	1965-1966. Güz
Kaç yıl parasız yatılı okuduğu	—
Okuduğu yabancı dil	İngilizce
Diplomayı veren okul	KABATAŞ ERKEK LİSESİ

Diploma No: 3785 Diploma derecesi: orta

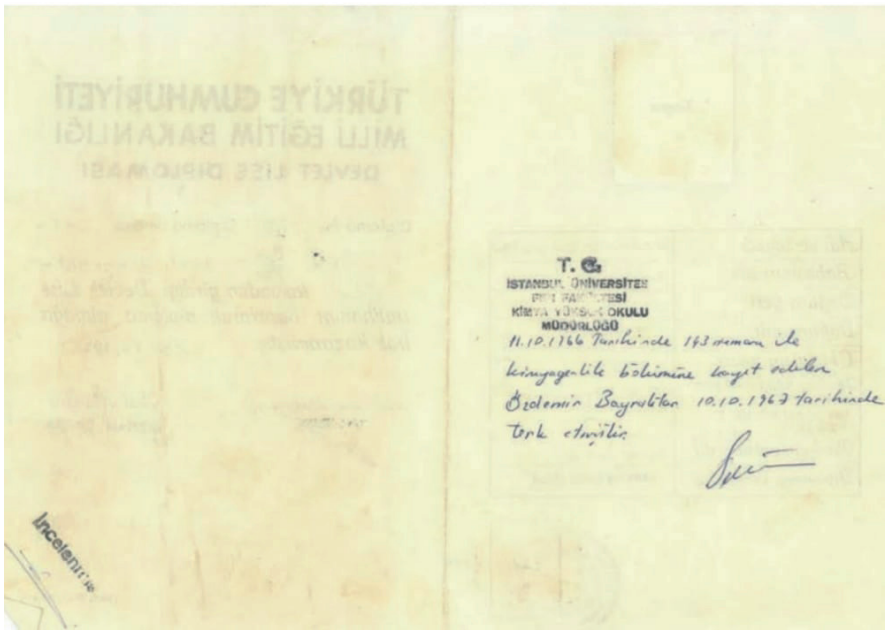
Lütfü Oğlu Özdemir Bayraktar
Fen kolundan girdiği Devlet Lise imtihanını başararak diploma almağa hak kazanmıştır. 29/ IX/1966

Milli Eğitim Müdürü a.
Zeki TUNÇ

Okul Müdürü
ADNAN DİNÇER

EYLÜL 1966

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FEN FAKÜLTESİ
KİMYA YÜKSEK OKULU
MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
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İncelenmiştir

↗
His Kabataş diploma and his registration document for Istanbul University's Higher School of Chemistry.

A Young Soul in Search of His Calling

Joy, curiosity, and a streak of wildness…

After graduating from high school, Özdemir wanted to take a break and postpone his university preference for a year. When his mother resisted, he enrolled in the Chemistry Department at Istanbul University in 1966. This adventure did not last long. One year later, he retook the entrance exam and enrolled in the Mechanical Engineering Faculty at Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ). He began commuting to school on the 41A municipal bus — one of those buses where everyone knew when to board and where to sit.

Even at that early stage, his friends noticed that he had not come to the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering casually. They saw his enthusiasm for learning, his passion, and his determination. The engineering education he began in 1967–68 would foreshadow his future achievements. His struggle to grasp the “spirit” of the machines he built with his own hands — and to make them operational — took root concretely here, in the corridors of the Mechanical Engineering Faculty.



↗
A moment from Özdemir Bayraktar's university years.



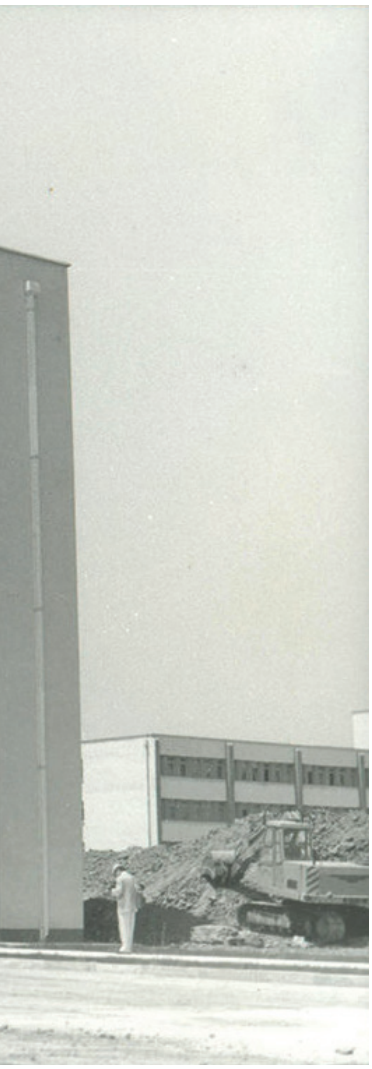
↖
From Özdemir Bayraktar's youth

FOR ÖZDEMİR, WHEN ENGINEERING MERGED WITH THE CURIOSITY AND DRIVE FOR DISCOVERY THAT HAD PURSUED HIM SINCE CHILDHOOD, IT BECAME A WAY OF LIFE.

Özdemir always possessed a questioning, critical, curious spirit. This drove him to devote his time and vitality entirely to becoming a good engineer. For him, engineering meant developing a sharp capacity to understand how machines function — and acquiring the knowledge and skill to reproduce them. For Özdemir, engineering, combined with the curiosity and urge to discover that had followed him since childhood, became a way of life. This excitement was easily recognized by everyone around him. His brother Ömer, closest to him, would also be influenced by him. Despite their mother Emine Hanım's persistent advice that he study medicine, Ömer chose to become an engineer like his brother. Because of this decision — and their close ages — the two brothers studied at the same university for two years. As Ömer physically resembled Özdemir, he became known as "Özdemir's brother."



↗
An early photograph of Istanbul Tech's Ayazağa Campus.
Özdemir Bayraktar completed his undergraduate studies here.





↗
Students and faculty members at the ITU Department of Mechanical Engineering laboratory, late 1960s.

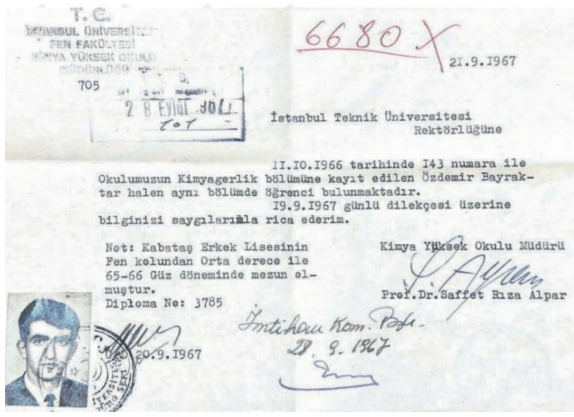


↙ Lütfü Bey's boat.

"ÖZDEMİR, PLEASE SOLVE THIS FOR US."

In 1960, Lütfü Bey had a 17-meter fishing boat built in Ayvansaray. By the standards of the time, it was a fine vessel. In those years, nearly all fishermen used Volvo engines. As the 1970s approached, problems began appearing in the charging dynamos of the fishing boats' engines. There was no one in their surroundings capable of repairing these dynamos. Since he was studying mechanical engineering, the fishermen sought out Özdemir: *"Özdemir, please — solve this problem for us."*

Dismantling the dynamos and examining them carefully, Özdemir rewound the charging dynamos with his own hands, using every means available under the conditions of the day. Ömer assisted his brother. When the transistor-based circuits inside the dynamos malfunctioned, there were no domestically produced transistors to replace them. There simply was no spare part available. In response, Özdemir developed an alternative solution: he inserted a light bulb into the circuit, allowing the system to function. With this method, not only was a technical problem resolved — but he and Ömer also earned some pocket money from the work. As this story clearly shows, Özdemir Bayraktar began producing indigenous and original components already during his student years.



T. C.
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
FEN FAKÜLTESİ
KİMYA YÜKSEK OKULU
MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
705

6680 X 21.9.1967

İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi
Rektörlüğüne

11.10.1966 tarihinde 143 numara ile Okulumuzun Kimyagerlik bölümüne kayıt edilen Özdemir Bayraktar halen aynı bölümde öğrenci bulunmaktadır.
19.9.1967 günlü dilekçesi üzerine bilginizi saygılarımla rica ederim.

Not: Kabataş Erkek Lisesinin Fen kolundan Orta derece ile 65-66 Güz döneminde mezun olmuştur.
Diploma No: 3785

Kimya Yüksek Okulu Müdürü
Prof.Dr.Saffet Rıza Alpar

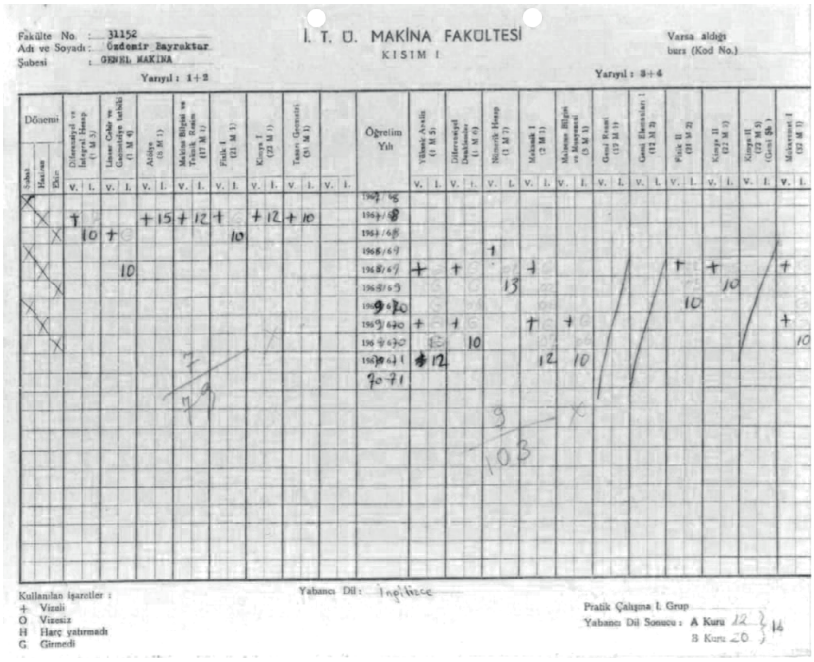
İmtihan Kom. Reis.
21. 9. 1967

20.9.1967

↙ An official document from the year he spent at Istanbul University's Higher School of Chemistry.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

While continuing his university education, Özdemir also began building wide networks of communication. In those years, he considered friendship to be just as important as his coursework. So much so that his classes occasionally fell behind; he completed university not in early summer, but in February, extending his studies by one term. In his class were both highly diligent students and others who occasionally pushed lessons into the background. Yet each of them possessed such mastery in their respective areas that they would at times question their professors, criticize them, even claim to know more. These students — coming from every corner of Anatolia — were among the brightest and most intelligent in Türkiye. Within the class, two informal groups emerged: the "Kuşlar" (The Birds) and the "Keşler" (The Rascals). Özdemir did not sit in the very front row among the intensely focused "Birds." He was among the "Keşler" — the witty, mischievous, occasionally rebellious ones.They were together at football matches and in various antics.Özdemir stood at the center of the group. With the anecdotes he told, he became the source of laughter in their gatherings, and his presence was always sought.



↘ Özdemir Bayraktar's grade transcript from Istanbul Technical University's Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.



↗
A photograph of Özdemir Bayraktar in his youth.

It would, of course, be impossible to separate Özdemir Bayraktar's student years from politics. The 1970s were years when political tensions reached their peak. For many, even greeting someone of a different political view became nearly impossible. Özdemir, however, did not carry such anxieties. He did not build his friendships on political grounds. He could be friends with anyone whose sincerity he believed in and who desired the good of Türkiye. During his university years, when oppression and pressure against Turks in Cyprus intensified, he joined the march in Taksim to protest the injustice and to show that Turkish Cypriots were not alone. He made his stance clear in that demonstration. The principled position he would maintain throughout his life began to cause him trouble even in his university years. Because he also had leftist friends, a raid was carried out on Özdemir Bayraktar's home.

He was part of a group of friends among whom socialists were prominent — and he existed among them with his own identity intact. Because he appeared exactly as he was and never engaged in hypocrisy, he was loved and respected by his friends.



↘
A march in Taksim during the 1960s protesting events in Cyprus — Özdemir Bayraktar stands third from the right.



↘
An image from the 1968 student demonstrations symbolized by the "6th Fleet Go Home" banner, held in front of Dolmabahçe.

Although they differed politically, he and his socialist friends united in their opposition to imperialism. Together, they protested the presence of the U.S. 6th Fleet. Even then, Özdemir stood on the side of what he regarded as national, and the stance he would carry until the end of his life required him to stand alongside the friends who shouted: "*6. Filo Defol!*" "Yankee Go Home!" Students from different cities across Türkiye — future engineers — believed in Özdemir's sincerity.

They recognized that he was devoted to engineering, always full of ideas, and energetic. He was extremely active, never sitting still, constantly in motion. As his university friends described it, he loved putting on "playful engineering performances."



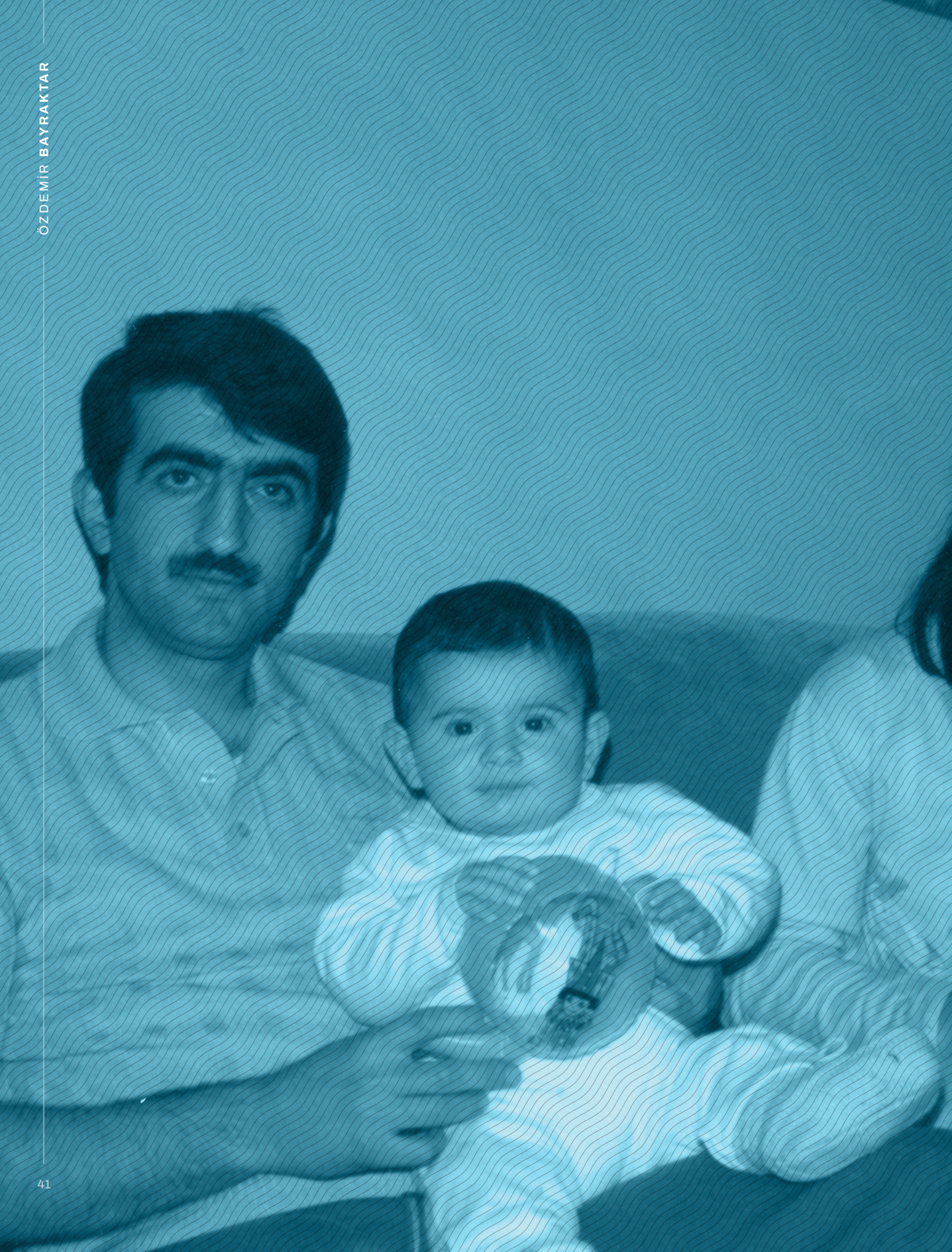
↙
A photograph of Özdemir Bayraktar from his youth.

AN UNPLANNED LIVE BROADCAST

Garipçe's fishermen would sometimes find underwater listening devices left in the sea by the Russians. They would retrieve them and bring them ashore — though most did not know what the devices were or what they did. One day, they decided: *"Let's show these to Özdemir."* At the time, he was still a student at the faculty. They began examining the devices day and night in the workshop of an electronics technician in their neighborhood who built sound systems. Upon seeing the tubes and batteries inside, they quickly realized that the devices functioned both as receivers and transmitters. In those days, households raised their antennae high so that their televisions could pick up signal. In the neighborhood where the Bayraktars lived, there were only two televisions. One day, while several neighbors were watching TV, they suddenly heard Özdemir's voice coming from the television — followed by the electronics technician's voice. They stared at the screen in astonishment. From the conversation, it became clear that they were experimenting with the Russian receiver-transmitter devices at that very moment.



↗
Another image from his youth.





02

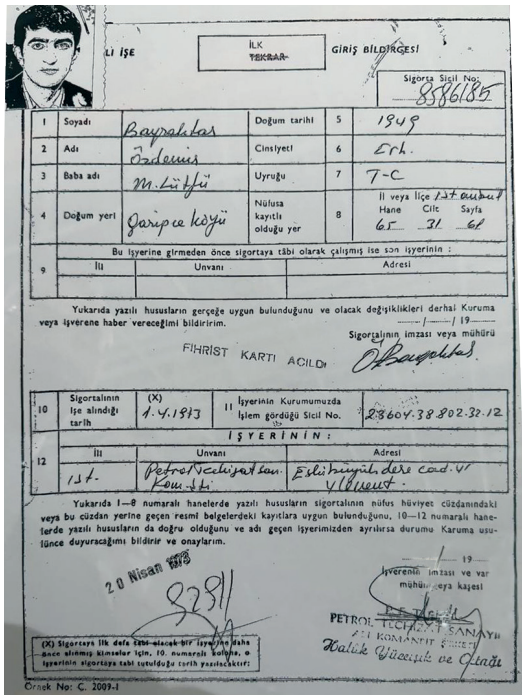
SEEKING THE SOUL OF TÜRKIYE
(1972-2001)

The Engineer's First Steps

"He who teaches, learns."

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR GRADUATES FROM THE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT IN 1972.

Time passes quickly for Özdemir Bayraktar — in wooden lecture halls, laboratories, faculty corridors, beneath the trees of the campus — through debates and exchanges of ideas, driven by his passion for learning. In those years as well, the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Istanbul Technical University — which trained Türkiye's pioneering engineers — possessed one of the strongest academic staffs in the country. The Mechanical Engineering Department was among the broadest engineering disciplines. It educated students with a vision of designing, manufacturing, testing, and improving all kinds of mechanical and energy-conversion systems. While maintaining his successful academic performance there, Özdemir did not wait for graduation to enter working life. In his final year, he worked for one year in Levent at Petes Makina,



İLK İŞE — İLK / TEKRAR — GİRİŞ BİLDİRGESİ

Sigorta Sicil No: 8386185

1	Soyadı	Bayraktar	Doğum tarihi	5	1949
2	Adı	Özdemir	Cinsiyeti	6	Erk.
3	Baba adı	M. Lütfü	Uyruğu	7	T-C
4	Doğum yeri	Garipce köyü	Nüfusa kayıtlı olduğu yer	8	İl veya ilçe: İstanbul / Hane: 65 / Cilt: 31 / Sayfa: 61

9 — Bu işyerine girmeden önce sigortaya tâbi olarak çalışmış ise son işyerinin: İli / Unvanı / Adresi

Yukarıda yazılı hususların gerçeğe uygun bulunduğunu ve olacak değişiklikleri derhal Kuruma veya işverene haber vereceğimi bildiririm.

__/__/ 19__

Sigortalının imzası veya mührü

FİHRİST KARTI AÇILDI

10	Sigortalının işe alındığı tarih	(X) 1.4.1973	11 İşyerinin Kurumumuzda işlem gördüğü Sicil No.	23604.38.802.32.12

İŞYERİNİN:

	İli	Unvanı	Adresi
12	İst.	Petrol Ticaret San. Kom. Ltd.	Esentepe, Büyükdere cad. Vİ Levent.

Yukarıda 1—8 numaralı hanelerde yazılı hususların sigortalının nüfus hüviyet cüzdanındaki veya bu cüzdan yerine geçen resmî belgelerdeki kayıtlara uygun bulunduğunu, 10—12 numaralı hanelerde yazılı hususların da doğru olduğunu ve adı geçen işyerimizden ayrılırsa durumu Kuruma usulünce duyuracağımı bildirir ve onaylarım.

20 Nisan 1973

8291

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İşverenin imzası ve var mühür veya kaşesi

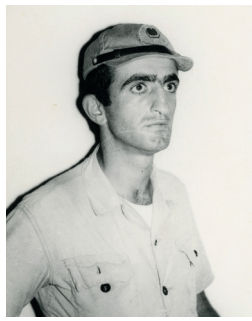
PETROL TİCARET SANAYİ A.Ş. KOMANDİT ŞİRKETİ

Kalıcı Yüzeyler ve Ürünü

(X) Sigortaya ilk defa tâbi olacak bir işyerine daha önce alınmış kimseler için, 10. numaralı kolonda, o işyerinin sigortaya tabi tutulduğu tarih yazılacaktır.

Örnek No: C. 2009-I

↙ Employment registration document dated April 1, 1973.



↘ Özdemir Bayraktar during his military service in 1973.

↙
Özdemir Bayraktar (right) with a fellow soldier.

↘
A 1973 military photograph showing Özdemir Bayraktar (second from the right) with his comrades.





a company producing hydraulic lifts, as a student-engineer. In 1972, he graduated from the five-year Mechanical Engineering program. At that time, because reserve officers had accumulated in Türkiye, short-term military service had just been introduced. When his time came, Özdemir left home to complete his short-term service in Bornova Hacılarkırı. While Özdemir Bayraktar sought to develop a roadmap for his personal life, Türkiye was going through a historic period.

THE FIRST ORDER — FROM HIS MOTHER!

Emine Hanım reacted strongly to the idea of short-term service: "*What do you mean three and a half months of military service? You will go there and not remain idle for even a minute. If they don't give you work, you'll take stones from one place and carry them to another — then back again. If you don't do what I say, I will not give you my blessing.*" He went to the army with this instruction in mind. Naturally, he did not remain idle there either. He dealt with technical problems within the barracks.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

Yet fate would have it that after his short-term service, he would, in a sense, remain a soldier for life: walking alongside soldiers in the Southeast — in Cudi, in Gabar — spending nights in barracks and containers, finding himself in the midst of clashes, continuing his service to the homeland throughout his lifetime.





↖ Title page of İsmail Hakkı Öz's dissertation.

↖ İsmail Hakkı Öz during a visit to Germany.

The 1971 memorandum, a turning point in Türkiye's history, plunged the country into a difficult atmosphere. Worsening repression, executions, and arrests prepared the ground for the dark climate that would emerge in the 1970s.

Having graduated from ITU's Department of Mechanical Engineering in 1972 and completed his military service, Özdemir received an offer from Prof. İsmail Hakkı Öz, who was teaching Engines, to serve as his assistant. His two-year tenure deepened his technical knowledge and his professional character.

İsmail Hakkı Öz was a pioneering academic who studied engineering in Germany and survived the bombardment of Dresden before returning to Türkiye where he established the Agricultural Machinery Research Center. His analytical approach and his contributions to applied science shaped not just a generation but also the culture of technical education and research in Türkiye. He touched the lives of countless students, including Necmettin Erbakan, yet this connection was much more personal and deeper for Özdemir Bayraktar.



İsmail Hakkı Öz (left) and Özdemir Bayraktar. A photograph documenting a teacher-student relationship that evolved into a friendship.

Indeed, his mentor İsmail Hakkı Öz was chief among the people who left their mark on the life of Özdemir Bey, who saw the professor as more than an instructor – as a rare guide who shaped his way of thinking and his professional approach.

Their fieldwork together on the potato-harvesting machine project in Florya was a period that developed Özdemir Bayraktar's technical expertise as well as professional discipline and patience. Occasionally, İsmail Hakkı Öz's authoritarian style would clash with Özdemir Bayraktar's determination to speak his truths. Emine Hanım would describe this conflict as follows: "A stone crashed a rock." Yet their differences of opinion did not hurt their relationship. On the contrary, it helped them form a strong bond based on mutual respect.

Indeed, Özdemir Bayraktar remained in touch with his mentor after his tenure ended. Over time, their relationship evolved into a friendship. As a matter of fact, his student was with Prof. İsmail Hakkı Öz when he passed away. This final stand was more than a sign of respect for one's professor. It was Özdemir Bayraktar's way of showing his deep loyalty to the man who gave direction to his life.

Upon receiving his master's degree, Bayraktar managed a workshop in Avcılar, which distributed garden-type tractors and manufactured tractors, for three years as a senior engineer.









↖
Özdemir Bayraktar and Canan Hanım visiting an ancient city.









↖
Three moments from the engagement of Özdemir Bayraktar and Canan Hanım.



↘
A moment from the wedding day. Pictured alongside Özdemir Bayraktar are his father Lütfü Bey, his mother Emine Hanım, his brother Ömer Bayraktar, and the newlywed couple Özdemir and Canan Bayraktar.


AT IS MENSUPL
TRA



Around this time, BURTRAK acquired the production rights for Japanese garden-type tractors called IHI Shibaura (known in Türkiye as İşbora). Turgut Özal, who served as chairman of the board, and Kaya Erdem, who handled administrative affairs, were looking for a technical manager to begin production. Özdemir Bayraktar, with his references as the most qualified candidate in the field, receives an offer from BURTRAK. The task that falls to Özdemir Bayraktar is to travel to Japan, which holds the production rights, conduct detailed negotiations, learn the intricacies of the work, and — rather than producing the necessary machinery in France — bring them back to Türkiye. For this reason, he frequently travels abroad.

During his years at BURTRAK, Canan Hanım and Özdemir Bayraktar marry in 1977. In 1978, Özdemir Bayraktar is so absorbed in his work that he receives the news of the birth of his first child, Haluk, during a business trip in Japan.



↙
A photograph from Özdemir Bayraktar's 1978 trip to Japan.

After working at BURTRAK for approximately three years, he takes over as deputy general manager of Istanbul Segman, which was based in Kırkpınar-Sapanca, in 1981. Even before Özdemir Bayraktar joins the company, people are told that "the factory will have a bright future and many great things will be accomplished" thanks to him.

During the establishment phase of the factory, workbenches arrive, assembly and installation work is carried out, and trial production slowly gets underway. Özdemir Bayraktar sees the Istanbul Segman Sanayii through its founding phase, and once the factory is up and running, he moves on.

Özdemir Bayraktar enjoys tackling problems and places considerable importance on producing solutions. In the places where he works, once he has established the system and ensured that things run smoothly, he typically finds himself growing restless and leaves. His elder son Haluk Bayraktar describes this as follows:

"My father worked in some well-known places after graduating from university. But Özdemir Bayraktar was not the kind of person who could be controlled. Özdemir Bayraktar was the kind of person who needed to be wherever the problem was. If there were no major problems, Özdemir Bayraktar himself could become the problem. He was always like this. He always entered environments where great problems existed, tackled those problems, solved them, and established a system and a methodology."

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NOT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO COULD WORK UNDER SOMEONE ELSE'S AUTHORITY. WHEREVER HE WORKED, HE WAS THE BOSS – THERE WAS NO OTHER BOSS. HE ALWAYS HAD THE FINAL SAY. AND HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF THE TIME.

Ömer Bayraktar

ÖMER BAYRAKTAR (BROTHER)



↗
An "İş Bora Super" tractor ad published in Milliyet on 16 September 1983.

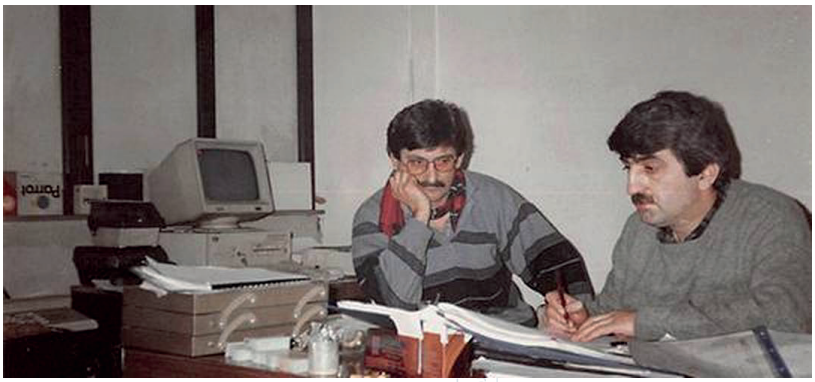
Baykar Is Founded

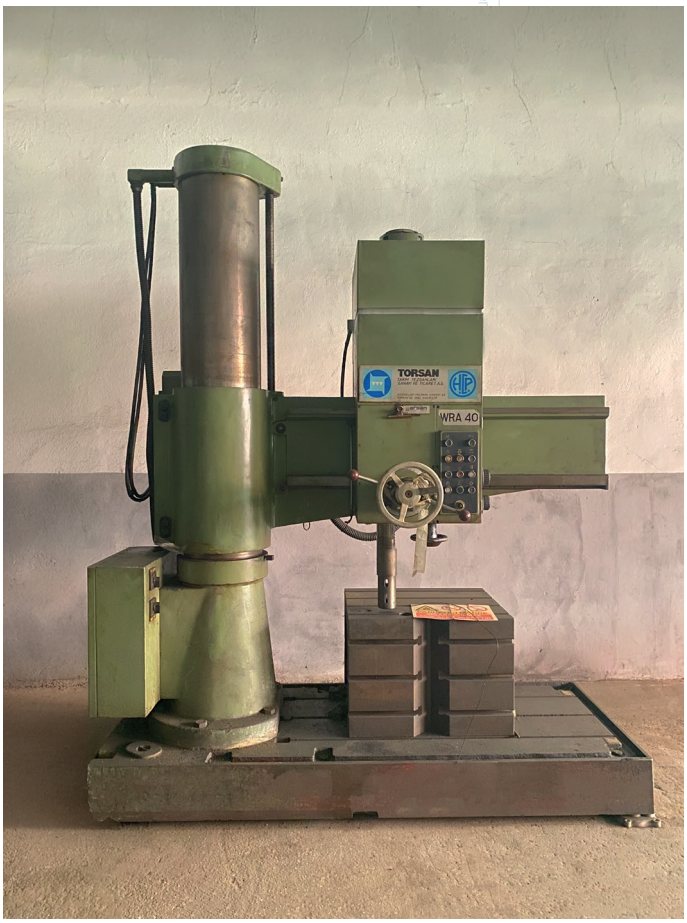
ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR ESTABLISHES BAYKAR WITH HIS BROTHERS ÖMER BAYRAKTAR AND SALIH BAYRAKTAR.

Özdemir Bayraktar establishes a sole proprietorship in 1983 under the name “Özdemir Bayraktar.” Hardly anyone was surprised by this development, as everybody knew about his dream of “starting his own business”. By 1985, he founds Baykar A.Ş. Shortly after Baykar is established, manufacturing begins for steering system components for Uzel — one of the brands producing tractors in Türkiye — specifically parts such as steering gears and hydraulic pump shafts. In this way, two components that had not previously been produced in Türkiye are introduced to the market and domestically manufactured. In times of economic crisis, industry is the first sector to be affected. Rather than becoming one of those affected, Özdemir Bayraktar continues operating through alternative approaches and further expands the company’s manufacturing range to include firms such as Tofaş and Mercedes-Benz.

When Baykar is founded, there is only a single drilling machine in the workshop in Bayrampaşa. “It started with a drill,” he would later say. In a total area of 600 square meters, they work with great dedication, shedding sweat on the lathes. At that time, working conditions were extremely difficult. There was no technological infrastructure in place; even the machining of tractor and automobile components required advanced technology. This fact illustrates how significant the localization effort truly was.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar at Baykar's first workshop, together with his colleague Osman Arslan.



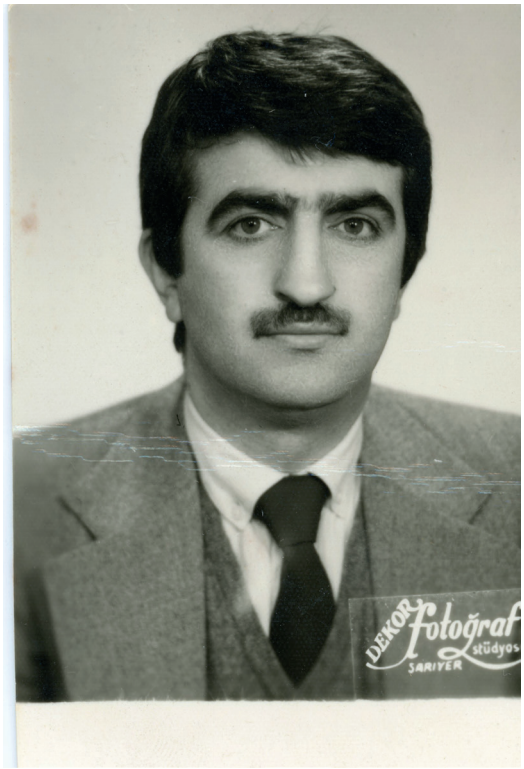


↘
A radial drilling machine used at Baykar. A piece of workshop equipment from that era.

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR HAD A PERSEVERANCE, A RESOLVE, AND AT TIMES A STUBBORNNESS THAT MADE PEOPLE CALL HIM “CONTRARY.” IN MY VIEW, THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT BROUGHT ALL HIS SUCCESSES. THERE WERE MANY WHO CAME TO HIM IN THE DIFFICULT TIMES AND SAID: "WHAT ARE YOU STILL FIGHTING FOR — YOUR LIFE IS PASSING YOU BY..." BUT HE NEVER GAVE UP. WHETHER IT WAS IN HIS FOOD, HIS DRINK, OR HIS BLOOD AS A MAN FROM TRABZON — WHO CAN SAY. GOD BLESS HIM.

Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, İLİM YAYMA FOUNDATION



↗
A portrait of Özdemir Bayraktar.

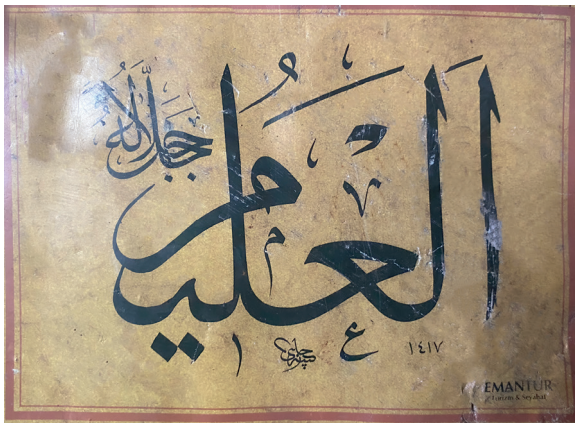
FLAWLESS MANUFACTURING, METICULOUS WORK

Özdemir Bayraktar attaches great importance to details in his professional life; he produces flawlessly and works with meticulous care. Yet because he does not tolerate mistakes, at the slightest problem he does not hesitate to sharply reprimand those at the workbench. To be able to benefit from such reprimands is itself a skill. For every sentence he utters carries the weight of a lesson. In technical matters, he is almost always right. The general manager of Uzel requests that Özdemir Bayraktar manufacture a gearbox with extremely tight tolerances. For days, for months, he works on that single component; he struggles to produce it — and succeeds. That is the kind of engineer he is.

"The self has no dignity — but the work you do does."

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR

↘
The el-Alîm ("The All-Knowing") calligraphic panel hanging on the wall of the Bayrampaşa workshop.



↘
A Jerusalem calendar bearing the Baykar logo, hanging on the wall of the Bayrampaşa workshop.

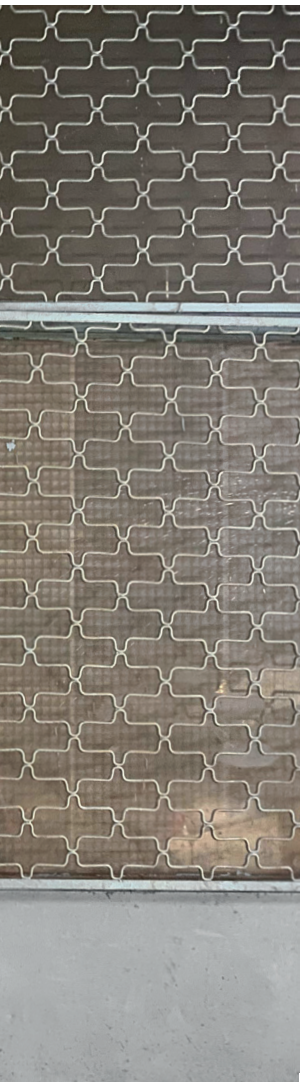


Özdemir Bayraktar gradually expands the workshop in Bayrampaşa step by step. One of his greatest passions becomes purchasing broken machines or second-hand manufacturing equipment brought from abroad, modifying them, and putting them back into production in Türkiye. Eighty percent of the machines in the workshop consist of machines he has transformed. Together with his brothers, he works day and night renewing the mechanics and systems of the machines and manufacturing with them in the workshop. He converts NC machines into CNC machines — and, so to speak, makes the machines “do somersaults.”

On one occasion, a machine begins producing major tolerance errors due to excessive overheating. Özdemir Bayraktar’s solution is simple, yet ingenious enough to inspire admiration: to prevent overheating, he places a hospital IV drip behind the machine. The water from the serum bottle drips onto the machine, cooling it. Remarkably, that machine continues operating in this state for years. On another occasion, he spends months working on a newly acquired NC machine and converts it into a CNC machine. During the first test, two holes will be drilled and the machine’s precision will be measured.

A command is given for a 100 mm distance; the machine drills two holes, and when measured, it reads 102 mm. At that moment, cold water runs down Özdemir Bayraktar's back. The machine he had worked on day and night for months becomes a complete disappointment for him. Of course, after some time they realize that the machine's lead screw is not metric but inch-based. Yet because of the deep frustration he experienced, Özdemir Bayraktar does not go near that machine for a long time.





A Company Known for Its Quality

The Baykar team works in a modest space located on the second floor of the industrial complex in Bayrampaşa — behind a gray door and worn iron railings — with a prayer room upstairs and a small office and lavatory downstairs. On the walls hang not only a clock, but also calendars adorned with images of Hagia Sophia Mosque and Al-Aqsa Mosque, along with standard workplace safety notices. Directly opposite the calendar is a calligraphic rendering of the Beautiful Names of God (Asma al-Husna), a constant reminder of the true Owner of knowledge to Özdemir Bayraktar and his colleagues — encouraging them to work with even greater dedication. Once a day, tea arrives. They eat their meals from metal trays. During breaks, they fill their stomachs with hot toast and tea, turning their nights into extensions of their days. Thanks to the coffee they prepare in small red water heaters, they sometimes remain on their feet working until dawn.

Özdemir Bayraktar would delve into the finest detail of any subject that caught his curiosity; he would examine it and resolve it. When he asked someone a question, he would wait for a precise and convincing answer. One of his well-known sayings was: “Not by guessing, but by looking.” To do everything properly — by observing, examining, and researching — was his philosophy of life.

↖
The entrance gate of Baykar's Bayrampaşa workshop.

↘
Baykar's first logo.



When the production of a new component begins in subcontract manufacturing, a workflow diagram is created. Once production starts, the cycle repeats continuously; quality control follows. After the system is established, there is nothing more to be done from an engineering standpoint other than making certain necessary adjustments. Production continues within this flow. Baykar proceeds with manufacturing according to its own internal rhythm. Looking at the stage Baykar reached in those years, there is hardly any need for engineer Özdemir Bayraktar — because the system has already been established; the production flow continues. Within a short time, Baykar becomes a brand whose name is associated with quality.



↙
Baykar's current logo.

In Return for a Steam Cooker...

When Baykar's workshop was still in Bayrampaşa, a different logo was being used at the time. Haluk Bayraktar wanted a new logo designed for Baykar and requested this from Sevda Gücümen, the wife of Bülent Tatlıcan. When they showed the new logo to Özdemir Bayraktar, he liked it very much and said, "From now on, let's use this logo." Later, he would often ask Sevda Hanım, "How did you come up with this? Where did you find the inspiration?" He told Sevda Hanım that he would like to compensate her. When Bülent Bey and Sevda Hanım explained that they were friends and would absolutely not accept payment, Özdemir Bayraktar bought Sevda Hanım a steam cooker as a gift. Almost twenty years later, she still uses that cooker. Interestingly, even when Bülent Bey occasionally suggests buying her a new one, Sevda Hanım refuses — saying it is a keepsake from "Brother Özdemir."

↘
Some of the spare parts produced by Baykar: steering gear box, hydraulic pump, tail flange (Tofaş), hydraulic pump valve, steering gear box cover, rot kolu, hydraulic pump front and rear body.



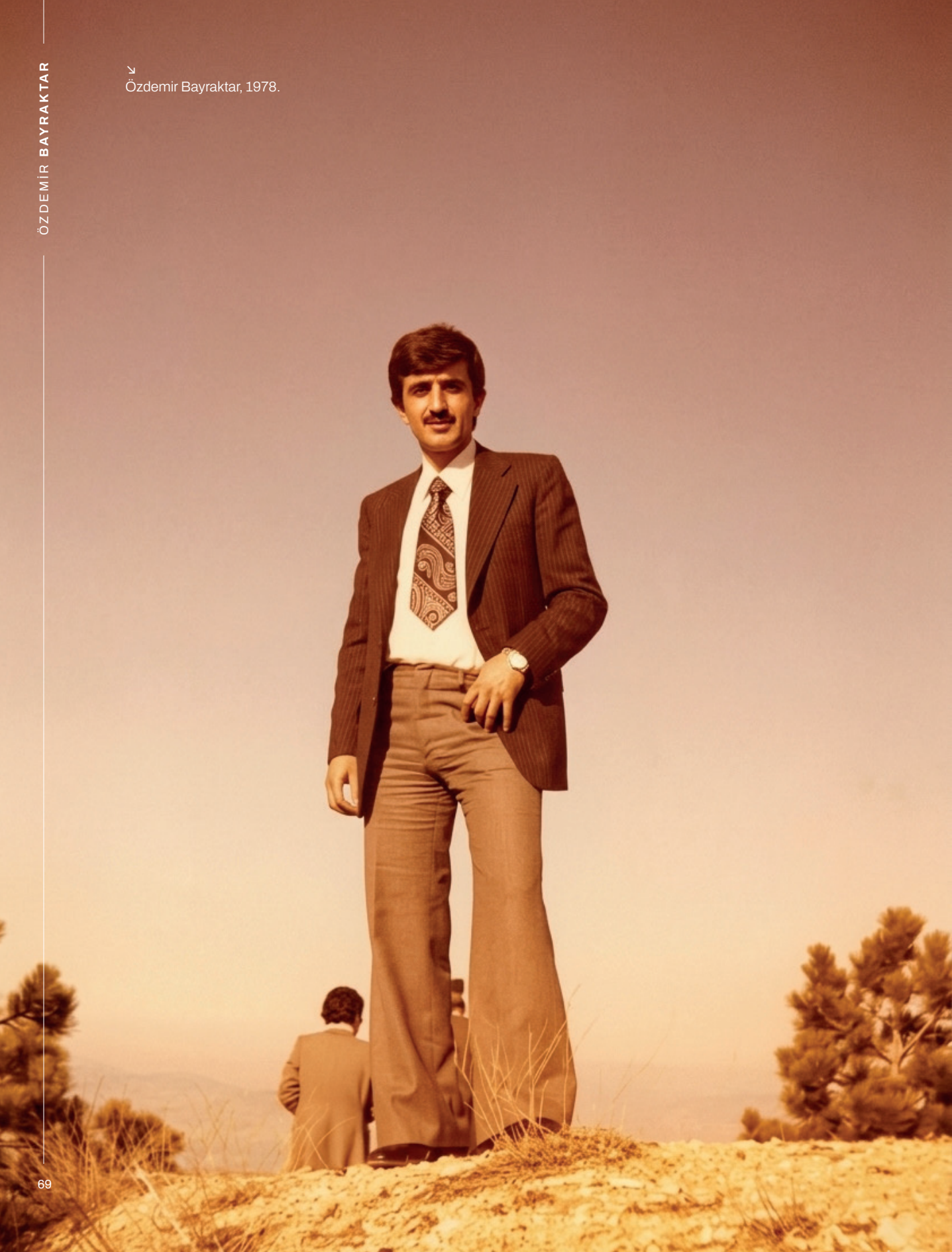
ⓘ Scan, Watch

IF IT'S BAYKAR, PUT IT STRAIGHT IN THE BIN

In the automotive sector — and of course in other industries as well — the way main manufacturers view their subcontractors is important. Subcontractors must reach a certain standard of quality and level.After all, all purchases pass through the main companies' quality control procedures.However, there is one difference in Özdemir Bayraktar's company: At Uzel, during the quality control stage, all goods arriving from subcontractors go through inspection — yet the quality of only one brand's products becomes proverbial. Within Uzel's quality control department, a phrase begins circulating: *"If it's Baykar, put it straight in the bin."* This expression demonstrates how Baykar's production quality and reliability were recognized.



↗
Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar with their colleagues at Baykar's Bayrampaşa workshop, 1990s.



↙
Özdemir Bayraktar, 1978.

The Bayraktar Family Grows

AS THE CHILDREN GROW UP, CANAN HANIM IS AT THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK, WHILE ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR IS DEEPLY ENGAGED IN HIS WORK AT BAYKAR.

In 1977, one year after Özdemir Bayraktar's marriage to Canan Hanım, their first child, Haluk, is born. Selçuk is born in 1979, and Ahmet in 1982. Özdemir Bayraktar's wife, Canan Hanım, is a graduate of the Department of Economics at Istanbul University. She is an economist, yet she also worked with accounting programs written in assembly language on the era's bulky computers. Canan Hanım develops herself in the fields of art, history, and painting as well. She takes care of the children's education and helps them with their studies. She keeps pace comfortably with Özdemir Bayraktar's intense working tempo. Moreover, within that tempo, she finds opportunities to work in her own areas of expertise. While the children are growing up, Canan Hanım works at the Industrial Development Bank of Turkey, and Özdemir Bayraktar works intensively at Baykar.Yet whenever possible, they strive to spend all their time with the family. As the children grow older, spending time together becomes easier.

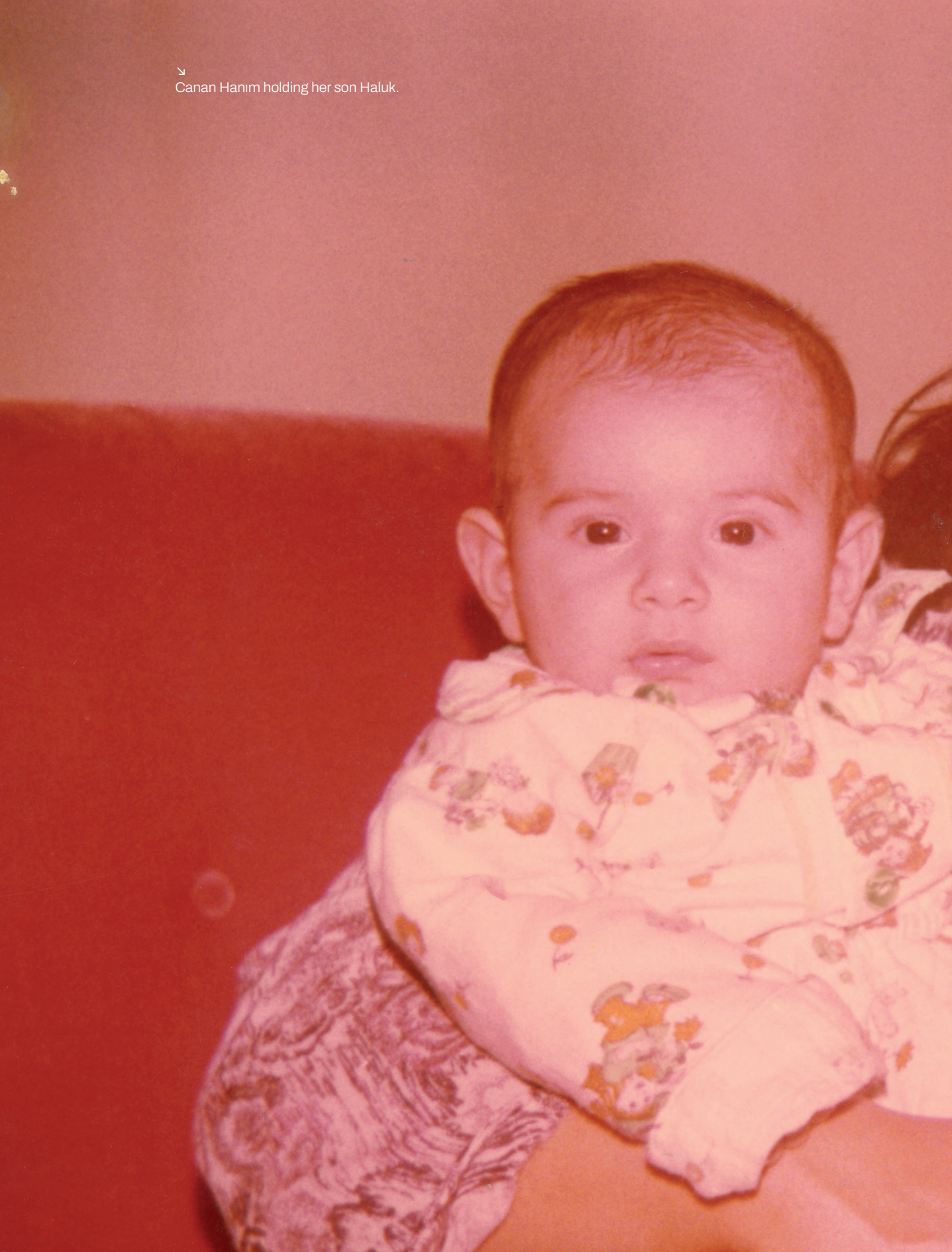


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A photograph of Haluk and Selçuk from their infancy.

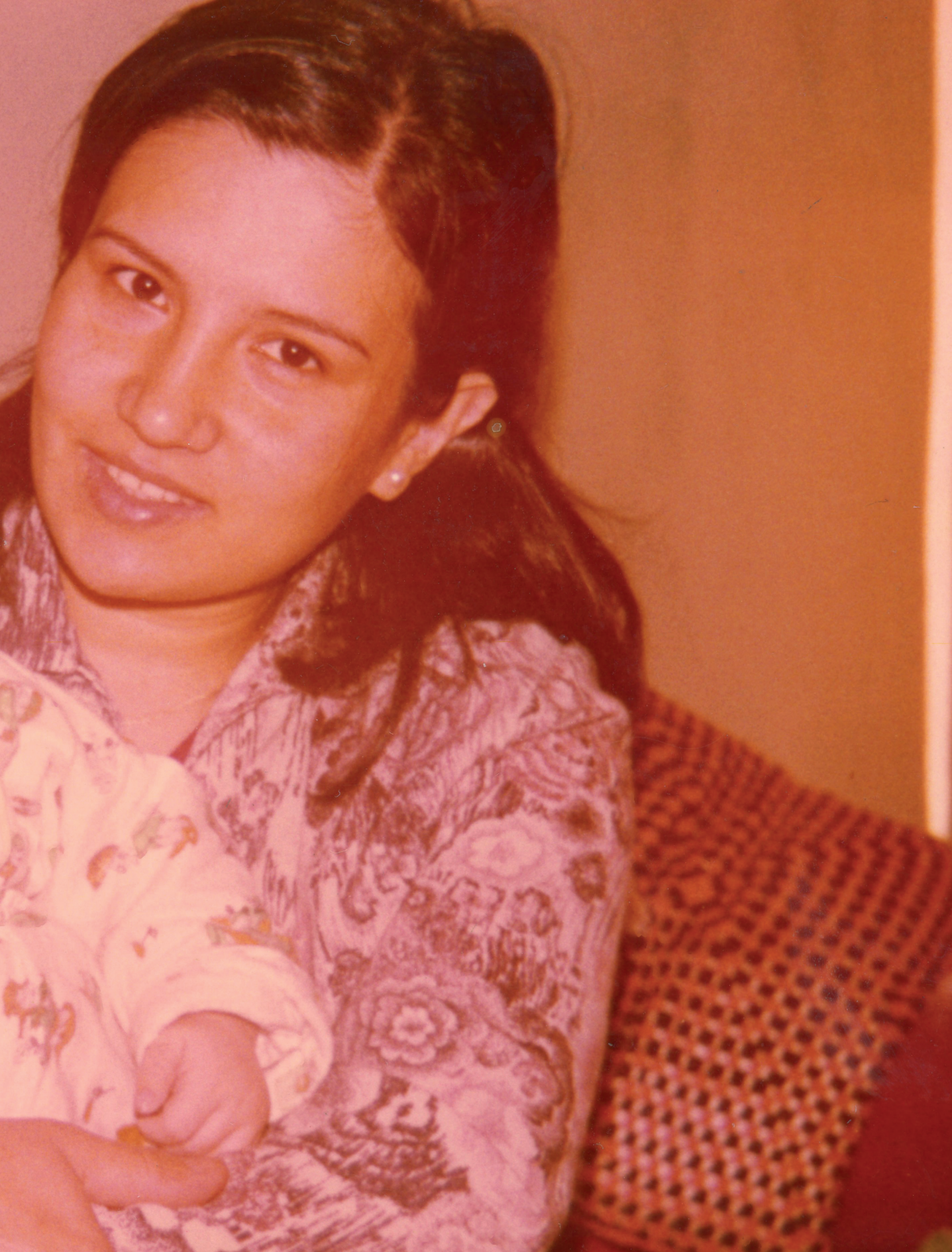


↘
Özdemir Bayraktar and Canan Hanım with their son Haluk.





↘
Canan Hanım holding her son Haluk.







↘
Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet as kids.



↗
A photograph from the circumcision ceremony of Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet.



↘
Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet feeding birds in Eminönü.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

WHENEVER A NEW MODEL PLANE ARRIVED AT HOME, SELÇUK OR HALUK KNEW THAT THEY WOULD BUILD IT TOGETHER. AND AHMET KNEW THAT THEY WOULD FLY IT TOGETHER ON THE WEEKEND.

For Özdemir Bayraktar, “family” is a special institution. In this home, the essential matter is not simply “being together,” but “doing things together.” Just as it was important for Özdemir Bayraktar’s mother, Emine Hanım, that everyone gather for dinner in the evenings, it is equally important for Özdemir Bayraktar to spend time with his family — to be together at meals and in their pursuits. In this way, he begins sharing his own curiosities and hobbies with his talented children. When a model airplane arrives at home, he and Selçuk or Haluk build it together. Ahmet joins them as well. A week later, they will fly the completed airplane together. At times, unable to resist, Özdemir Bayraktar will certainly invite a few friends as well. On sunny days, these shared activities multiply.

The Bayraktar family swims together in the summers. They buy diving tanks from Russian markets and learn to dive. They windsurf in the Bosphorus. One day, Özdemir Bayraktar takes his children to the wooden house where he spent his childhood. He shows them the tool room and explains how he used to assemble radio parts there and how he built small ship models.At that time, he is also deeply curious about computers. Instead of buying a nice car, he goes and purchases the latest technological machines. When the children start middle school, he brings home the best computer available. The children, with joy and curiosity, join their father in these pursuits.

When it comes to technological tools, Özdemir Bayraktar does not hesitate to invest whatever he has. Everyone who knows him knows this well. Model airplanes, scale aircraft, computers... He is deeply knowledgeable about the technical aspects of his hobbies. He especially loves airplanes; he often returns from trips abroad with a model airplane. While receiving amateur pilot training from the Turkish Aeronautical Association, Özdemir Bayraktar also takes Selçuk flying with him. They fly in a single-engine training aircraft and have photographs taken. This experience will later become a powerful, meaningful, and unforgettable memory in Selçuk's life story. After obtaining his pilot's license, Özdemir Bayraktar attends small-scale aviation festivals from time to time, bringing his children along as well. He wants to teach them all the functions of the airplane.

↘
Selçuk Bayraktar aboard a single-engine training aircraft.



↘
Özdemir Bayraktar's Private Pilot License.



Türk Hava Kurumu
Türkkuşu

PİLOT SERTİFİKASI

LİSANS TİPİ :
LİSANS NO :

ADI ve SOYADI : .....
BABASININ ADI : .....
DOĞUM YERİ : .....
DOĞUM TARİHİ : .....

Yukarıda fotoğrafı yapışık ve kimliği yazılı Bay .....' a ...../...../19..... ...../...../19.... tarihleri arasında Türkkuşu Uçuş Okulunda ..... saat uçuş yaptırılmış olup, başarılı görülerek işbu belge ...../...../19..... tarihinde kendisine verilmiştir.

UÇUŞ OKULU MÜDÜRÜ TÜRKKUŞU GENEL MÜDÜRÜ T. H. K. GENEL BAŞKANI



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar with his son Selçuk and fellow pilots.

↘
Selçuk Bayraktar standing next to a single-engine training aircraft.



Without tiring, with passion, he tries for hours to explain everything he knows. Of course, flying with his sons leaves a deep impression on them. He wants them to see airplanes, to touch them. His concern is to ignite a spark in his children. Ultimately, his children possess the capacity to turn that spark into a fire. In the years to come, hundreds, even thousands of children will do the same. For every member of his family, he deepens the meaning of the concept of family in this way. After all, this is how he himself was raised — by his father Lütfü Bey and his mother Emine Hanım; and Lütfü Bey, in turn, by his father Abdurrahman Bey and his mother Hamide Hanım. To be a family means striving to earn a living together, facing hardships together, living with resilience and unity; it means being in a home where you can spend time together and learn from one another, unite around shared goals or pursuits, progress according to your abilities, always feel the support of your mother and father, and express your vitality.

Every emphasis placed on togetherness strengthens the family's bonds and unites them around a common language.Despite his comfortable financial situation, Özdemir Bayraktar is not a father who indulges his children in everything they want. From time to time, he offers certain guidance; he shows Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet the right direction, but never adopts a pressuring manner. The only request Özdemir and Canan Bayraktar have of their children is that they take their education seriously.

Fish Gatherings

Özdemir Bayraktar has a wide circle of friends. He loves hosting and welcoming guests. For this reason, it would not be an exaggeration to say that there is hardly ever a guestless day in their home. After all, Özdemir Bayraktar is the son of Lütfü Reis. Although Lütfü Reis did not encourage his sons Özdemir, Ömer, and Salih to pursue fishing as a profession, they go fishing at every opportunity, every weekend. Moreover, Özdemir Bayraktar greatly enjoys taking his friends along on fishing trips as well.

One of the indispensable figures in these scenes is Ahmet. Ahmet rises early in the morning, takes the boat, and heads out to sea with a single fishing line; he serves the fresh mackerel he catches at home to the guests. Fresh fish is always the most delicious — especially when it comes to the table from his own hands. Canan Hanım expertly fries the fish Ahmet catches; within a short time she prepares wonderful tables for the guests. Unexpected crowds do not discourage her. While the children serve the guests, Özdemir Bayraktar warms the atmosphere with his pleasant conversation, tells anecdotes, and treats his guests.It is a scenario repeated countless times — familiar, yet never tiresome.



↙
Left to right: Ahmet, Selçuk, Canan, and Haluk Bayraktar, 1999.

↘
A view of the Istanbul Strait from the window of the Bayraktar family home in Sarıyer.





↗
Özdemir Bayraktar, together with Selçuk and Ahmet Bayraktar, on the balcony of their home in Sarıyer.

CANAN HANIM'S FISH

Although Özdemir Bayraktar devoted most of his time to the work to which he was passionately committed, he succeeded throughout his life in keeping his family and friendships strong.He made time in the evenings to be with his family and friends, and he was always at the center of lively conversations. With his enthusiastic and sincere personality, Bayraktar built strong and lasting friendships throughout his life. He was so generous and genuine that he would suddenly invite the friends sitting at his table — and sometimes even someone he happened to be speaking with on the phone — to come home for fish. And it would not remain just a few people; by the time they reached the house, many more would have joined the group. Sometimes, even late at night, they would all head to Sarıyer together to eat Canan Hanım's fish. Canan Hanım — who was always by her husband's side and knew him extremely well — never complained about this. She describes those days with these words: *"When Özdemir called me, I would ask, 'Where are you?' If he said, 'I'm leaving İkitelli,' I would ask, 'How many of you are there?' If he said two, I would multiply it by five. I would prepare accordingly."*

In the Bayraktar family, because of the importance and sensitivity attached to family bonds, relationships would never be severed. Having learned this from their father and grandfather, it became for them an "inner," almost instinctive way of life.

The Bayraktar family is also spiritually sensitive. On religious holidays, elders and relatives are visited first. The whole family gathers together. After Sarıyer, they go to Kadıköy, where Canan Hanım's family lives.Cemetery visits are always made, and Fatiha is recited for the souls of the elders.

Özdemir Bayraktar places great value on children — especially girls. He does everything in his power to make them happy and gives them toys through which they can develop themselves. He always carries money in his pocket to distribute as allowance. In fact, when his own pocket runs out of cash, he sometimes scolds those around him, saying: "Why don't you carry money? I've run out — I need to give allowance."

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WANTED HIS FAMILY TO BE TOGETHER ALL THE TIME.

Özdemir Bayraktar is someone who wants his family to remain constantly together. For this reason, after founding the company, he also wants to see his brothers Ömer and Salih Bayraktar by his side. For the family to remain within its own dynamic is important. His brothers follow in their elder brother Özdemir's path because they trust in what he has done and will do, and because they believe he will succeed; they always support him.

For them, Özdemir Bayraktar's presence becomes an irreplaceable strength. Spending the weekend together becomes a tradition for the family. Since Özdemir Bayraktar both established his company in its earliest days and was deeply passionate about his work, he works intensely. Yet he never neglects asking about Haluk's, Selçuk's, and Ahmet's lessons or taking an interest in them. At times, he even takes his children with him to the workshop. Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet apprentice under their father. They stand at the lathe and operate the milling machine.

During those years, because Canan Hanım is also working, the children are cared for more by Cavide Hanım. Cavide Hanım reads the Illustrated Knowledge Encyclopedia with the children and tries to stimulate their curiosity. The "motherly affection" she shows Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet ensures that the children love her as much as their own mother; yet they cannot stop missing Canan Hanım. After leaving her job, Canan Hanım dedicates the meaningful portion of her time to her children. During exam periods, she supports them and helps them study.

↘
Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar in elementary school.





"COME ON, DAD, LET'S GO HOME!"

Whatever task he undertakes, Özdemir Bayraktar performs it with meticulous care, passion, and excitement; he never places his own comfort first. In Bayrampaşa, in a workshop environment heavy with the smoke of cutting oil and littered with metal shavings on the floor, he works every day until late at night. Haluk and Selçuk insist, *"Come on, Dad, let's go home."* Yet despite his children's objections, he wants them to see this environment as well; he gives them small responsibilities to help them learn the work. When his sons enter the workplace and witness their father's attentiveness to detail, they too begin to understand it. They observe the excitement of a father who devotes most of his time to making, repairing, and designing something. Far from comfort in Bayrampaşa, in that modest workshop, Özdemir Bayraktar's passion and enthusiasm gradually pass on to his sons. The first steps of a long journey are taken amid the smoke of cutting oil.

Özdemir Bayraktar advises his children: "Wherever you are, you must study without losing touch with your origins and your roots." More than anything, he wants his children to advance according to their abilities and always supports them. Knowing that their father constantly supports them, Haluk Bayraktar receives his bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from Middle East Technical University in 2000; Selçuk Bayraktar graduates from Istanbul Technical University's Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering in 2002; and Ahmet Bayraktar graduates from Işık University's Department of Business Administration.



The Spirit of Türkiye

National Outlook (Milli Görüş)

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR DID NOT CHANGE HIS VIEWS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES SINCE HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN A POLITICAL CAREER.

As Türkiye passes through the dark, uncertain, and anxious climate of the 1970s, Özdemir Bayraktar is in his twenties. During these years, the National Outlook (Milli Görüş) movement — which would later become an important part of his life — begins to take shape and establish its place on the Turkish political stage.Formally beginning with the founding of the National Order Party (MNP) in 1970, the movement quickly attracts the attention of the Turkish public and becomes a gathering point for those who center their faith in life and believe in the necessity of a new development model. Opposing a capitalist economic model based on interest and exploitation, Necmettin Erbakan — who proposes the concept of a “Just Order” — will, for many years, represent a powerful political current as the leader of the National Outlook movement. The principles of National Outlook— industry, technology, and production-based development; giving labor its due; and advocating a national economy not rooted in exploitation — are also highly compatible with Özdemir Bayraktar’s own identity.



↖
Necmettin Erbakan and Özdemir Bayraktar sitting at the same table.

A Principled Stance

Although Özdemir Bayraktar participated in protests and marches from his youth and took an interest in politics, he never actively entered politics or sought to build a political career. In fact, the politics he was concerned with reflected a perspective far broader than daily political debates. His worldview — shaped by faith as well as patriotism and nationalism — formed the most essential part of his political understanding. Seeing the Turkish flag throughout his life as an expression of love for his homeland, Özdemir Bayraktar's sense of nationalism was far removed from hostility; it encompassed aims of serving his country and being beneficial to it. Prepared to do anything for his country, Özdemir Bayraktar carried this love so far that he developed an emotional relationship with the Turkish flag and, in later years, even presented flags as gifts to many military units.

FOR ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR, WHAT MATTERED WAS NOT WHO A PERSON WAS, BUT WHAT HE KNEW. ALL OF THE EXAMPLES I WITNESSED WERE LIKE THIS. DOES HE HAVE KNOWLEDGE? DOES HE POSSESS VALUES? DOES HE UPHOLD NATIONAL IDENTITY? DOES HE LOVE HIS COUNTRY? AND FINALLY, AT WHAT LEVEL IS HIS KNOWLEDGE? HE WOULD FIRST LEARN THESE THINGS. THEN HE WOULD MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS ON THAT BASIS.

Uğur Tarçın

LİEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)

"DO NOT LEAVE IT WITHOUT A FLAG"

One of the most important symbols in which Özdemir Bayraktar's national and spiritual sentiments found embodiment was the Turkish flag. A friend recounts a moment from one of their visits together:

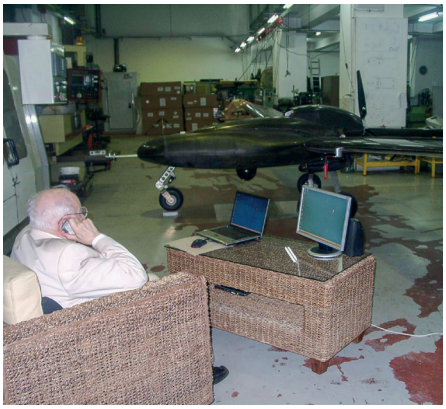
"Özdemir Bayraktar had established a routine unique to himself every Friday. In the morning, he would go to Merkezefendi and from there proceed to the Edirnekapı Martyrs' Cemetery. He would visit the graves of Nuri Demirağ, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, and other distinguished figures, reciting prayers at length. If he noticed that the flags at the cemetery had faded or become worn over time, he would immediately ensure they were replaced; he would not delay in this matter.

After visiting the martyrs' cemetery, he would walk a little further from Edirnekapı to a köfte shop, sometimes meet acquaintances, and engage in warm conversation. These Friday walks were special moments when he found both spiritual solace and the chance to step away from the work environment and breathe."

Özdemir Bayraktar's devout and patriotic character also became one of the main reasons he joined the movement led by Necmettin Erbakan — who described himself as "Morality and Spirituality First" — and which upheld national sensitivities. After the National Order Party (MNP), representing the National Outlook movement, was closed in 1973, the National Salvation Party (MSP) was established. Following the September 12, 1980 coup, in 1983 the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) was founded, continuing the National Outlook chain and becoming one of the significant parties in Turkish political history.

The Arduous Paths of Truth

In the years when Özdemir Bayraktar began to take an active interest in politics, Baykar already had a well-established production and system structure. At the end of the 1980s, during the Sarıyer municipal elections, he worked voluntarily in the Welfare Party's campaign. This marked his first step into active politics. After meeting Necmettin Erbakan in 1990, he formally joined the Welfare Party, became a member of the Provincial Executive Board, and served as Provincial Advisor and Provincial Inspector. He became known as someone who constantly supervised his duties and established systems. He also took part in projects aimed at developing service-oriented municipal governance. During election periods, he was among the team that conducted the training process provided to three thousand people by the party over a three-month period. He even gave lectures himself at the Welfare Party's Institute of Local Administrations. Although he never sought to stand out in the political arena or to build a political career, he devoted significant effort to the Welfare Party, became a pioneer of technological innovations in politics, and played a role in the successes achieved during that period.





↗
Necmettin Erbakan visits the Bayraktar family's İkitelli workshop in 2007.

Already in the early 1990s, during elections, he ensured that ballot box analyses were conducted in Microsoft Excel using macros. In 1992, during the renewed elections in Sarıyer Bahçeköy, he stepped forward and worked actively in the campaign, this time as a party official. As in every area of his life, he carried out his political activities with great seriousness and dedication. His character traits led both to his being highly respected within the Welfare Party's provincial organization and, at times, to criticism. Even as his influence in politics gradually increased, Özdemir Bayraktar never altered his independent stance under any circumstances, since he was not pursuing a political career. Necmettin Erbakan, who had known and deeply appreciated his comrade for years, closely observed and valued this character. He even appointed him as the Istanbul Provincial Inspector of the Welfare Party. Özdemir Bayraktar fulfilled this duty properly and did not hesitate to call something wrong when it was wrong, nor to confront people when necessary. So much so that he occasionally criticized Necmettin Erbakan himself, with whom he had walked a long road. Within the party, it was said that Özdemir Bayraktar's greatest trait was that he spoke his mind. His stance — resisting injustice and not allowing injustice to be done to him — his courage and strength in bringing forward what he believed to be right regardless of the rank, position, or power of the person before him; and moreover, his clear and direct manner that left no room for misunderstanding — were signatures of his very being.

EVEN AS PROVINCIAL INSPECTOR, ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR WAS ABOVE THE PARTY'S PROVINCIAL CHAIRMAN. NOW, WAS HE A LITTLE STERN-TEMPERED? SURE. BUT NOT BECAUSE HE WAS A PROVINCIAL INSPECTOR. THAT WAS SIMPLY HIS TEMPERAMENT. HE WOULD NEVER MINCE HIS WORDS. HE WOULD SPEAK DIRECTLY. AND HIS MANNER WAS SOMEWHAT FIRM. HE TREATED TAYYIP BEY, THE PROVINCIAL CHAIRMAN, IN THE SAME WAY. ONE DAY I SAID: "ÖZDEMİR BEY, SPEAK A LITTLE SOFTER. AFTER ALL, TAYYIP BEY IS OUR PROVINCIAL CHAIRMAN. YOU ARE SAYING THAT 2 TIMES 2 EQUALS 4. THAT'S CORRECT. BUT YOU SAY IT SUCH THAT THE OTHER PERSON DESPERATELY WANTS TO CLAIM IT EQUALS FIVE!" HE RESPONDS: "OH, IS THAT WHAT I AM DOING? THEN PULL ME BACK!"

Ali Taşkıran

SENIOR ENGINEER (FRIEND)

↘
A photograph from Özdemir Bayraktar's time at the Welfare Party. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Melih Gökçek are also pictured, 1992.



REALIZING THE DIRE STRAITS IN WHICH THE TURKISH PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES, ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO HIMSELF, THOSE AROUND HIM, AND HIS BUSINESS.

He is someone who tries to understand every issue in political processes — the mechanisms behind them, their techniques and dynamics — resolving and analyzing models in his mind. Because he perceives the impasse in which Türkiye and the Turkish people find themselves, he makes proposals to himself, to his circles, and to his business. He has a nature that cannot remain still without producing solutions. Both his principled character and his ability to generate solutions gradually bring him to the forefront within the Welfare Party. During this period, he also establishes a close relationship with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and becomes a friend to him. Throughout Erdoğan's tenure as Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, he is among those closest to him. He plays an effective role in winning the elections. Just as Necmettin Erbakan does, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan places great trust in and respect for Özdemir Bayraktar. From the mid-1990s onward, as Özdemir Bayraktar withdraws from politics and the National Vision movement splits into two, this leads to a de facto distancing between different factions. Yet, like many of Özdemir Bayraktar's friends, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan never forgets his sound and genuine character. He values his opinions. Indeed, they would eventually speak at length about the "state of the homeland" and exchange views – as they did in the 1990s.

ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS WE WERE DEFEATED BY THE WEST IS THAT WE FAILED TO BECOME AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY. AND HERE IS BROTHER ÖZDEMİR — ONE OF THE ENGINEERS WHO WANTED TO INITIATE THAT INDUSTRIAL LEAP, WHO WANTED TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, HE SUCCEEDED. IN 1453, WE CHANGED THE CONCEPT OF WARFARE WITH CANNONS. THE CONCEPT OF WAR IN THE WORLD CHANGED. IN THE 2010S, WITH UAVS, TÜRKIYE ONCE AGAIN CHANGED THE GLOBAL CONCEPT OF WARFARE. AND WE OWE THIS TO THE BAYKAR FAMILY. ABOVE ALL, WE OWE IT TO ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR.

Prof. Dr. Erhan Afyoncu

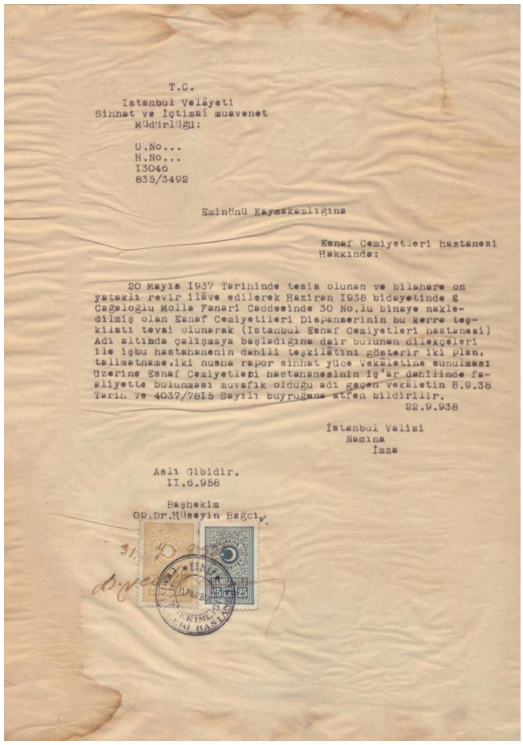
RECTOR, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY (MSÜ)

Friendship, Service, and Diverging Paths

ENGAGING WITH OTHERS, ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR FOCUSED ON THE QUESTION OF SERVING THE STATE – NOT POLITICAL VIEWS.

Both in his family life and in his professional life, Özdemir Bayraktar attaches importance to consultation and deliberation. With many of his friends from the political sphere, he would talk until dawn about questions such as: "How can we be useful to humanity?" "How can we ensure unity and solidarity in Türkiye?" "How can we set this country on the right course?" "How can we bring an end to terrorism?" "What can we do for the country's development?" He would concentrate on questions and problems, seeking remedies. Even though he and some of his friends held differing views — both within the process and from the very beginning — this never harmed their friendship. Truly, Özdemir Bayraktar would debate for hours with friends who held different opinions, yet by the end of the day there would be no resentment or estrangement between them. In his human relationships, the essential matter was not ideology or basic political positions, but service to the state. Political thought was not one of the main determinants that restricted or directed his relationships. He maintained friendships with people of every view and background.

In the second half of the 1990s, Özdemir Bayraktar reduced the weight of politics in his life and became more involved with the Istanbul Tradesmen's Hospital (İstanbul Esnaf Hastanesi). Through his father Lütfü Bey, he became acquainted with the hospital; due to management errors, it had reached the brink of closure. Intervening in the situation, Özdemir Bayraktar worked to restore the hospital to its feet. After entering the board of directors, within five to six months — through dedicated effort with his colleagues — he ensured that the hospital gained momentum. With proper management, a sound worldview, and experience, debts were paid and staff salaries were covered. In the end, Özdemir Bayraktar proved to be someone who set the right goals and moved in the right direction. The Istanbul Tradesmen's Hospital not only provided employment for many people but, over the years, saw its service quality visibly increase.



T.C.
İstanbul Vilâyeti
Sıhhat ve İçtimaî muavenet
Müdürlüğü:

U.No...
H.No...
13046
838/3492

Eminönü Kaymakamlığına

Esnaf Cemiyetleri hastanesi
Hakkında:

20 Mayıs 1937 Tarihinde tesis olunan ve bilahare on yataklı revir ilâve edilerek Haziran 1938 bidayetinde 8 Cağaloğlu Molla Fenarî Caddesinde 30 No.lu binaye nakledilmiş olan Esnaf Cemiyetleri Dispanserinin bu kerre teşkilâtı tevsi olunarak (İstanbul Esnaf Cemiyetleri hastanesi) Adı altında çalışmaya başladığına dair bulunan dilekçeleri ile işbu hastanenin dahilî teşkilâtını gösterir iki plan, talimatname,iki nüsha rapor sıhhat yüce Vekâletine sunulması üzerine Esnaf Cemiyetleri hastanesinin 19'ar derecede faaliyette bulunması muvafık olduğu adı geçen Vekâletin 8.9.38 Tarih ve 4037/7815 Sayılı buyruğuna atfen bildirilir.
22.9.938

İstanbul Valisi
Namına
İmza

Aslı Gibidir.
II.6.938

Başhekim
Op.Dr.Hüseyin Beğcı

↙
This 1938 document permits the Dispensary of the Istanbul Tradesmen's Associations to operate as the "Istanbul Tradesmen's Hospital."

Özdemir Bayraktar's work at the Tradesmen's Hospital was not limited to managerial success; his sensitivity revealed itself even in the smallest details concerning the hospital. Dinçer Çetintaş, who worked as an accountant at the hospital, recounts:

"Patients or their relatives would come requesting discounts after surgery. 'I have five thousand lira,' 'I have eight thousand lira'... Such conversations would occur almost every day. To explain the situation, I would go to Özdemir Bayraktar's office. After listening, he would say firmly, 'Absolutely no discount.' Then he would add quietly: 'If they're unable to pay... bring them to me.' He would take out whatever he could from his own pocket and say, 'Let this cover it.'"

Özdemir Bayraktar would never allow the foundation's property to be touched. In his own words: "A foundation is a trust." It was personally witnessed that several times a week he contributed from his own pocket to patients' payments, helping without drawing attention to himself. As much as his managerial ability, this foundation ethics — which he protected with sensitivity — was also part of his stance.

↘
A page from the architectural project published in the 315th issue of Arkitekt magazine in 1964: facade photographs and design details of the Istanbul Shopkeepers Hospital.



Mimarî: Y. Mimar SAMİM OKTAY G.S.A. Foto: KANZLER
Statik: BÜLENT YÜNGÜL İ.T.Ü.

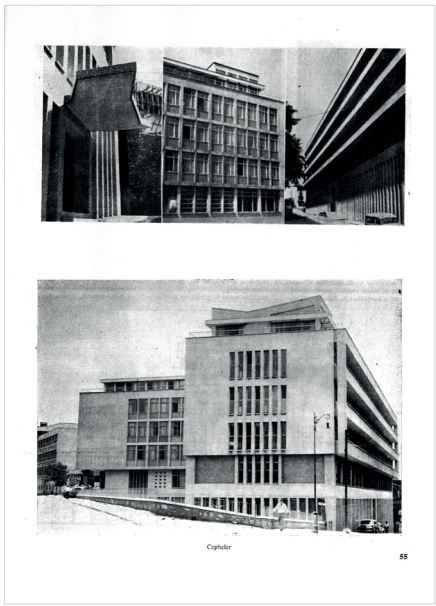
İSTANBUL ESNAF HASTANESİ

250 yataklı İstanbul Esnaf Hastahanesi Süleymaniye caddesi ile Tekvimhane caddesi arasında kalan üçgen biçimli bir arsa üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Tekvimhane cad. ile Süleymaniye caddesi alt ucu arasında 2 katlık bir kot farkı vardır. Katların sıralarında, giriş ve çıkışların tanzimînde bu kot farkından faydalanılmıştır.

Hastahanenin inşaatına 1955 yılı yazında temel atılmak suretiyle başlanmıştır. Paranın temininde çekilen güçlükler dolayısiyle ancak 1 Kasım 1963 de hastahanenin açılışı yapılarak hasta kabulüne başlanmıştır. Hastahane idare heyeti esnaf teşkilatının ve toplumumuz içinde bağımsız kişiler arasından kendi özelliğine uygun olarak seçilirler. Bu heyetin teşebbüs ve çabaları ile bu güçlü iş başarılmıştır. Hastahaneye başta (İnşaat Çilingir ve Yapı Ustaları) Birliği olmak üzere birçok İnşaat kurum ve dernekleri, tutarı 1,5 milyon lira değerinde aktif malzeme yardımında bulunmuşlardır. Bu firmaların finanse ettiği bir çok idarehanede ustalar tarafından montaj işleri ikmal etmiştir. İnşaatın ikmali müddetince ve yardımların İsviçre'den gelmesi sırasında formalite zorlukları meydana gelmiş, idare heyeti bu müşkülleri yenmek için dev gibi çalışmıştır. İnşaata, ikmal edilinceye kadar sarfedilen para miktarı, ayni yardımlar dahil, 8 milyon lira civarındadır. Hastahanenin kat'ıar yekûnu 9000 m² dir.

Hastahanenin fonksiyonuna göre muhtelif girişleri vardır. Doktorların ve resmî

53



Cepheler

55

The turbulent period that began with the closure of the Welfare Party in 1998 found Özdemir Bayraktar serving in the Istanbul Provincial Organization. With the subsequent founding of the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), he undertook the role of chairman of the Monitoring Committee, which prepared analyses based on field data, evaluated organizational work through scientific methods, and drafted reports aimed at increasing overall efficiency. Because of the crisis the National Outlook movement entered and the country's conditions, he sought to play a more active role in politics and to resolve the problems within the party. He held regular meetings and conducted district visits. In the Traditionalists–Reformists split — perhaps the most significant turning point in the history of the National Outlook movement — he stood with the Traditionalists. Yet the crisis within the party and the crisis in Turkey's political arena were not resolved as he wished. He left politics, not to return it to the center of his life again. Although he had believed that politics played a very important role in projects aimed at opening new horizons for Türkiye and had carried out significant work in that arena, he came to see that the story he wished to write could not be completed within the political sphere.

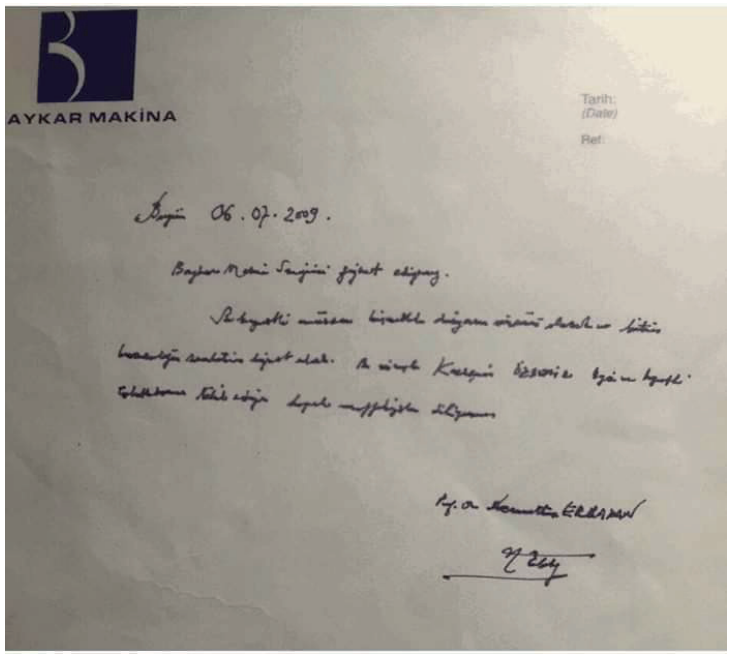


↙
Özdemir Bayraktar and his son Haluk Bayraktar on a Bosphorus tour following the D-8 Summit, alongside Prof. Necmettin Erbakan.

When the Virtue Party was closed in 2001, he stepped away from politics and began preparing for another endeavor which he believed was essential for Türkiye's realization. Türkiye needed a localization initiative not only in politics but also beyond politics. Recognizing this, Özdemir Bayraktar had now reached one of the important turning points of a story that branched out like the limbs of a centuries-old tree.

The 1990s went down in history as one of Türkiye's darkest periods. Unsolved murders, political instability, and terrorism bent Türkiye's back, making it nearly impossible to pursue a national and stable policy. During the period when Özdemir Bayraktar was part of the National Vision movement, conditions in Türkiye steadily worsened, and the blow dealt to the movement in the late 1990s distanced Bayraktar from politics. While Özdemir Bayraktar and Baykar pursued the indigenous path independently of this political story, the day would come when Türkiye's greater story would arrive at the same point. Because of the conditions Türkiye was in, it was as though Özdemir Bayraktar had waited for years for the moment that would eventually arrive.

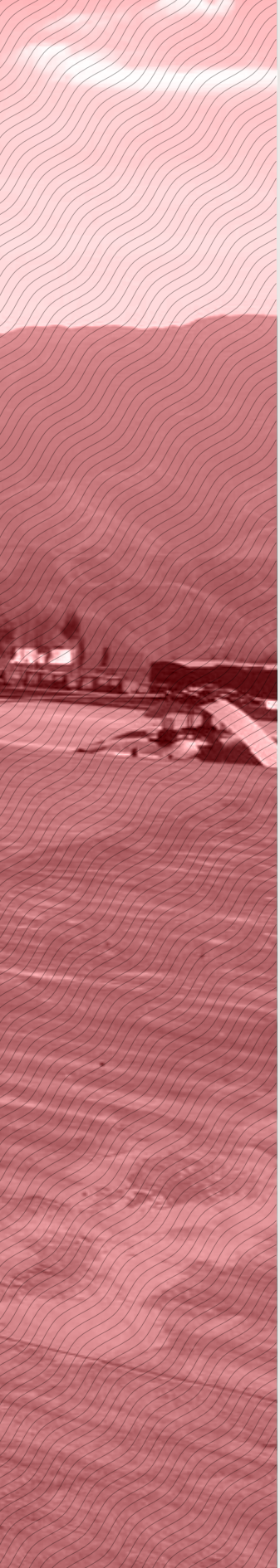
↘
From Necmettin Erbakan's visit to Baykar Makina's Istanbul facility on 6 July 2009. In the guestbook, he notes that he finds Baykar promising for Türkiye's defense industry.



"THIS IS NOW AN INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION UPON YOU"

After the closure of the Virtue Party, Özdemir Bayraktar visits Necmettin Erbakan — who was under a political ban at the time — together with his son Haluk Bayraktar. The main topic is, of course, politics — yet the conversation opens to another subject. At one point in the discussion, Erbakan asks the guests how the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) efforts are progressing. Özdemir Bayraktar begins speaking with excitement about the UAV projects he has undertaken. Necmettin Erbakan listens attentively and asks questions. Özdemir Bayraktar explains at length the difficulties of producing UAVs and the obstacles they may encounter. He lists all the challenges and possible negative scenarios. Özdemir Bayraktar expects Erbakan to say, *"Let's give up on this venture."* But that is not what happens. Necmettin Erbakan, as both a politician and an engineer, sees the truth. He completes his remarks by saying "These days, you will produce equipment that will serve this nation and the ummah. Despite whatever obstacles or barriers you may encounter, doing so is now an obligation upon you." With these words, he encourages Özdemir Bayraktar at the very beginning of the journey. Through both his words and his demeanor, he demonstrates that he stands behind the work to be done.





03

BECOMING AN ‘AKINCI’
(2001-2016)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Efforts

Where Does a Story Take Root?

In tired, sleepless eyes? When heads are stubbornly lifted toward the sky? In the very first moment a machine takes flight like a bird?

When an aircraft with a one-and-a-half-meter wingspan crashes? Or when every single piece is put back together again?

Perhaps in all of them. Perhaps in none.

In stories that grow through sleepless nights, grow stronger through struggle, and are pursued with faith?

When Özdemir Bayraktar knocked on the door of his son Haluk and his friend Ekber Onuk and said, "We are going to build an airplane," what did he feel?

When did Selçuk Bayraktar first grasp that a indigenously produced aircraft could be built in Türkiye — that believing in such a venture, even fighting for it, was itself valuable?

What was Ömer Bayraktar thinking on competition day as he launched the Bayraktar Mini UAV into the sky?

Now then — where shall we begin the skyward story of the Bayraktar family and Baykar?





↖ Özdemir Bayraktar inspecting an early UAV prototype at the Bayrampaşa workshop, early 2000s.

A New Turning Point in the Millennium

The 1990s corresponded to a highly turbulent period for Türkiye — socially and politically, but also economically. During this period, many companies either went bankrupt or were forced to downsize. That Baykar was able to remain standing in such a period was possible because the company operated in multiple different sectors. By that time, Baykar had already proven itself in the industry and was thus able to preserve its strength. As the 2000s approached, although Baykar continued operating at the same level of quality, the flow of life was moving in a different direction — and Özdemir Bayraktar possessed the vision to recognize this.

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NOT SOMEONE WHO WOULD TAKE ON TASKS THAT ANYONE COULD EASILY DO.

With the widespread adoption of CNC machines in the market, the production of subcontract industrial components becomes easier. For this reason, a growing number of firms enter the field to carry out such work. In Özdemir Bayraktar's view, his path in this area has now reached its end. The reason is not that his own business potential has diminished; on the contrary, it is that the level of skill required to produce these parts is no longer scarce.

Because Özdemir Bayraktar is someone who does not pursue what everyone can easily accomplish, but who seeks to achieve what has not yet been achieved. This situation leads him toward new pursuits. In his mind, there is now another vision and another idea. The thoughts and designs that once adorned his dreams in the past are no longer merely dreams; they have become part of a concrete plan for Özdemir Bayraktar.

The First Rehearsals of a Great Story

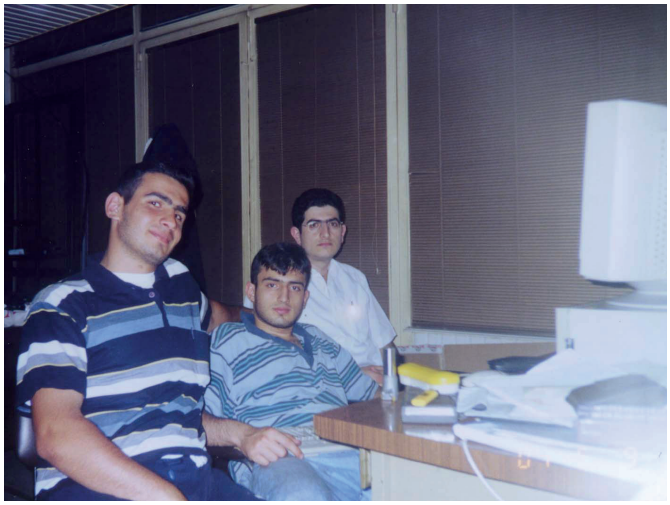
Özdemir Bayraktar's love of airplanes begins in childhood and turns into a great passion as he grows older.mThrough his work at BURTRAK, when he travels to Japan and France, he buys model airplanes; upon returning, he spends nights and days working to get them operational. On one occasion, they spend a week working on a plane he brought from Japan. After building the model, they go to a hill in Sarıyer to fly it. Özdemir



↙
One of Selçuk Bayraktar's photos from abroad. Flight demo with a UAV in the countryside. Philadelphia, 2001.



Bayraktar releases the aircraft with a burst of throttle. The plane rises no more than ten meters before crashing to the ground and breaking into pieces.The fate of the airplane brought from France will be no different. That model, too, buries itself in the grass from a height of fifty meters. On another trip abroad, he brings back a helicopter. Of course, a helicopter's flight and control system are far more complex, and flying it is more difficult. Selçuk rises to the challenge of this task. When it comes to such complex model aircraft systems, in the words of his uncle Ömer Bayraktar, young Selçuk becomes "the master of this craft."



↙
Ahmet, Selçuk, and Haluk Bayraktar.

Özdemir Bayraktar succeeds in passing on his passion for airplanes to his children. His sons Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet grow up in an environment where they play with toy airplanes and where the sky dominates their imagination. Imagine a room filled solely with toy airplanes. Whenever Özdemir Bayraktar hosts friends at home, he occasionally takes them into this airplane room and even wants them to watch his children at play. In this way, he manages to transmit his love of aviation to his children.

To fly the model airplanes he brings from abroad, the family also goes together to the Sarıyer stadium on weekends. He pays no attention to friends who comment, “Aren’t you too old for this? Don’t you have anything better to do?” Instead, he even invites some of them by saying, “We’re flying airplanes — you should come too.” As the airplanes take to the air, the Bayraktar family becomes excited with the enthusiasm that aviation inspires. For Özdemir Bayraktar, this is not a simple hobby or pastime. While explaining that this is more than a game, he points toward the future, saying, “You’ll see.”

Indeed, what at that time appeared to be a leisure activity or a weekend pastime is, in reality, a rehearsal. A rehearsal for a great and epic story...

MY ELDER BROTHER ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR USED TO SAY, "WE CAN IGNITE A SPARK ON THIS PATH. IF WE IGNITE THAT SPARK, IT WILL CATCH FIRE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO SETS IT ALIGHT — WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE FULFILL OUR DUTY." AND WE IGNITED THAT SPARK. AND, THANK GOD, IT TURNED INTO A FLAME.

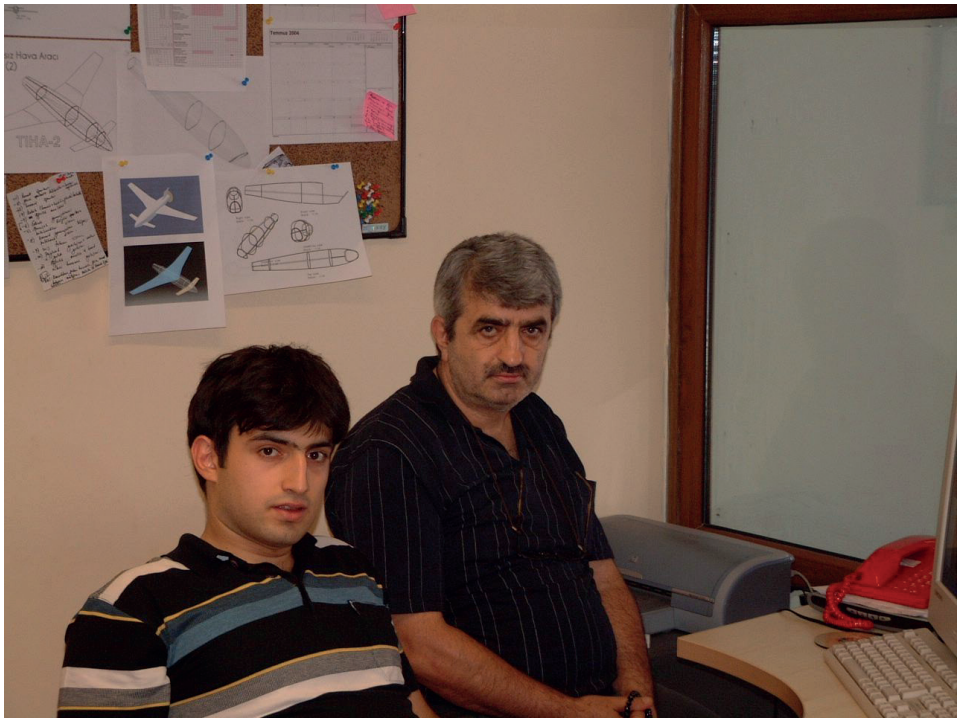
Ömer Bayraktar

ENGINEER (BROTHER)

“We must be the first ones to build an unmanned aerial vehicle for our country—because Türkiye needs it. In our neighborhood, what is required is a strong army and a strong Türkiye.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR

↘
A 2004 photo of Özdemir Bayraktar with his son Selçuk at the workshop. Below, Haluk Bayraktar working at his desk on the same day.







At the Back of His Mind

WHEN IT CAME TO ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR AND HIS PERSPECTIVE AS AN ENGINEER, ANY QUESTION ESSENTIALLY TRANSFORMED INTO BELIEF.

Özdemir Bayraktar's passion for airplanes was so strong that it suggested the leap he would make in the 2000s had long been present in a corner of his mind. He had a distinctive approach to airplanes. Approaching the age of fifty, as the head of a large company, he examined aircraft the way little Özdemir once examined the workings of a radio. Confident, curious, and passionate.

Uğur Tarçın –whom he met during the Turkish Aeronautical Association's amateur pilot course in 1989—describes the situation as follows: "The aircraft we used at the time were the T67s — two-seat, single-engine, front-propeller training aircraft with three wheels.Of course, flying is something very beautiful — an extraordinary feeling to glide in the sky, to climb, to descend. But Özdemir Bey was an engineer; alongside his flight experience, he was in fact practicing engineering. After savoring flight and understanding flight aerodynamics, he said one day during a flight, 'I will build this airplane.'" For someone attending amateur pilot training and experiencing flight for the first time, it would be natural to be captivated by the excitement of that moment; one might say that seeing different beauties, flying, was itself something magnificent. But when it came to Özdemir Bayraktar — and to the gaze with which he looked — the matter had already transformed into a story of belief, possibility, and horizon.



↖
Özdemir Bayraktar working on the first-ever UAV prototype. Next to him stands Haluk Bayraktar.

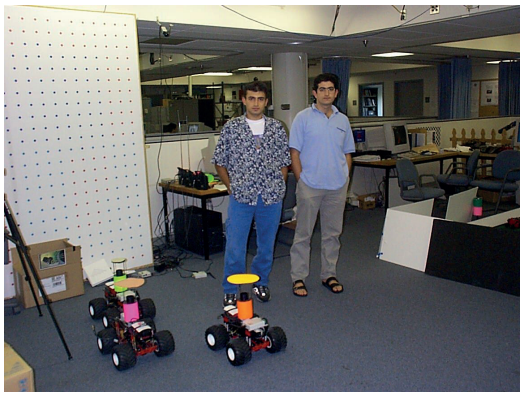
"Türkiye Needs This"

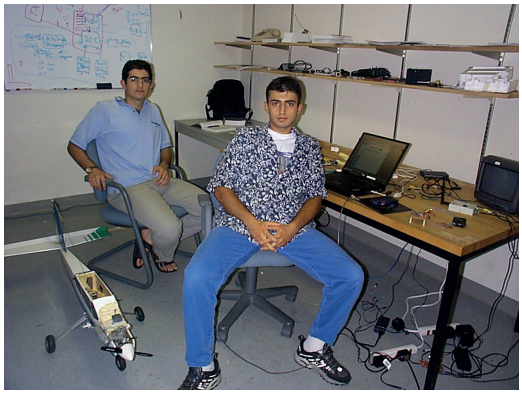
Özdemir Bayraktar plays a major role in the formation of his sons as engineers. Haluk graduates from the Department of Industrial Engineering at METU, and Selçuk from the Department of Electronics and Communications Engineering at Istanbul Technical University. Özdemir Bayraktar wants his sons Haluk and Selçuk to pursue their graduate studies abroad.

Haluk completes his master's degree in Financial Engineering at Columbia University, while Selçuk completes his master's degree in Electrical Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). After returning from abroad, Haluk begins working at a company.

At that time, Baykar is still operating in the subcontract industrial field. Upon his father's invitation, Haluk joins his father's business, and together they decide to purchase CNC machines and fully enter the manufacturing sector. During those years at the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn), Selçuk Bayraktar conducts significant research on UAV formations and robot coordination. He is even admitted to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) based on these achievements. There, he works on automatic flight control algorithms for unmanned helicopter systems.

Since Özdemir Bayraktar himself is deeply interested in aviation, he is very pleased with his son Selçuk's work on UAVs. Yet deep down, he looks for ways to ensure that the works that Selçuk will produce with his talent and hard work can benefit Türkiye. Having made it a principle to serve the Turkish nation and its people, Özdemir Bayraktar is concerned that Selçuk Bayraktar might marry and settle abroad.Since such a plan does not exist in Selçuk Bayraktar's mind, he occasionally even rebels against his father's suggestions.





↙
Photos from Haluk Bayraktar's visit to his younger brother Selçuk Bayraktar in the United States. UPenn GRASP Lab, 2001.

Özdemir Bayraktar closely follows his son Selçuk Bayraktar's work on unmanned aerial vehicles and the early formation flight experiments of unmanned aircraft. His son's talent and abilities make him proud. After Selçuk Bayraktar sends his family videos of the model aircraft he flies in the United States, they decide: "Türkiye needs this; we must do this in Türkiye."

To create something new and transform it into a major enterprise has long been one of Özdemir Bayraktar's dreams. This time, the Bayraktar family sets out to begin a completely different and challenging story for Türkiye — with the effort, sacrifice, and determination of every family member.

But how does a company suddenly begin producing UAVs? They think: They ask themselves what would be the right way of doing this. Then, unexpectedly, an opportunity appears before them...

MY FATHER WOULD CONSTANTLY GIVE ME ADVICE. HE WAS EXTREMELY WORRIED THAT I WAS GOING TO SETTLE AND MARRY IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEVER COME BACK HOME. HE WOULD SAY IT OPENLY AND FREQUENTLY. INDEED, HE WOULD SAY IT SO OFTEN THAT I WOULD NEARLY PROTEST DESPITE NOT HARBORING ANY SUCH INTENTIONS IN MY HEART.

Selçuk Bayraktar

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, BAYKAR (SON)

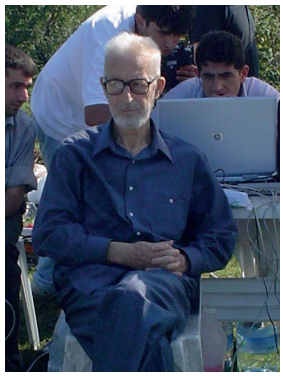
“We raise them here, we educate them, we help them grow. We bring them to the point where they are ready to lay eggs. And then they leave — and go lay their eggs in another nest.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR









↗
A picture from the summer of 2004. The Bayraktar family prepares their UAV for a test. Top right, the late Mehmet Mert Bayraktar poses with the UAV. Bottom right, Lütfü Bey, Özdemir Bayraktar's father.



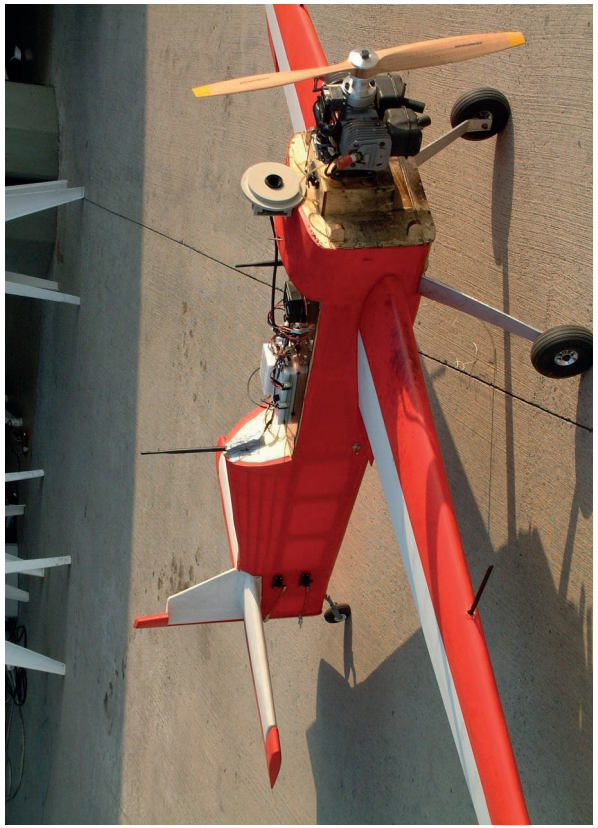


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Özdemir Bayraktar working on the UAV prototype in an open field. Below, Selçuk Bayraktar runs technical checks.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar in Samandıra, together with his sons Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar and the engineering team.







International Aviation Symposium: RAST2003

A FEW "UNINVITED" GUESTS ALSO ATTENDED THE SYMPOSIUM: ÖZDEMIR, HALUK, AND SELÇUK BAYRAKTAR.

International Aviation Symposium: RAST2003 In the autumn of 2003, an international symposium called RAST2003 — focusing on developments in space and aviation — was to be held at the Air Force Academy. Many researchers from renowned universities in the United States, from Türkiye's ITU and METU, and from Boğaziçi University, among others, would participate in the symposium to present and discuss their work. A few "uninvited" guests would also attend: Özdemir, Haluk, and Selçuk Bayraktar. At that time, Cemal Öksüz was serving as Head of the Department of Aircraft Engineering at the Air Force Academy. Through a friend from the industrial sector, Yusuf Tokdemir — whom he knew — Selçuk, Haluk, and Özdemir Bayraktar knock on Cemal Öksüz's door. Yusuf Tokdemir first introduces Özdemir Bayraktar and explains his work. Then Selçuk Bayraktar speaks about the research he conducted abroad, describing his project thesis on unmanned aerial vehicles.

That day, the Bayraktar family has brought with them a model aircraft with an approximately one-and-a-half-meter wingspan. With his technical background, experience in the United States, work on UAVs, and mastery of the subject, Selçuk Bayraktar attracts the attention of commanders, bureaucrats, and students alike. He displays his project for those present. At the same time, projects from students of the mechanical engineering, aircraft engineering, and electronics departments — nearly a hundred in total — are also exhibited in the area. During this time, a group of students approaches Cemal Öksüz and says: "Sir, we would like to listen to Selçuk Bayraktar; please have him explain his project to us."

Cemal Öksüz goes to the commander of the Air Force Academy — who was serving as rector at the time — and explains the situation.

Although the commander is not particularly willing to grant permission, with Cemal Öksüz's insistence it is decided that the students will be able to listen to Selçuk Bayraktar half an hour before the evening meal begins.



↙
Selçuk and Haluk Bayraktar talk about their work on UAVs at the Air Force Academy, 2003.





↙
Özdemir Bayraktar listening to his son Selçuk Bayraktar speak about his experience with UAVs from the stage of the Air Force Academy conference hall.

Özdemir Bayraktar sits in the very front row of the hall while Selçuk Bayraktar stands on stage with his aircraft. The hall is filled with approximately one thousand people. When dinner time arrives, about twenty to thirty people leave; with the rest, the conference continues until half past eleven. The Bayraktar family leaves a deep impression on the military audience. Following the symposium, Özdemir Bayraktar strengthens his communication with the Air Force Academy. In the period that follows, many students from the school apply to Baykar to carry out unmanned aerial vehicle projects. Baykar, in turn, consistently shares the necessary equipment and accumulated knowledge for the projects with the students. Özdemir Bayraktar supports the students of the Air Force Academy in developing their capabilities, procuring materials from abroad when needed, facilitating their trips abroad, and participating in competitions. Selçuk Bayraktar, too, acts as an elder brother to the Air Force Academy students whenever they need support.



↙
The UAV on display at the exposition area of the Air Force Academy symposium.

↙
Özdemir Bayraktar briefs participants on the UAV at the exposition area.



ONE DAY, WE WENT TO SEE THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR DEFENSE INDUSTRIES. AS WE WERE IN THE WAITING ROOM, THE DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY CAME AND ASKED WHY WE WERE WAITING. THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT REPLIED THAT WE WERE WAITING TO SEE THE UNDERSECRETARY. FOR THE SAKE OF STARTING A CONVERSATION, ÖZDEMİR BEY WENT TO HIM AND SAID: "PERHAPS YOU KNOW US. WE ARE BUILDING UAVS. WE HAVE COME TO DISCUSS THIS PROJECT." THE UNDERSECRETARY REPLIED: "NO, I DO NOT KNOW." BROTHER ÖZDEMİR TURNED TO ME AND SAID: "YOU SEE, BÜLENT? LANDSCAPES FROM OUR COUNTRY." THE ROOM SUDDENLY GREW VERY TENSE.

Bülent Tatlıcan

MECHANICAL ENGINEER (FRIEND)

The Spark

The first step has been taken; it seems a positive result has been achieved. Now it is time for the next stage. The Bayraktar family takes the next step and, under its former name, schedules a meeting with the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries and presents their work to the head of department. They explain that unmanned aerial vehicles represent a paradigm shift, and they present reports and academic articles. They visit not only the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries (SSM), but also institutions such as ASELSAN, Turkish Aerospace Industries Inc. (TUSAŞ), and ROKETSAN, explaining the work they have carried out. The aim of the Bayraktar family is to introduce themselves, to convey that they have begun working in this field, and to demonstrate that Türkiye can seize this paradigm shift.



↙
A family photograph taken after the May 2005 presentation on the UAV development program at Istanbul University.



↙
Photo taken at the TOK'05 National Automatic Control Conference. May 2005, Istanbul Technical University Department of Electronics. Haluk Bayraktar presenting on the UAV development program.





↘
Haluk Bayraktar briefs participants about UAV systems following his presentation at the TOK'05 National Automatic Control Conference, 2005.

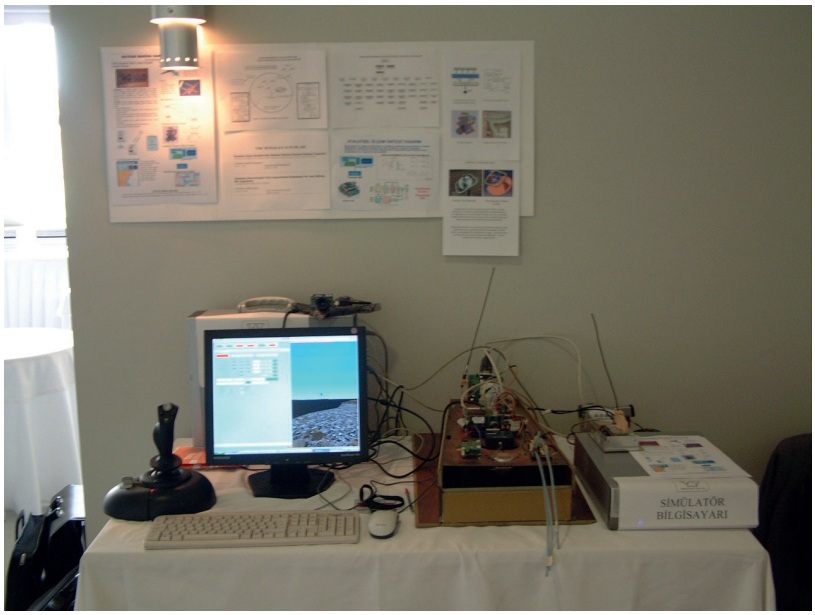
As Özdemir Bayraktar begins work on unmanned aerial vehicles, he says:

“Let us set out on a path. What matters is to ignite a spark along the way. It does not matter who sets it alight. We will have fulfilled our duty.”

While Selçuk Bayraktar works on his own project in the United States, Özdemir Bayraktar begins working on model aircraft together with his son Haluk Bayraktar. His youngest, Ahmet Bayraktar, also joins. The team — composed of young engineers brought together at Baykar to carry out aircraft development — communicates with Selçuk Bayraktar over the internet. Work on unmanned aerial vehicles begins swiftly. Özdemir Bayraktar’s passion for aviation and his multifaceted engineering background, his conviction that Türkiye needs a domestically and nationally produced unmanned aerial vehicle, and the path he opened with this belief converge with Selçuk Bayraktar’s technical leadership. A legendary struggle that encompasses the entire Bayraktar family begins. The spark has been ignited.

“You run ahead. Let the steam follow you.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR



First version of the autopilot system developed by Baykar.

FOR THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY, PURSUING A CAUSE THEY BELIEVED IN WAS INDEPENDENT OF WHETHER SUCCESS WOULD FOLLOW.

Between 2004 and 2006, Selçuk Bayraktar was at MIT as a research assistant, while at the same time continuing his university work. As online discussions proceeded, each time he returned to Türkiye he worked with the team until the early hours of the morning. Workdays that reached twenty hours were followed by only three or four hours of sleep. The entire team was focused on building a robotic aircraft in model-plane scale — integrating software, electronics, mechanics, and aerodynamics. The fundamental goal was to recognize paradigm shifts and make a breakthrough in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles. Because many countries and companies abroad had already begun working on UAVs. In 2004, the core software code that would form the heart of the UAV — Türkiye's first robotic guidance system — emerged under Selçuk Bayraktar's technical leadership. The first flight tests were carried out in Garipçe. After the flights in Garipçe, Özdemir Bayraktar's belief that this technology could be built in Türkiye grew stronger.

This beginning story goes beyond courage. The essential matter is struggle. But for the Bayraktar family, pursuing a struggle they believe in is independent of success. As Selçuk Bayraktar says: "Success may come or it may not; what matters is the struggle itself."

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar working on the UAV airframe at his workshop.



"WE, TOO, WILL BUILD AN AIRCRAFT."

In 2003, one evening, Özdemir Bayraktar, together with his son Haluk Bayraktar, knocks on the door of his engineer friend Ekber Onuk from university. At that time, Ekber Onuk is in contact with the defense industry. Özdemir Bayraktar says to Onuk:

"We are going to build an airplane, and we will also buy composite materials from you..."

ⓘ Scan, Watch

Let us hear the rest of the story from Onuk himself: *"I said, 'You cannot buy anything from me.' Haluk frowned. 'You will tell me what you need. I will supply them to you. Buying is out of the question.'"*

Ekber Onuk would provide all the materials and composite technology required by the Bayraktar family free of charge.

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS A VERY GOOD ENGINEER AND WAS AWARE OF TÜRKİYE'S CAPABILITIES. HE BELIEVED: "THESE THINGS CAN BE DONE. THEY ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE TASKS. AS LONG AS YOU HAVE BELIEF, DEDICATE YOURSELVES TO THE WORK, MAKE THE NECESSARY SACRIFICES, AND BRING FORTH THE RIGHT, WELL-EQUIPPED KNOWLEDGE."

Zeynep Okyay

CHAIRWOMAN OF THE BOARD, KALE GROUP

Bayraktar Mini UAV Preparation and Demonstration Process

THEY TOILED FOR FOUR MONTHS, MEETING BOTH CRITERIA THROUGH ENTIRELY INDIGENOUS AND ORIGINAL MEANS AS THEY PREPARED FOR THE COMPETITION.

On July 27, 2005, preparations for the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Project begin at the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries. They aim to launch a project for the Mini UAVs Türkiye needs, but they have no intention of preparing this project through conventional methods. They think: "Let us issue an open call — whoever in Türkiye is working in this field should come and present their prototypes... Whoever succeeds, let us support them." At that time, the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries is developing this project model for the first time. Since the Bayraktar family had previously come and made a presentation, they are personally invited to the project. They speak about the project they have prepared and request the opportunity to conduct work accordingly.

Within the project, there is a rule that either the airframe or the flight control system must be original. However, the Bayraktar family chooses to make both the airframe and the control system original and domestic. Özdemir Bayraktar is in favor of building everything from scratch. For four months, they work day and night, fulfilling both criteria and making them indigenous and original in preparation for the competition day. The demo process is intense; during testing, they encounter numerous difficulties.



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Ömer Bayraktar holds the UAV prototype, built for the competition, at the workshop.



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Airframe and wing components of a UAV laid out on the workshop floor ahead of assembly.





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Özdemir Bayraktar carefully examining parts during the UAV's assembly.

↘
Bayraktar Mini UAV.



↘
Özdemir and Ömer Bayraktar during a demo flight at the İkitelli Mechanized Infantry Brigade Command, 2006.











↙
Bayraktar Mini UAV after crashing during a test flight.

On October 3, 2005, preparations are made one day before the demo flight on the runway used by firefighting aircraft in the forested area above Maslak. The team has only three aircraft in hand. Faculty members from ITU who are involved in UAVs are also present at the site for the demo. During the test flight, the aircraft takes off successfully, but after a short while crashes to the ground.

After taking off with manual control, when switching to autopilot, the aircraft — with Selçuk Bayraktar at the controls — crashes while turning toward the sun. As a result, the team is left with only one UAV. This situation worries Haluk Bayraktar: “This is our last UAV... Let’s take it to Ankara and fly it at the demo site.” But Özdemir Bayraktar is resolute: “No, this UAV will fly here.” They fly the remaining UAV in the forested area. During this flight as well, the aircraft crashes and is damaged. Now only hours remain until the demo morning — and there is no UAV left that can fly.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

Freedom Has Wings

THE TEAM TOOK TO THE FIELD WITH A POORLY PAINTED AIRCRAFT HELD TOGETHER BY GRAY TAPE.

Two UAVs have been prepared for the competition to be held for the unmanned aerial vehicle project under development by the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries. However, one of the UAVs has crashed and the other has been damaged during landing. When the team boards the minibus and sets out for Ankara, both along the journey and upon arrival — in the corridors of TUSAŞ's guesthouse — they struggle until morning to assemble and repair the second aircraft, which has not yet been fully completed. At three in the morning, in TUSAŞ's guesthouse, as they work on the corridor carpet to complete the missing parts of the aircraft, one of the foreign guests staying at the guesthouse gives the entire team a puzzled look — perhaps thinking he has wandered into a dream. At that hour, a model aircraft lies on the ground, surrounded by a group of people...In a few hours, the Baykar team will awaken everyone at the competition to "a dream" — a dream that will demonstrate that building a domestically and nationally produced unmanned aerial vehicle in Türkiye is possible.

At the Turkish Air Force's Mürted Air Base, after that long night spent in TUSAŞ's guesthouse, morning finally arrives. The delegation from the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries is present on the field, and Haluk Bayraktar delivers the preliminary briefing to them. Selçuk Bayraktar tells his elder brother Haluk Bayraktar, "Stretch out the talk a bit," because the team is still finishing the aircraft. After a while, the team will step onto the field with an aircraft whose certain parts are secured with gray tape and painted in patchwork fashion.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

Turgut Şenol recounts that day with the following words: “There were pieces of tape on the aircraft. The one that gave it an aesthetic appearance was me. We had to work quite a bit to bring the fuselage together.

I arrived at night. I stayed with them until morning. We taped it up, but it didn’t look very good. This time, I took a model knife in my hand and shaped it nicely. When you look at it, it appears as if it has been specially finished with a stylish coat of paint, but in reality it was more of a reinforcement operation to prevent the fuselage from coming apart. It is a day we laughed about a lot among ourselves.”

At the start of a bright, sunny day, a small team stands inside a vast facility and walks toward the field: With the sadness of having crashed the aircraft the previous day, and the exhaustion of having worked all night — yet with faith, determination, hope, and the awareness that there is still a long road ahead...

At the edge of the base, in TUSAŞ’s aircraft manufacturing and maintenance center, F-16/C and D aircraft are being mounted in accordance with instructions. Nearby, F-16s conduct drills; the sound of artillery is heard. The second UAV prepared for the demo is so modest that it could be described as saying, “Let my appearance not deceive you.”

Because inside this aircraft lies an important core: software, electronics, and aerodynamics — domestic and original — a core designed and built by Turkish engineers. Just before takeoff, the team performs one final check. When they realize that the aircraft is not responding to the control unit, Selçuk Bayraktar suspects that the problem is a connector and removes the part.Finally, the aircraft begins responding to the controls. After a tense wait, when Ömer Bayraktar lifts the aircraft from the ground and launches it forward with his right hand, it seems as though the aircraft will fall.

For a brief moment morale drops — but after two brief dives, the aircraft regains stability and flies. The entire team exhales in relief. Everything functions perfectly. With the national software developed through nearly two years of effort, and



THE BAYKAR TEAM WAS THE ONLY TEAM TO SUCCEED.

the hardware they had built with great dedication, the aircraft performs exceptionally well in the air.The team is exhausted from working all night.

Özdemir Bayraktar, however, is excited — and certain that they will succeed. And the result unfolds exactly as he had anticipated. Among the four firms participating in the competition, only one aircraft — the one whose most critical components, the software and flight control system, were domestic — succeeds. The other firms' aircraft, despite having foreign software and hardware, either fail to fly as expected or crash before completing the demo successfully. The only successful team is the Baykar team.

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TUSAS Compound, Ankara, 2005. For the first time ever, a UAV with indigenous and original software and airframe takes flight.





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Family photo with ITU faculty and Türkiye's first-ever autopilot-equipped Mini UAV following the successful demo flight.



After the flight, Selçuk Bayraktar wishes to make a speech and share his feelings on behalf of everyone who contributed to the development of the unmanned aerial vehicle they produced. It is the month of Ramadan; everyone is tired, fasting, and sleep-deprived — yet the excitement is at its peak. He explains why they undertook this work.

He speaks to the why behind the work — addressing the great big "really?" in the delegation's eyes, that lingering sense of "things like this don't happen in Türkiye." Because that day, with the flight of a indigenously and originally developed unmanned aerial vehicle — including its flight computer and control system — the learned helplessness that had taken root in Türkiye was also shattered. Özdemir Bayraktar, responding to what his son said before the delegation and the cameras, tells him: “You spoke well.” Just as important as doing the work itself is explaining why it was done and how it will be done... That day, Selçuk Bayraktar speaks as follows:

ⓘ Scan, Watch



↗
Stills from Selçuk Bayraktar's famous speech at the TUSAS compound.

“

I know the ultimate point of this field. In the United States, we are building the systems of major companies ourselves.

Within five years, Türkiye can become number one in the world in the field of unmanned aerial vehicles.

It can happen very easily — I am telling you. Because the technology that will be used ten years from now is already being developed there by me and friends like me. It can happen within five years, very easily — and for Türkiye, it is a tremendous opportunity to seize this. If Türkiye captures this technology, other industries will develop as well. I have dedicated my life to this cause. I have been working on it for four years. I extend my heartfelt thanks and affection to everyone who has supported us.

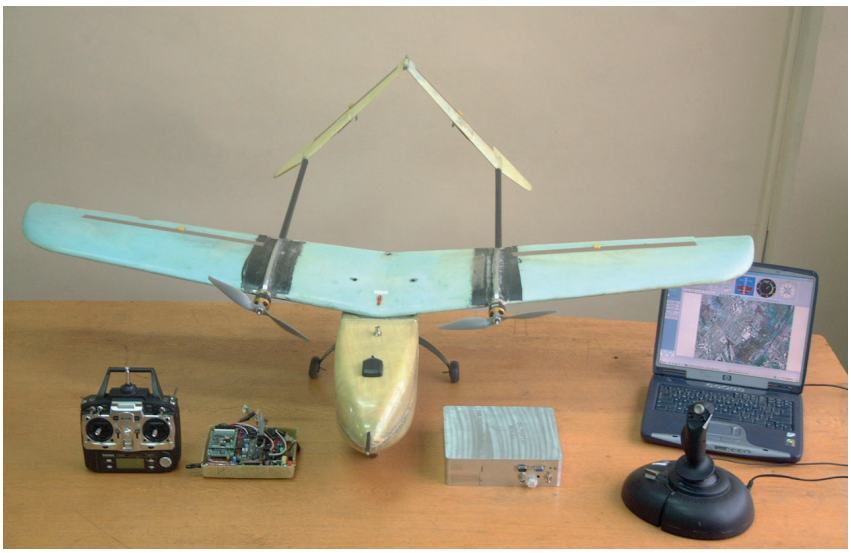
SELÇUK BAYRAKTAR

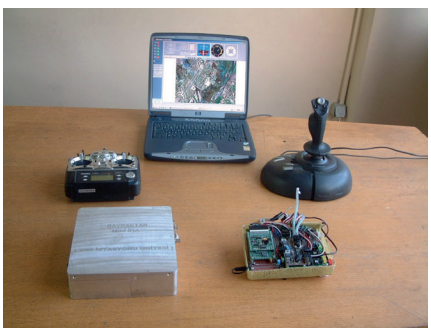
ⓘ Scan, Watch

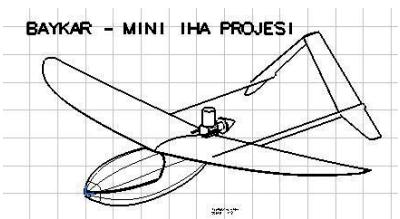
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Özdemir Bayraktar at the workshop.











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Bayraktar Mini UAV with remote control, circuit boards, control box, ground station computer, and original sketch.



The World's First Operational Mini Unmanned Helicopter: Malazgirt Mini UAV

Of the three organizations invited alongside the Baykar team, none produces both the airframe and the software domestically. After carrying out the flight demonstrations on October 4, 2005 and achieving success, months pass without any news from the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries. The other organizations are granted additional time and another opportunity to present, but when they fail once again, the Baykar team definitively wins the tender.

Yet this success does not slow the team's pace. They wait nearly a year for the contract, but during that time the Baykar team does not stand still. They decide to move into the field to test and further develop the Bayraktar Mini UAV. After the competition, they also focus on developing the world's first unmanned mini helicopter — which they name the "Malazgirt Mini UAV."

↖ Özdemir Bayraktar working on the Malazgirt Mini UAV with his sons Haluk and Selçuk and the engineering team.







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Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar making pre-test preparations on the Malazgirt Mini UAV.





↖
Özdemir Bayraktar and the engineering team preparing the Malazgirt Mini UAV for flight.



↘
Özdemir, Ömer, and Haluk Bayraktar, together with the team, conducting Malazgirt Mini UAV flight tests on the terrace of their Bayrampaşa workshop.







THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM WAS VERY INTENSE; THERE WAS A NEED FOR THIS KIND OF TECHNOLOGY. DIALOGUE WITH THE SOLDIERS HAD DEVELOPED — THEY WERE INVITING US. MY FATHER WAS ALREADY VERY INTERESTED. TOGETHER WITH THE ENGINEERS, WE WOULD TAKE WHATEVER WE HAD AND GO...

Haluk Bayraktar

CEO, BAYKAR

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Özdemir and Haluk Bayraktar running technical checks on the Malazgirt Mini UAV at a military base.





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Selçuk Bayraktar and the Malazgirt Mini UAV at a military base.





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The Baykar team posing with the Malazgirt Mini UAV and a group of soldiers at the Şırnak Akçay Brigade, 2006.



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The Baykar team
in Akçay, Şırnak.

The Baykar research and development team begins its work within the 6th Motorized Infantry Brigade in Akçay, Şırnak. The commanders open their headquarters to the team, saying, “Come and work here.” The team takes whatever they have in hand and goes to the region, working day and night to develop the Malazgirt Mini UAV and the Bayraktar Mini UAV. The days pass working side by side with the soldiers in the field — producing what is needed and carrying out research and development activities accordingly.

Mustafa Köseoğlu, who was newly appointed to the brigade at the time, describes the scene upon arriving at headquarters as follows: “I had been assigned as Chief of Staff of the Şırnak 6th Motorized Infantry Brigade. Özdemir Bayraktar and his sons were, at that time, working on the first prototypes of unmanned aerial vehicles. They had come to the region with a helicopter-type unmanned aerial vehicle they had produced. They wanted to see how this unmanned aerial vehicle — which they had developed in a factory and laboratory environment — would be used in the field and how it would serve the soldiers. For this purpose, they chose Mount Gabar, where the fight against terrorism was particularly intense, as the most suitable location.”

ⓘ Scan, Watch

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR'S GREATEST QUALITY WAS THAT, WHENEVER A DEFICIENCY WAS REPORTED, HE WOULD PERSONALLY GO INTO THE FIELD TO ADDRESS IT IMMEDIATELY AND TRAIN THE PERSONNEL USING THE SYSTEM. HE WAS A CIVILIAN, YET IN MANY WAYS LIKE A SOLDIER... PLANNED, METHODICAL, AND DISCIPLINED. HE INTEGRATED THE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE HE PRODUCED WITH THE PERSONNEL AND MANAGED THIS ENTIRE PROCESS WITH GREAT SKILL.

Salih Zeki Çolak

GENERAL (RET.)



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar at the Şırnak Akçay Brigade, 2006.

"WILL YOU BE ABLE TO ACCEPT MY OFFER?"

Lieutenant Colonel Melih Gülova, like many others, is deeply moved when he witnesses the work carried out by the Baykar team. When the team first tells Melih Gülova about the Malazgirt Mini UAV, his eyes light up. He says that they themselves are trying to find solutions in the fight against terrorism through technology. Özdemir Bayraktar says: *"We will do whatever we can with the means at our disposal, but would you be willing to accept my proposal?"* When Melih Gülova asks with curiosity, "What is your proposal?" Özdemir Bayraktar replies: *"Provide us with a place to set up a workshop, and we will provide you with technological support."* Lieutenant Colonel Melih reflects and consults with his colleagues. Finally, taking the initiative, he enables the team to establish a workshop at the foothills of Mount Gabar, where the brigade is stationed. He does whatever he can to provide the logistical support the team requires.

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR WAS SOMEONE WHO COULD BUILD FRIENDSHIPS WITH SOLDIERS AT EVERY LEVEL. FROM THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF DOWN TO THE LOWEST-RANKING SOLDIER, HE DEVELOPED SINCERE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EVERYONE. THANKS TO HIM, UAVS MADE THE ENEMY VISIBLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GUERRILLA TACTICS IN THE FIELD. OVER TIME, THIS PROCESS EVOLVED INTO ARMED UAVS AND BECAME A FORCE THAT NEUTRALIZED THE ENEMY.

Dr. Osman Gazi Kandemir

BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET.)

From specialist sergeants to the highest-ranking commanders of the Turkish Armed Forces, they witness with interest and astonishment how Özdemir Bayraktar arrives with his sons and stays in containers, how the team develops its technologies in line with the needs of Turkish soldiers — working for hours on end. The technology developed by the Baykar team through great sacrifice, and the fact that research and development is conducted directly where the projects will be used, ensure that soldiers at all levels embrace the project and that their motivation increases. The team, of course, draws moral strength from Turkish soldiers in return.

Let us once again listen to the testimony of Brigade Chief of Staff Köseoğlu: “They said they wanted to test and develop this unmanned aerial vehicle within the brigade, under real operational conditions. This was a first for the Turkish Armed Forces — almost like a paradigm shift. Previously, when the military requested something from the General Staff, if it was not available domestically — which was often the case — it would be procured urgently from abroad. The soldier would then try to adapt to the system that had been purchased. Now a civilian company had emerged, wanting to test the technology it had developed directly in the field alongside the soldiers, to see whether it truly served their needs. Özdemir Bayraktar’s idea was an extraordinary approach.”

At the time, the fight against terrorism was very intense and challenging. There was a need for advanced indigenous technologies in the field. Israel’s Heron surveillance UAVs had numerous technical deficiencies. These systems were unable to transmit real-time imagery; they were operated by Israeli pilots, and in the event of a malfunction, intervention by Israeli pilots was again required. This situation caused delays in transmitting operational imagery to soldiers. Soldiers in the region were alert at every moment. In a challenging geography, they were engaged in constant struggle.

OUR UNITS, TOO, CHALLENGED THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY. FOOTAGE RECEIVED FOUR DAYS LATER WAS WORTHLESS BECAUSE FIGHTING TERRORISM IS A REAL-TIME TASK. ONE CAN ONLY SUCCEED IF ONE ACTS ON THE FOOTAGE AS SOON AS IT ARRIVES. YET IF YOU RECEIVE THE OUTPUT IN FOUR DAYS, THAT MEANS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. WE COULD NEVER OBTAIN RELIABLE IMAGERY FROM ISRAEL'S HERONS. YET WE STILL PAID FOR THE IMAGES.

Ata Kalkan

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)

IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM, WE USED TO SEND UNITS TO AN AREA UPON RECEIVING WORD. BUT THANKS TO THE UCAVS, IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO TRACK A TERRORIST GROUP IN REAL TIME. YOU SAY "STRIKE," YOU SAY "FIRE." DONE. I HAVE NEVER SEEN A MAN STAY IN THE MOUNTAINS NIGHT AFTER NIGHT JUST TO TEACH PEOPLE ABOUT A PRODUCT HE HAS SOLD. THAT'S WHAT ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR DID. THIS IS TRUE DEVOTION—LOVE OF COUNTRY AND OF THE SOLDIERS.

Ergin Saygun

FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF – GENERAL (RET.)



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The Malazgirt Mini UAV during a flight test.

Having directly observed and experienced the realities in the field, the Baykar team led by Özdemir Bayraktar designs the Malazgirt Mini UAV in a way suited to rugged terrain. They believe that a system with vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) and pinpoint landing capability would serve as an effective tool in the fight against terrorism. The Malazgirt Mini UAV is produced in two types — gasoline-powered and electric-powered — with its electronic systems. As a mini UAV, Malazgirt is developed entirely domestically, from airframe design to manufacturing. With a maximum takeoff weight of 12 kilograms, the Malazgirt Mini UAV is equipped with a thermal camera system that enables day-and-night imaging. In this way, the helicopter can conduct reconnaissance both day and night.

A VAN, A KALASHNIKOV, AND A MAN

Özdemir Bayraktar, Selçuk Bayraktar, and Haluk Bayraktar are together with their teams at the military brigade in Gabar. Believing that a soldier's needs can only be understood by living alongside them, the entire team places great importance on working in the field. They train personnel in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, provide support, keep reports and records, and receive feedback directly from the soldiers. Through flight tests, research and development work on the Bayraktar Mini UAV continues. At the same time, prototypes are being produced in Istanbul. Ömer Bayraktar was thus asked to bring the prototypes to Gabar.

With the aircraft packed in his luggage, Ömer Bayraktar arrives at Mardin Airport for a demo. Since he was told that a van would pick him up, he waits there. Eventually, a van arrives. There are several other passengers on board. Before long, they depart. The passengers disembark one by one.

Ömer Bayraktar also works to ensure that prototypes are delivered to Gabar. With the aircraft packed in the luggage beside him, Ömer Bayraktar lands at Mardin Airport for a demo. He is told, "A minibus will pick you up from there," and waits. Eventually, the minibus arrives; there are a few other passengers inside. Before long, they set off. One by one, the passengers disembark. Only the driver and Ömer Bayraktar remain in the minibus. They reach Cizre; they have two more hours to travel into the mountains. They pass through pitch-dark, steep, and sharply winding roads.

The driver stops the minibus in front of what looks like a small roadside hut and says he will return shortly. Within five minutes, he comes back carrying a Kalashnikov. He places the weapon in the minibus and says, "The roads here are dangerous. Keep this by your side." Ömer Bayraktar does not know the driver and is understandably uneasy. Moreover, there are Mini UAVs in the luggage beside him. The road is dangerous, the journey is long, and the Kalashnikov lies there between them.Finally, in the distance, from the mountaintop, a light becomes visible. The driver points ahead and says, "That's the brigade."

↘
A military zone where the Bayraktar family conducted their work.



THEY WERE CONDUCTING TESTS IN VERY HIGH-RISK AREAS SUCH AS ŞIRNAK AKÇAY AND OCCASIONALLY MT. GABAR. HERE'S WHAT I CAN SAY TO EXPLAIN HOW DANGEROUS IT WAS: BEFORE ŞIRNAK, I WAS STATIONED IN PATNOS. AT THE TIME, MY BIG BROTHER'S GRANDSON WAS MARTYRED IN A CLASH. LIKEWISE, LT. COL. MELIH GÜLOVA, WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR, WAS MARTYRED IN THE SAME AREA WHEN HE DROVE OVER A MINE. THIS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE WITHOUT LOVE OF COUNTRY AND NATION. OTHERS THOUGHT "DO I HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO? WHY GO TO ŞIRNAK AND RISK STEPPING ON A MINE?" BUT A FATHER WENT THERE WITH HIS TWO SONS.

AT THE TIME, MT. GABAR WAS WHERE THE CLASHES WERE MOST INTENSE. IF YOU WENT TO AN OPERATION, YOU WOULD DEFINITELY MAKE CONTACT. THEY CONDUCTED THEIR TESTS AND TRIALS IN SUCH A DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENT. IT WAS A VERY DIFFICULT PROCESS, BUT THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE ULTIMATELY OBTAINED A VERY SIGNIFICANT SYSTEM.

Alparslan Erdoğan

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)

↘
From the Mini UAV signing ceremony between Baykar and Kale Group. Özdemir Bayraktar and Osman Okyay, 4 October 2006.



The Kale–Baykar Partnership

Following the demonstration flight conducted for the Baykar team in October 2005 and the success that followed, there came a period of waiting before a contract could be signed. The Undersecretariat for Defense Industries (SSM) informed Baykar that a "Defense Industry Company" certification was a prerequisite for signing the contract. Since Baykar did not yet hold this certification, the company was advised to partner with a larger, certified firm. Acting on this guidance, Baykar opened talks with Kale Kalıp — a company that held the required certification and had experience in the defense industry.

Through a mutual friend, Özdemir Bayraktar reached out to Osman Okyay, who served as Head of the Technical Division at Kale Group. He visited Kale Kalıp's facility in Sefaköy and laid out his intentions to Mr. Okyay. He spoke about his son Selçuk Bayraktar's training in the field and the work they had been doing, explaining that they wanted to build domestic unmanned aerial vehicles, that they had won the SSM's tender, and that they were seeking a partnership with Kale Kalıp in order to sign the contract. He added that the technology in question was the technology of the future.

IN OCTOBER 2006, THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH THE "KALEKALIP-BAYKAR JOINT VENTURE."

Osman Okyay, however, made clear that — given Kale Kalıp's recent unhappy experiences in the defense industry — he doubted much progress could be made. The moment Mr. Okyay voiced his reservations, Özdemir Bayraktar's temper flared. "I have to give you this warning," Mr. Okyay said, and went on to recount what they had been through, fearing that Baykar, too, would find itself in a difficult position down the road. As he listened, Özdemir Bayraktar's anger drained away. He was stunned, and visibly saddened. "You can't be serious..." he said. After a conversation that stretched on for four hours, the first meeting was left unresolved.

The next day, Kale Group's founder, İbrahim Bodur, called his son-in-law, Osman Okyay. Özdemir Bayraktar was sitting with Mr. Bodur, and had relayed to him everything he had told Mr. Okyay. Osman Okyay walked his father-in-law through the conversation he had had with Özdemir Bey, but İbrahim Bey replied: "I know you're upset because of what you've been through. But listen — this is a matter of homeland and nation. Son, we may lose today, but tomorrow we'll gain something else. Lend a hand." And with that, the alliance between the Kale Group and Baykar was set in motion. In October 2006, the Defense Industry Executive Committee signed a contract with the "Kalekalıp–Baykar Makina Joint Venture."

The process would prove arduous enough to vindicate every one of Osman Okyay's concerns. Okyay recalls a day when he and Özdemir Bayraktar went together to the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries, where Bayraktar said: "We have no doors left to knock on here either. Every door has been shut in our faces; everyone runs from us as if we were lepers." But of course, Özdemir Bayraktar would go on waiting at the door — and forcing it open if need be.

"TÜRKIYE'S UAV VENTURE BEGAN WITH A DONATION TO THE STATE — AS OPPOSED TO A GRANT FROM THE STATE."

The negotiations progress with great difficulty, yet somehow reach the proposal stage. This time, the proposal process does not proceed with ordinary figures; it seems as though Baykar is being especially worn down and forced to withdraw. During this period, Baykar experiments with different formulas in order to overcome the obstacles placed before it. Melih Han Bilgin, who was working as a private-sector executive at the time, recounts the final move Baykar made to break through the barriers:

“At the final decision stage regarding the UAVs, the following process unfolded. The proposal phase was ongoing and an intense consultation process had been entered. Selçuk Bayraktar said, ‘What can we do to secure a decisive victory — one from which there is no turning back?’

The prototype phase had been completed, many costs had been incurred, and significant payments had already been made. The technical solution was nearly ninety percent complete. Özdemir Bayraktar and I believed that reducing the cost component in the final offer could provide an advantage.



Selçuk Bayraktar asked, 'If we completely eliminate the engineering development costs, would that give us a major advantage in the tender process?' And we collectively arrived at that decision." Eliminating the engineering development costs in the submitted offer meant that, in the serial production phase, only the costs of the equipment installed on the unmanned aerial vehicle would be calculated. Thus, the proposal was accepted — and the tender remained with Baykar.

↘
Ömer Bayraktar manually launches the Mini UAV during a test with the team.



TÜRKIYE'S UAV VENTURE BEGAN WITH A DONATION TO THE STATE—AS OPPOSED TO A GRANT FROM THE STATE. THIS PROJECT WAS DELIVERED TO THE STATE AT A COST.

Melih Han Bilgin

GENERAL MANAGER, TURKISH PETROLEUM CORPORATION (TPAO) (2018-2024)

With the elimination of all engineering development costs, no payment was collected from the state; on the contrary, those costs were effectively granted to the state. In Melih Han Bilgin's words: The UAV journey in Türkiye began not with resources taken from the state, but with a grant made to the state.

After a contract process that lasted one year, in October 2006 Kale–Baykar, having secured the project, begins serial production. For the composite airframe, Kale Kalıp's facilities are used; all other equipment and software are produced within Baykar.

↘
A presentation on the Malazgirt Mini UAV inside the command tent set up by Kale-Baykar.



In parallel, the Baykar team continues traveling to Şırnak and carrying out research and development work for the Malazgirt Mini UAV. In 2007, demonstration flights are conducted for officials of the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries using UAVs improved based on test results. In Ankara, during these flights, two Malazgirt Mini UAVs fly simultaneously. Moreover, during the same demonstration, live imagery from a Mini UAV flying in Istanbul is transmitted to the command-and-control center in Ankara. The Mini UAV flying in Istanbul is commanded from Ankara. Özdemir Bayraktar and his sons Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar are in Ankara, while Ömer Bayraktar is with the Istanbul team. The demonstration flights are successful.



↗
Özdemir and Haluk Bayraktar preparing the Malazgirt Mini UAV.



↗
Ahead of the demo flight in Ankara, Malazgirt Mini UAVs rest outside the control station.





↗
Özdemir Bayraktar running technical checks on the Malazgirt Mini UAV.





ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NOT JUST A MECHANICAL ENGINEER. HE WAS DEEPLY VERSED IN MANY FIELDS OF ENGINEERING. I, TOO, AM AN ENGINEER. BUT I HAVE NEVER KNOWN AN ENGINEER LIKE HIM— THAT INCLUDES MYSELF.

Ömer Bayraktar

ENGINEER (BROTHER)

↘
Bayraktar Mini UAV airframes and wings, ready for delivery, placed inside carton boxes. Final checks before delivery.





In December 2007, production processes of the Bayraktar Mini UAV are completed and it is prepared for delivery. The delivery will take place at the Malatya 2nd Army Headquarters. Özdemir Bayraktar does not attend the delivery; Ömer Bayraktar reports everything by phone to his elder brother, providing updates in real time. Because those around him know that if Özdemir Bayraktar notices even the slightest deficiency, he will immediately intervene.

The Bayraktar Mini UAV, produced for close-range day-and-night reconnaissance and surveillance purposes, enters the inventory of the Turkish Armed Forces as the first domestically developed and original mini-class unmanned aerial vehicle and begins to be used by the Turkish Armed Forces in the same year.

In 2012, it becomes the first domestically produced aerial vehicle exported by Türkiye. A total of 76 Bayraktar Mini UAVs enter the inventory of the Turkish Armed Forces — given the name "Gözcü" ("Observer") by the military.

↘
Family photo following the delivery of Malazgirt Mini UAVs. Altay Barracks, Malatya, 2007.





↙
A Malazgirt Mini UAV waiting to be deployed on a field.

The Malazgirt Mini UAVs Are Ordered Into Storage!

For a moment, before the wind turns against them, the good news seems to be arriving in waves. In December 2008, an order is placed for four Malazgirt Mini UAVs. In June 2009, the four Malazgirt Mini UAVs are delivered, accompanied by an acceptance-test report stating that they had been tested and found "complete and without defect." Once delivered, the Malazgirt Mini UAVs enter service in the Southeast and in cross-border operations.

At that time, no unmanned helicopter version of such a system exists in the world; for the first time, an unmanned helicopter is produced for the Turkish Army. However, although Türkiye's first domestically developed software has been completed, the flights of the Malazgirt Mini UAV are suddenly halted. The Baykar research and development team states that there is no software error in any of the four Malazgirt Mini UAVs delivered. Without examining the cause of the malfunction, it is claimed that the issue is software-related, and flight permissions are not granted. The Malazgirt Mini UAVs are placed into storage. All of this becomes, in a sense, the early footsteps of the difficult struggle that would soon begin for Özdemir Bayraktar and the Baykar team.

MONEY WAS NEVER AN END FOR ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR. IT WAS SIMPLY A MEANS. MAKING MONEY WAS NEVER WHAT DROVE HIM. WHAT DROVE HIM WAS BUILDING A STRONG TÜRKIYE ON THIS LAND. "YOU EITHER GROW STRONG OR YOU DISAPPEAR," HE WOULD SAY. HE KNEW THIS — AND HE BELIEVED, WITHOUT QUESTION, THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD TO BE STRONG.

Osman Güneş

MEDICAL DOCTOR (FRIEND)



↖ A soldier carrying the Bayraktar Mini UAV on his back across a snow-covered field.

What Happened in the Southeast

Spiritual Sensitivity

In the years 2005–2006, during a period when Türkiye's public agenda was shaken by news of martyrs, Baykar conducts flight tests of unmanned aerial vehicles in Şırnak's Mount Gabar — one of the regions where terrorism was most intense.

Spending time side by side with the soldiers, eating from the same field kitchen, the daily news of fallen soldiers deeply affects Özdemir Bayraktar. Because he always placed great value on Turkish soldiers, whenever news arrived, his eyes would moisten and he would gaze into the distance. From each soldier who was martyred, he drew a share for himself — a lesson. Within the

Turkish Armed Forces, the many martyrs lost due to technological insufficiencies would further compel the Baykar team led by Özdemir Bayraktar to accelerate the development of unmanned aerial vehicles and to push toward success as quickly as possible. For this purpose, they would not hesitate to mobilize every material and moral resource.

ONE DAY, WE WERE SPEAKING WITH A LIEUTENANT COLONEL AT THE GENERAL STAFF. WHEN WEAPONS CAME UP, BROTHER ÖZDEMIR SAID, "COMMANDER, IF YOU GIVE US A DECOMMISSIONED F-5, WE CAN TURN IT INTO AN ARMED PLATFORM." THE LIEUTENANT GENERAL LEAUGED AND REPLIED, "FOR GOD'S SAKE, ÖZDEMIR BEY, DON'T PUT ME IN A DIFFICULT POSITION." THAT WAS THE BREADTH OF BROTHER ÖZDEMIR'S VISION.

Bülent Tatlıcan

MECHANICAL ENGINEER (FRIEND)

"We took it upon ourselves."

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR

↘
A military zone where the Bayraktar family conducted their work.



Özdemir Bayraktar likes to listen to those who personally experience problems in the field, because if there is a problem somewhere, he is there to solve it. The Baykar team, spending time shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers in the same brigade, focuses on doing their very best. The region in Şırnak where they are stationed consists of steep elevations and geographic conditions that do not allow continuous surveillance, making it extremely difficult to ensure security for the soldiers. For this reason, at regular intervals, reconnaissance and screening units must leave the brigade to inspect supply lines and roads. However, during such operations, soldiers are exposed to various attacks by the terrorist organization, including remotely triggered explosive devices.

WHEN DESCRIBING HIS WORK, ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WOULD SAY: "DO NOT EXPECT ANYONE TO APPRECIATE YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO. THEY WILL NOT. BUT KEEP WALKING THE PATH YOU KNOW TO BE RIGHT — WITHOUT WEARINESS, WITHOUT COMPLAINT."

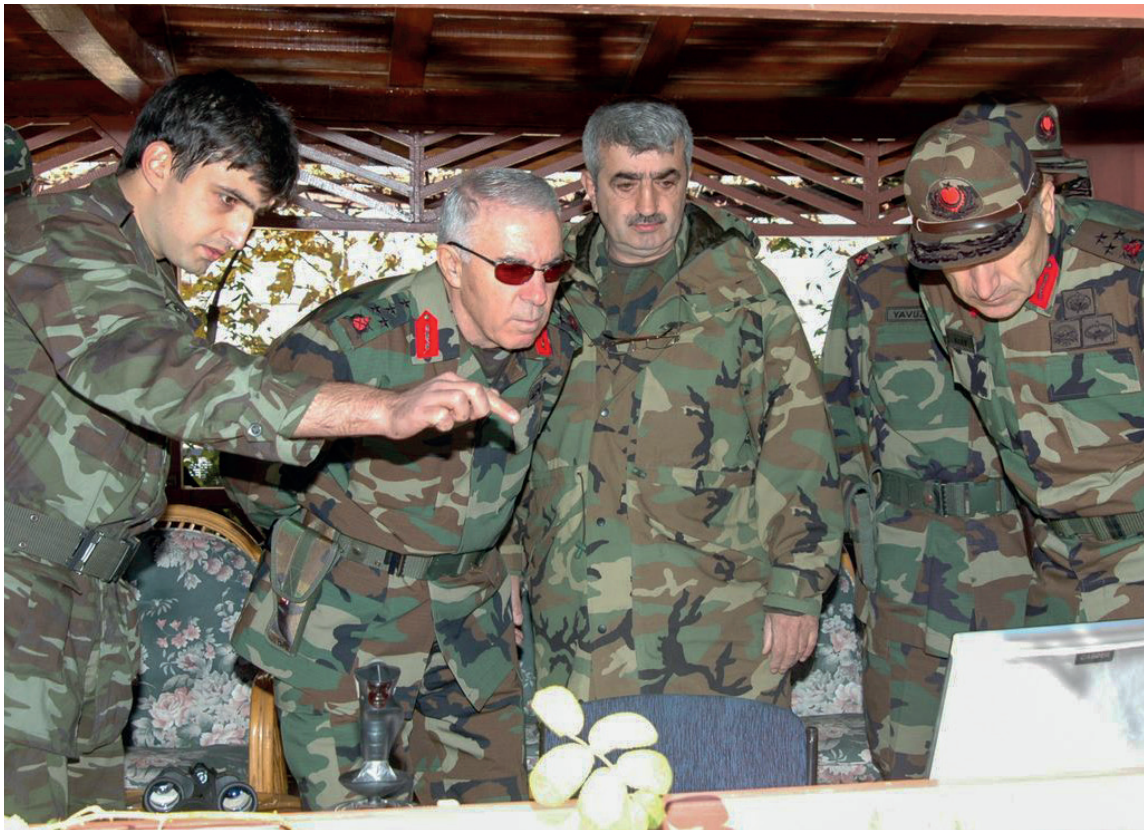
Ercüment Tatlıoğlu

COMMANDER OF THE NAVAL FORCES – ADMIRAL



↗
Özdemir, Haluk, and Selçuk Bayraktar at the mission computers at the Şırnak Akçay Brigade, 2006.

↘
Özdemir and Selçuk Bayraktar briefing Gen. Hasan Iğsız, then Deputy Chief of the General Staff, on UAVs. Şırnak Akçay Brigade, 2006.



↘
Haluk Bayraktar monitors the control systems as Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal watches the Bayraktar Mini UAV's demo flight. Keşan, 2008.





↗
Özdemir and Selçuk Bayraktar pose for a photo with soldiers.



AN ENGINEER'S TOUCH FOR A SURGICAL STRIKE

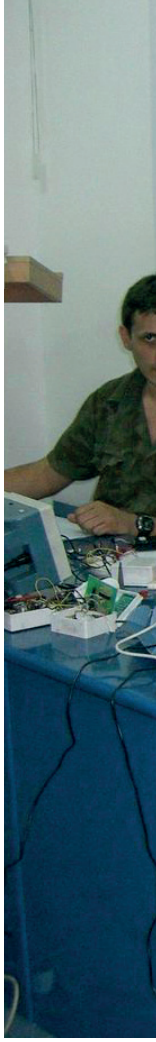
At the time, the Heron UAVs acquired from Israel produce poor imagery, and because coordinates are fed in incorrectly, strikes are directed at the wrong targets. The Baykar team sets out to find a solution and attempts to verify coordinates by matching the UAV footage against satellite imagery. Doing so requires powerful computers, as satellite photographs are high in resolution. Özdemir Bayraktar procures all the necessary computers and satellite imagery through his own means and has a three-screen system installed at the brigade. One screen displays the UAV feed, another the satellite imagery, and the third Google Maps.



↘
Soldiers preparing the Bayraktar Mini UAV for a mission. 2009.



The Baykar team works to align these three screens and bring them to the correct coordinates, enabling soldiers to relay accurate coordinates to the troops — to the artillery and air force units. The three-screen working method developed by the Baykar team is later deemed effective by soldiers and commanders and adopted across the units. Özdemir Bayraktar thinks to himself: "Why should only our soldiers have to deal with the terrorists..." He wants engineers to apply their minds to these kinds of problems as well — to come to the field and develop practical solutions for the military.



↘
26 August 2007. The Baykar team working to crack the encryption of a remote-controlled explosive device known as Tol Qazi.

Tol Qazi G-021

During their deployment in Şırnak, the soldiers turned to the Baykar team for help, asking them to take a closer look at a device they had captured. When the team examined it, they found themselves looking at a piece of advanced encryption technology. At the time, the Turkish Armed Forces' jammers could not suppress the frequency on which the device operated. What was striking was that the terrorist organization, which had at first been hand-building these devices, had since moved to producing them in series. The professional hand behind their manufacture was evident from the components, whose markings had been deliberately scrubbed. Two words were inscribed on the device itself: Tol Qazi — "Gazi's Revenge."

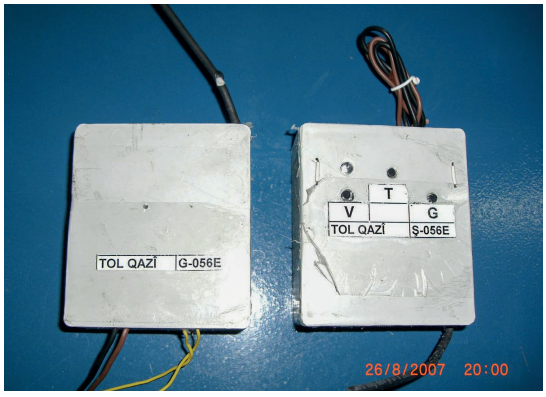
After studying the device further, Selçuk Bayraktar identified a two-step system. A first code generated by the transmitter armed the system; a second code detonated the bomb.

The team's research carried on around the clock. They worked to figure out the logic by which the codes were being generated. In the early hours of the morning, Selçuk Bayraktar — staring at the screen and asking himself whether there might be a pattern hidden in the sequence — cracked the function and made the connection.

The next morning, the Baykar team built a system, using the Bayraktar Mini UAV's autopilot, that could decrypt the codes used by the transmitters seized from the terrorists. When they activated the system at a moment when no soldiers were in the field, mines detonated simultaneously at multiple locations. During this period, the Baykar team — who had originally come to Şırnak to continue their UAV work — set the UAVs aside and turned their attention to these explosive devices. The reason was self-evident: whatever the soldier needs most urgently in the moment, that is where the time and effort must go.



↘
26 August 2007. Electronic circuit of Tol Qazi, a remote-controlled explosive device captured from terrorists near the Şırnak Akçay Brigade.







↗
Selçuk Bayraktar conducting tests with soldiers, 2009.

After some time, however, the code-breaking devices were taken out of the Baykar team's hands. The fact that a solution had been developed to meet a soldier's pressing need — only for someone, somewhere, to obstruct its use — shook Özdemir Bayraktar to the core. Obstructions of this kind enraged him; he could not accept them. For Özdemir Bayraktar, if something was right, if he believed it would benefit the country and was needed to protect the lives of soldiers in harm's way, nothing else mattered. Beyond all this, the field in question wasn't even one in which Baykar was commercially active, nor one the company had any intention of entering. Selçuk Bayraktar and his team handed over every piece of software and hardware they had developed under field conditions in Şırnak to the military engineers at the 4th Main Maintenance Center, who worked within the Turkish Armed Forces to neutralize IED (Improvised Explosive Device) systems. They also turned over to the responsible team at the 4th Main Maintenance Center all of the transceiver systems they had used — equipment that was difficult to source from abroad.

Baykar's support, both material and otherwise, electrified the military engineers. At long last, the codes had been broken on a family of IEDs that had plagued Turkish soldiers, and the means now existed to neutralize these encrypted devices. Even so, the systems were never widely fielded; the matter was deemed inconvenient by certain quarters. Özdemir Bayraktar could understand neither the logic of the bureaucrat nor the calculations of the businessman. The single conviction that occupied his mind was articulated by retired Brigadier General Dr. Osman Gazi Kandemir as follows: "The bureaucracy sees the businessman across the table as someone engaged in commerce, someone fighting to make money. There's a very fine line here. The bureaucrat has to protect himself, just as the businessman has to protect his bottom line. But Özdemir Bayraktar, in every circumstance, wanted to do something for the Turkish Armed Forces. And in return for that wish, he wanted every door open to him. Over time — as the TSK got to know Özdemir Bey, and Özdemir Bey got to know the TSK — that's exactly what came to pass, organically."

Although Özdemir Bayraktar would, in time, prevail, the early going — breaking through the bureaucracy and certain entrenched assumptions — was profoundly difficult for him as well. While he was working to push past various attempts at obstruction, another terrorist attack occurred, and the team again traveled to the forward base. The fallen officer was a first lieutenant — a computer engineer, a graduate of Istanbul University.



↙
A soldier with the Malazgirt Mini UAV, 2009.

I SERVED IN FRANCE AS A MILITARY ATTACHÉ FOR A LONG TIME. IN FRANCE, INDUSTRY AND THE MILITARY WORK HAND IN HAND. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE WITH OURS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, A CIVILIAN MANUFACTURER HAD ENTERED THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES — AND WAS RECEIVED WARMLY, EMBRACED. FROM THAT CAME SOMETHING OF GREAT VALUE.

Ahmet Yavuz

MAJOR GENERAL (RET.)

“The apprentice’s hand is slow. The master’s ear is deaf. You may shout as much as you like.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR



↙
A military base where the Bayraktar Mini UAV was tested, 2009.

↙
A soldier packing the parachute of the Bayraktar Mini UAV, Şırnak-Hakkari, 2009.





↙
Selçuk Bayraktar aboard a helicopter with soldiers, 2009.

↘
Bayraktar Mini UAV landing by parachute.



↘
Ground control station and mobile command vehicle of the Bayraktar Mini UAV during a field mission.





↗
Şırnak Akçay Brigade, November 2006. Özdemir, Haluk, and Selçuk Bayraktar posing for a picture with the late Melih Gülova, who provided logistical support to the Baykar team.

Lieutenant Colonel Melih Gülova

IN TRUTH, THE DEVICES THAT COULD HAVE PROTECTED LT. COL. MELIH GÜLOVA HAD ALREADY BEEN BUILT. BUT THEY WERE NOT PERMITTED TO BE DEPLOYED THAT DAY.

In Şırnak, at the Akçay Brigade, the soldiers and the Baykar team came together around something precious — a shared cause, the cause of the country itself. Among those who greeted the team upon their first arrival at the brigade was Lieutenant Colonel Melih Gülova, the brigade's logistics support commander. After meeting the Baykar team and grasping what they were trying to do, he set about procuring — as best he could and as quickly as he could — whatever they needed for their development work in that remote, austere posting. Melih Gülova was a man full of life: warm, generous in spirit, with an easy, positive energy about him. Neither the harshness of the terrain nor the rigors of the assignment dimmed him or wore him down. Özdemir Bayraktar, with his quick wit, found in Melih Yarbay a kindred spirit, and the two of them shared no shortage of moments — laughing, trading jokes, enjoying each other's company.

But fate would not let the story rest there. In June of 2007, on the road between the Akdizgin Infantry Company and the Damlarca Infantry Company, a remotely detonated bomb planted by terrorists took the lives of Lieutenant Colonel Melih Gülova, Major Ramazan Armutçuoğlu, and Private Hasan Güreşen.

The news of Gülova's martyrdom — and that of his fellow soldiers — shook Özdemir Bayraktar to his depths. He had loved Melih Yarbay dearly, and the grief was commensurate. The devices that might have protected Melih Yarbay had, in fact, been built — but on that day, they had not been permitted to be used. Knowing this hardened, in Özdemir Bayraktar, into a sorrow he never spoke of and never let go of. After the incident, he returned to Istanbul. For days, he did not leave the house.

“To become a martyr, one must be worthy of it.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR



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A vehicle that suffered an IED attack on Mt. Gabar on 10 June 2007,
with Melih Gülova, Ramazan Armutçuoğlu, and Hasan Güreşen on board.

THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY MOVED IN STEP WITH OPERATIONAL UNITS AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED THE SYSTEMS THEY DEVELOPED THROUGH FEEDBACK FROM THE FIELD. BROTHER ÖZDEMIR IN PARTICULAR WOULD LISTEN TO SHORTCOMINGS REPORTED FROM THE FIELD, TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY, AND MOVE IMMEDIATELY TO ADDRESS THEM. THIS IS THE GREATEST REASON HE WAS SO WELL KNOWN AMONG THE SOLDIERS. HE WAS PRESENT WITH EVERYONE — NEVER BOASTFUL. HE DID HIS WORK AND EMBRACED ALL THOSE AROUND HIM. AND AT THE POINT WE HAVE REACHED TODAY, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES THAT MADE ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WHO HE WAS, WAS HIS HUMANITY AND HIS LOYALTY.

Ata Kalkan

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)



↗
Antenna system for UAVs, 2009.

A Phone Call from Hakkari

He returns from Şırnak and shuts himself away at home, gripped by despair and grief. In the years 2004 and 2005, Türkiye makes the decision to transition to an indigenous, national production model — but the bureaucracy, at every level, is not ready for it. They cannot conceive that Turkish entrepreneurs are capable of doing good and meaningful work. The failure to support what has been built, the various obstacles and restrictions, weigh heavier than the difficulties of the field itself. "That's it," says Özdemir Bayraktar. "I am done with this." Fighting with everything he has to realize his ideals, only to be met with bureaucratic obstruction — and to witness soldiers martyred because of that obstruction — fills him with rage.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

One day, Özdemir Bayraktar is sitting on the balcony of his home in Sarıyer, lost in thought, gazing out over the Bosphorus. Suddenly, his phone rings. On the line is a first lieutenant named Aydın Yiğit, calling from one of the mountain outposts in Hakkari — a region gripped by intense terrorist activity. How he found Özdemir Bayraktar's number, no one knows.

"Özdemir Bey, we are out here fighting terrorists. Our resources are limited. We pooled our canteen money — we want to buy the aircraft you make," he says.

Özdemir Bayraktar, inwardly: "Good God. Here I am sitting by the Bosphorus, and this man is slapping me from Hakkari." He pulls himself together.

"Forget the canteen money. Here is what you will do: invite us. Say, 'Come and give us a presentation with the Mini UAV.' We will come, we will give you the presentation. Then you will tell us you have nationalized them and are requisitioning them. And then you will throw us out."

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar during a field mission.



Years pass.

Özdemir Bayraktar crosses paths with Aydın Yiğit— the First Lieutenant who had called him from Hakkari—at a meeting.

"Are you the Aydın Yiğit?" he asks, and cannot help but add: "You know... what a slap you gave me from all the way out there!"

Aydın Yiğit laughs and replies: "When you started talking about requisitioning the aircraft, we thought, 'This guy must be drunk or something.'"

After returning from Şırnak, even if he came close to giving up, there are no words such as despair or surrender in his vocabulary or in his being. The phone call from Hakkari once again lifts his head. He makes a new decision: “Melih Gülova gave his life for this country — from now on, we have no sleep.”

As the Baykar team in Şırnak focuses on developing the Mini UAV, Özdemir Bayraktar pursues something else as well: living like one of the soldiers in the brigade. In this way, he will understand them better and identify their needs more accurately. He wears camouflage, visits outposts together with soldiers, spends nights alongside them, and eats from the same pot. When permitted, he boards the helicopter departing from the brigade and joins visits to the outposts.

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR KNEW WELL THE HARDSHIPS OF THIS REGION AND THAT BEING STRONG WAS SIMPLY NECESSARY. AND SO, WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE, HE SET OUT ON THIS PATH — SHARING THE MISSION HE HAD TAKEN UPON HIMSELF FOR HIS COUNTRY, HIS ACCUMULATED WISDOM, HIS EXCEPTIONAL INTELLECT, AND HIS PIONEERING SPIRIT WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN AND WITH THE YOUTH.

Prof. Dr. Yaşar Hacısalihoğlu

RECTOR, İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL UNIVERSITY

“The obligation of some to depend on abroad cannot stand in the way of our responsibility to our nation.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR

IN THE LINE OF FIRE

Özdemir Bayraktar and his team are on their way back at the end of a day of flight tests. Their vehicle breaks down while passing through a valley near Seslice — a dangerous area where a district governor had been martyred in the past. The soldiers immediately take up defensive positions. There is no cell signal, the radios do not work, and nightfall is approaching. The brigade cannot reach the convoy. They eventually learn that the convoy has broken down. Özdemir Bayraktar repairs the vehicle's engine alongside the soldiers, and they manage to make it out of the line of fire.

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Military base where the Bayraktar family conducted their work, 2009.





↗
Özdemir Bayraktar posing for a picture with his brother Ömer Bayraktar, his son Haluk Bayraktar, Staff Colonel Mustafa Köseoglu, and soldiers outside the 6th Motorized Infantry Brigade at the foot of Mt. Gabar, Şırnak. Here, he was already a “civilian general.”

"YOU HAVE A MUSTACHE — IT WON'T WORK!"

At the Gabar Akçay Brigade, Özdemir Bayraktar works on unmanned aerial vehicles on one hand and constantly asks to join operations on the other. These are times when terrorism is at its peak. One day, he insists to Brigade Chief of Staff Mustafa Köseoğlu: *"Commander, send me along too."* Not wanting to send him, the commander offers an excuse: "*Özdemir Bey, you have a mustache — they'll know you're not a soldier.*"

The next morning, Özdemir Bayraktar shaves off his mustache and goes to the commander. *"Commander, I shaved my mustache. Will it work now?"* he asks. The commander had assumed Özdemir Bey would never shave his mustache. But Özdemir Bayraktar sees these operations as an opportunity to serve his country — if the issue is a mustache, he will not hesitate to shave it off.

Özdemir Bayraktar, who deeply loves everyone who fights for his country at the risk of their lives, does whatever he can for them. In his eyes, the most valuable people are those who fight and fall for their nation. This time, the commander takes Özdemir Bayraktar along for the operation and dresses him in a military uniform. The uniform bears no insignia, but Özdemir Bayraktar now holds a title all his own:

"The Civilian General!"

ⓘ Scan, Watch

ONE DAY HE GOT ANGRY WITH ME: "COMMANDER, WHY WON'T YOU SEND ME ON OPERATIONS?" HE SAID. I TOLD HIM, "ÖZDEMİR BEY, I CAN'T SEND YOU. YOU HAVE A MUSTACHE — THEY'LL REALIZE YOU'RE NOT A SOLDIER, AND THEY WON'T LET YOU ON THE HELICOPTER." THE NEXT MORNING, HE HAD SHAVED IT OFF. "COMMANDER," HE SAID, "THE MUSTACHE IS GONE NOW — YOU CAN SEND ME." AFTER THAT, THERE WAS NO HOLDING HIM BACK.

Mustafa Kösoğlu

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER OF BAYKAR, STAFF COLONEL (RET.)



↖
Özdemir Bayraktar inspecting surveillance systems with soldiers.





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Selçuk Bayraktar training military personnel on UAV systems.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar preparing to rest inside a cave within a military zone.



↘
The Baykar team resting in a military tent during the Malazgirt Mini UAV tests, 2009.



↘
Another day ends at the Şırnak Akçay Brigade, where they conducted tests.





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A military zone where the Bayraktar family conducted their work.

↙
Soldiers posing for a photo with the Bayraktar Mini UAV and the Malazgirt Mini UAV in Hantepe, Hakkari.



↘
A soldier prepares to manually launch the Bayraktar Mini UAV for a mission, 2009.





↗
The Baykar team poses for a photo with members of the 6th Motorized Infantry Brigade in Şırnak, 2008.

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR BELIEVED WITH ALL HIS HEART THAT THE FUTURE LAY IN THE SKIES. HE WAS DEVOTED TO AVIATION AND WAS CONVINCED THAT THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE DEPENDED ON AIR SUPERIORITY. IF THERE IS PEACE TODAY IN EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN TÜRKİYE, IF PEOPLE CAN GRAZE THEIR SHEEP ON THE HIGHLAND PASTURES OF TUNCELI AND THE MOUNTAINS OF HAKKARI, ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR'S CONTRIBUTION TO THAT IS IMMENSE.

Prof. Dr. Cevdet Erdöl

POLITICIAN – ACADEMIC



↙ Özdemir Bayraktar standing next to the Bayraktar TB1's small-scale prototype at the Baykar workshop in İkitelli, Istanbul.

Bayraktar TB1 and Bayraktar TB2 Processes

Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System Development Program

In 2007, the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries (SSM) launched the "Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System Development Program" on a competitive basis — that is, without providing any research and development support. Having closely observed Baykar's successes with the Bayraktar Mini UAV and the Malazgirt Mini UAV, they invited Baykar as one of two companies to participate in the project.

The SSM also requests letters of guarantee from the firms it has invited, noting that it reserves the right to call in the letters should the specified conditions not be met.

The SSM demands an aircraft capable of reaching 18,000 feet, staying airborne for ten hours, and launching by catapult with parachute recovery. Baykar, however, objects — arguing that an aircraft with these specifications, carrying a precision camera system, would be unsuitable and impractical for catapult launch and parachute recovery given the rugged terrain conditions of the Southeastern Anatolia Region.

↘ Özdemir Bayraktar working on the small-scale prototype of the Bayraktar TB1 at the İkitelli workshop with Ömer and Selçuk Bayraktar.



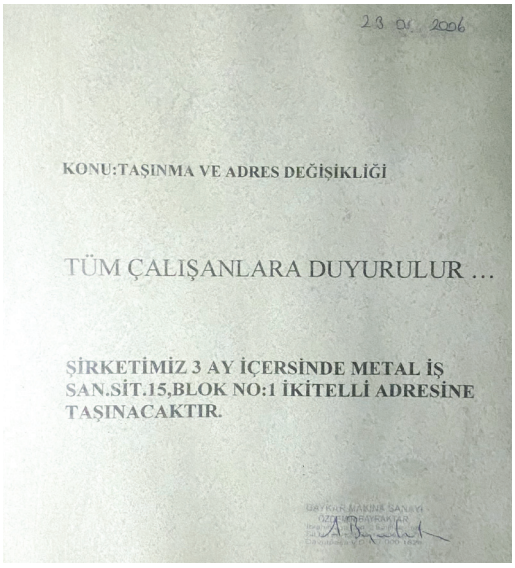
In Baykar's view, an aircraft of this kind would frequently crash due to this takeoff-and-landing method in such terrain, causing material damage to both itself and the state. While certain officials within the SSM and military bureaucracy insisted on the catapult-and-parachute method, Baykar maintained that these criteria were incompatible with the requested aircraft specifications. It later became clear that the criteria included in the project specifications were, in fact, the characteristics of a UAV produced abroad during that period. Özdemir Bayraktar insisted on the removal of this clause, convinced that the goal should not be to imitate what already existed but to develop something original and better suited to the need. The SSM subsequently removed those criteria.

FROM WHAT I OBSERVED, ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NEVER A MAN WHO SIMPLY WENT WITH THE CURRENT. HE ALWAYS EVALUATED AND ANALYZED MATTERS WITH HIS OWN MIND, HIS OWN FEELING, AND HIS OWN CONSCIENCE. HE NEVER ONCE SAID, "IF EVERYONE THINKS THIS WAY, THEN SO SHALL I."

Abdullah Eren

PRESIDENT, TURKISH COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AGENCY (TİKA)

The partnership established with Kale Group during the Bayraktar Mini UAV process continues with this new project as well. Selçuk Bayraktar returns from the United States to lead the technical team, and the entire team moves into the workshop within the İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone. In the İkitelli workshop — spanning a total of 1,500 square meters — a team of twenty-five, comprising fifteen engineers and ten technicians from various disciplines, carries out the research and development efforts.


23 01 2006

KONU:TAŞINMA VE ADRES DEĞİŞİKLİĞİ

TÜM ÇALIŞANLARA DUYURULUR …

ŞİRKETİMİZ 3 AY İÇERSİNDE METAL İŞ SAN.SİT.15,BLOK NO:1 İKİTELLİ ADRESİNE TAŞINACAKTIR.

↖
Announcement still posted on the wall of Baykar's Bayrampaşa workshop. This document, dated 23 January 2006, informs employees that the company will relocate to the industrial zone in İkitelli within three months.



↗
Various Bayraktar TB1 parts and molds at the Baykar workshop in İkitelli.



↗ Özdemir and Ömer Bayraktar standing next to the Bayraktar TB1's small-scale prototype at the İkitelli workshop.

Under this program launched by the SSM, work begins on the design of the Bayraktar TB1 — also known as Çaldıran — under the leadership of Özdemir Bayraktar, the general management of Haluk Bayraktar, and the technical direction of Selçuk Bayraktar, with a team of twenty-five in total. Working day and night for two years, they complete the aircraft. Haluk Bayraktar recalls that period: "Selçuk came back from the United States and took charge of the technical team. We then moved to the workshop in İkitelli and worked for two years to build the Bayraktar TB1 — the first prototype of what is today the Bayraktar TB2."

The result is an aircraft that stands apart with features no other aircraft of that era possessed: automatic taxi, automatic takeoff, and automatic landing. The autopilot system — the aircraft's control core — along with its electronics and software, is designed indigenously and originally by Turkish engineers.

Image analysis is conducted from the control station produced alongside the Bayraktar TB1. The pilot and co-pilot command the aircraft and carry out real-time monitoring from the command and control center. Baykar develops both the user interface software and the overall system design indigenously and originally.

With a takeoff weight of 450 kilograms, a wingspan of 9 meters, and a length of 5.5 meters, the Bayraktar TB1 is capable of automatic target tracking within a range of 150 kilometers from its launch point. The system is equipped with a thermal camera, a daylight camera, and a laser designator. Its propulsion system consists of a two-stroke engine producing 65 horsepower. It has six fuel tanks, can carry approximately 200 liters of gasoline, and can remain airborne for up to 10 hours.



↗

Small-scale prototypes of the Bayraktar TB1 at the İkitelli workshop.

WE KNEW ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR — BUT WHEN WE SAW THE ROOM HE OCCUPIED AT THE WORKSHOP, WE WERE SHOCKED. THE ROOM WAS BARELY THREE SQUARE METERS. EVERYONE IMAGINES ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR BUILDING UAVS, BUILDING UCAVS, BASED IN SOME GRAND PLACE IN ISTANBUL — BUT NO. HE LIVED IN A THREE-SQUARE-METER ROOM. AND FOR THREE YEARS, OUTSIDE OF THAT ROOM, HE WAS ONLY EVER AT THE FACTORY OR IN THE STAFF QUARTERS. I NEVER ONCE SAW HIM SLEEP ANYWHERE ELSE.

Bülent Arduç

NAVAL CAPTAIN (RET.)

↘
The window of the room where the Bayraktar family stayed at the İkitelli workshop. This window was added years later at the request of Canan Hanım.



During the development of the Bayraktar TB1, the Bayraktar family turns a promise Özdemir Bayraktar made to himself following the martyrdom of Melih Gülova into a guiding principle. They leave their seaside home in Sarıyer and begin staying in a windowless room on the top floor of the three-story workshop in İkitelli until the job is done. The workload is enormous — spanning the aircraft fuselage, flight control systems, power systems, and landing systems, among others. Some time later, at Canan Hanım's request, they have a window installed in the room. From 2007 until his passing, Özdemir Bayraktar — just as he did in his youth — would use a machine as a pillow when he grew tired and fall asleep in a corner of the workplace.

↘
Manufacturing Bayraktar TB1 parts at the İkitelli workshop.

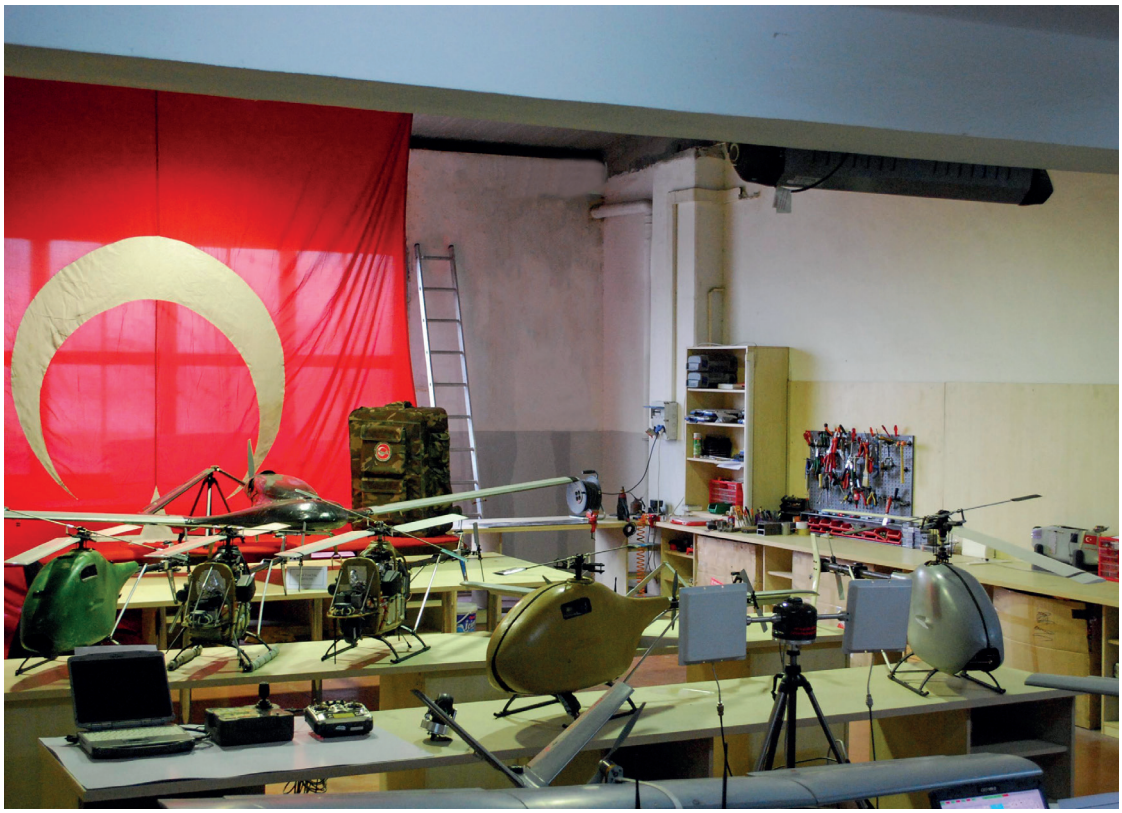


"YOU CAN'T PRODUCE!"

To manufacture products in the defense industry, certain criteria and certifications are required — facility security clearance, production permits, personnel security clearances. As is the case everywhere in the world, defense industry-related production can only be carried out in a certified facility.

For this reason, when production of the Bayraktar Mini UAV begins at the İkitelli workshop, personnel from the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries arrive to inspect the relevant permits and documentation.

They present some of the documents, and while applications for others have been submitted, the files are incomplete because responses have not yet been received. *"There's no point in stopping until the paperwork comes through,* Özdemir Bayraktar thinks — because the country has an urgent need for the systems being produced. Seeing that the documentation is incomplete, the assigned official says, *"You don't have a production permit — you cannot produce."* Özdemir Bayraktar responds, perhaps with a touch of humor: *"I can and I will. Look — production is continuing downstairs as we speak. There's no paperwork, no permit, and I don't need one. I'm perfectly capable. If you need the paperwork, go get it yourself."* When the agency that submitted the application and the one requesting the permits and clearances turn out to be one and the same, Özdemir Bayraktar highlights the irony of the situation. The certification process is expedited, and production continues without interruption."

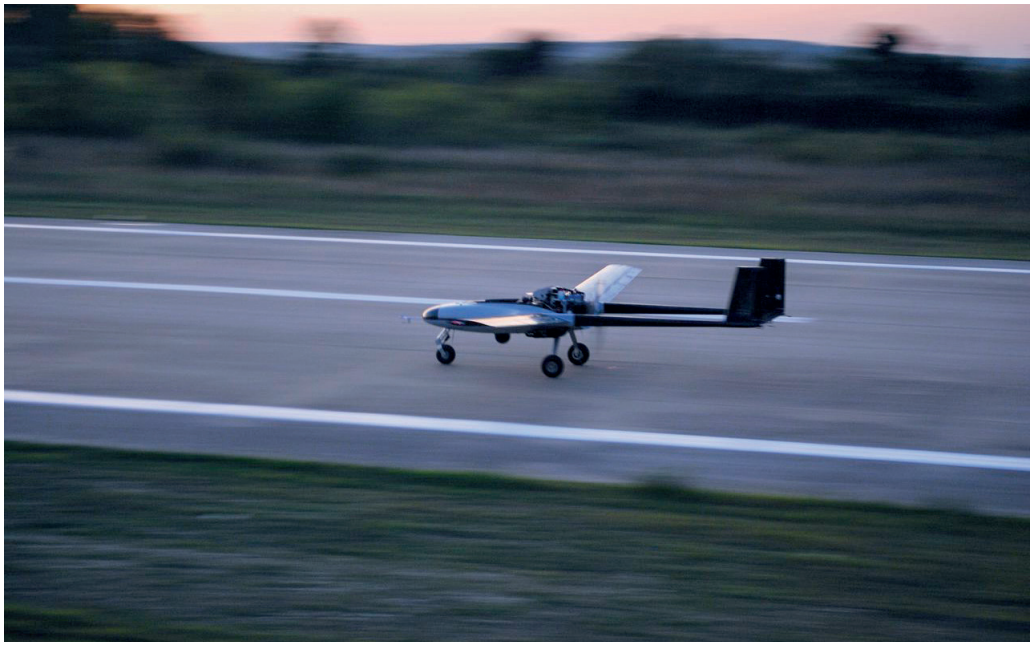


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At the İkitelli workshop, the Bayraktar TB1 (next to the bag) and Malazgirt Mini UAVs on display.

The First Flight of the Bayraktar TB1

After developing the Bayraktar TB1, the Baykar team searches for a runway to conduct its first flight, but for six months they cannot find an available airstrip. When faced with obstacles like these, Özdemir Bayraktar never hesitates to share the situation with those around him. He believes this is not just Baykar's problem but the country's — and that the obstacle must be overcome not because Baykar is struggling, but so that no one else has to face the same difficulty. In Haluk Bayraktar's words, Özdemir Bayraktar is an "icebreaker." He spends his entire life battling to find solutions to problems. Ergin Saygun Pasha, then Commander of the First Army, subsequently grants the Baykar team permission to use Keşan Airport. The first flight test of the Bayraktar TB1 finally takes place on June 8, 2009, at Keşan Airport. For the team, it is fifteen minutes filled with excitement and joy...

↙
Bayraktar TB1 taxiing on the runway ahead of takeoff.



↘
Photo from tests with Bayraktar TB1's small-scale prototype.



With the Excitement of the First Day

As the delivery deadline approaches, the SSM invites the two companies participating in the project to Sinop for two-week rotations to conduct test flights. An airport has been allocated for this purpose, to be used by the firms in turn. Test flights will be carried out under the supervision of a military delegation, and the companies will be given the opportunity to resolve any last-minute issues. While the Baykar team works in the field, Özdemir Bayraktar follows the developments from Istanbul. The phone never leaves his hand. With a pen and paper in hand, he writes down the updates he receives from the other end of the line, sometimes calling several times an hour. Özdemir Bayraktar is not in Sinop, but even if he were, he could not be any more curious and excited than this.

TO CONVEY THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT WAS BEING DONE, I WANT TO SPEAK OF A PHOTOGRAPH. IT WAS HANGING ON THE WALL, IN THE BACKGROUND — I REMEMBER IT AS IF IT WERE TODAY. IN THE PHOTOGRAPH WERE OUR HEROIC SOLDIERS, OUR COMMANDERS, ÖZDEMIR BEY, AND, AS I RECALL, A YOUNG SELÇUK BEY. ÖZDEMIR BEY ASKED A QUESTION: "HOW MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH ARE STILL ALIVE?" THE ANSWER, SADLY, WAS THAT WE HAD LOST A GREAT MANY TO MARTYRDOM. IN THAT MOMENT, I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE WORK BEING DONE WAS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR TÜRKIYE'S FUTURE AND FOR ITS NATIONAL DEFENSE INSTINCT. THAT PHOTOGRAPH MADE ME FEEL THIS: IF THESE EFFORTS REACHED THEIR GOALS, PERHAPS THE HEROES WHO WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE AMONG US TODAY COULD HAVE COMPLETED A LIFE OF HONORABLE SERVICE AND SURVIVED. TO THINK OF WHAT IT WOULD HAVE COST HAD IT FAILED IS HEAVY EVEN TO CONTEMPLATE. WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME OF OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE INSTINCT? HOW MANY MORE WOULD WE HAVE LOST? IN MY EYES, THE RISK OF THE LETTER OF GUARANTEE WE GAVE FOR THIS WORK BEING CALLED IN WAS ZERO.

Adnan Bali

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, İŞ BANKASI



↙
Bayraktar TB1, Bayraktar Mini UAV, and Malazgirt Mini UAVs inside a hangar.

↙
Bayraktar TB1 ready for action on the testing runway.





THE SUMMER OF 2009 WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR THE BAYRAKTAR FAMILY.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

The Cost of Wearing Down

During the development phase of the Bayraktar TB1, the entire family is at the factory day and night. There are many matters to resolve, many problems to solve. Özdemir Bayraktar is there to find a solution to every issue that arises in the process — and in doing so, he all but breaks himself. He wants Türkiye to seize this paradigm shift, even at the cost of his health. He is worn down in particular by the setbacks encountered during the Bayraktar TB1's flight readiness preparations and the process of finding a runway for flight tests. The summer of 2009 is an extremely difficult one for the Bayraktar family. On top of this, the intensification of terrorist raids in the Southeast takes a further mental toll on Özdemir Bayraktar.

Selçuk and Haluk Bayraktar want their father to take a few days' holiday with his friend Cemal Uzunovalı, asking him: "Could you take our father out on a boat?" After many long years, this will be Özdemir Bayraktar's first holiday — and they believe it will do him good. They first fly to İzmir and visit a few familiar firms, then make their way to Ayvalık where the boat is moored. The following day they set out by boat toward Assos, making their way among the islands of Ayvalık. Özdemir Bayraktar swims, surfs, dives, and casts nets.

↘
View of the port of Ayvalık on a pleasant evening.



THIS WAS ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S FIRST VACATION IN MANY YEARS. HIS CHILDREN THOUGHT A BREAK WOULD DO HIM GOOD.

The next morning, around six-thirty at Ayvalık Marina, Özdemir Bey wakes up, and his friend is roused by the sound of his footsteps. "I have a terrible pain in my chest," he says. They notice that Özdemir Bayraktar's blood pressure has dropped dangerously low.

They decide to go to Ayvalık State Hospital. When they get off the boat and head toward shore, Özdemir Bayraktar says he is having difficulty walking. The doctors at Ayvalık State Hospital assess Özdemir Bayraktar's condition, tell them they are sending him to İzmir, and prepare an ambulance. Those minutes are critical for the Bayraktar family. Haluk Bayraktar recalls the moment: "My father called me and, for the first time in my life, asked me to find a helicopter. I was stunned. I immediately called the companies, but they said the earliest they could come was three to four hours. We didn't have that kind of time. I called Osman Okyay. By chance, a helicopter was waiting in Çan, Çanakkale.

It took off immediately, landed at Ayvalık Marina within fifteen minutes, and picked up my father. Up until that point, none of us had ever been on a private plane, let alone a helicopter.



We had no idea how they were arranged or how it all worked." On the way to Istanbul, Özdemir Bayraktar's pain intensifies. When they land at the Boğaziçi University helicopter pad, his son Ahmet Bayraktar has already arranged the hospital — an ambulance is waiting at the ready. They rush him by ambulance to Florence Nightingale Hospital.

Around this time, Haluk Bayraktar is preparing to begin his military service, and Selçuk Bayraktar is at Hakkari Hantepe and Şırnak Akçay, providing Malazgirt Mini UAV flight training to soldiers. Meanwhile, since the Bayraktar TB1 development work continues, Selçuk Bayraktar has also returned to Istanbul that same day. He learns of his father's condition at the airport. Selçuk Bayraktar catches his father just as he is being taken out of the ambulance. Özdemir Bayraktar's pulse at that moment is 10. Following examinations that will last hours, a high-risk surgery is performed. After an arduous operation, he slowly begins to regain consciousness hours later.

THE FIRST THING HE SAID WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES

After hours of surgery, Özdemir Bayraktar opens his eyes in intensive care, in a room with no light. Not yet knowing how long the operation lasted or what time it is, he sees that then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has come to visit him. His first words are:

"Have our boys give you a presentation."

Özdemir Bayraktar's sons deliver a presentation to then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the hospital waiting room.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar's sons Ahmet, Selçuk, and Haluk making a presentation to then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a hospital waiting room, 2009.

DESPAIR HAD NO PLACE IN ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S WORLD. FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS, HE DID NOT SURRENDER TO IT FOR A SINGLE DAY — NOR DID HE EVER ALLOW IT TO TAKE ROOT IN THOSE AROUND HIM, NOT EVEN IN HIS DARKEST MOMENTS. HE NEVER TOOK THE FAMILIAR, EXPECTED PATH. BUT HE ALWAYS FOUND A SHORTER, BETTER, AND MORE EFFECTIVE ONE. THE PRICE HE PAID WAS HIS HEALTH.

Melih Han Bilgin

GENERAL MANAGER OF TPAO (2018–2024)

After leaving the hospital, Özdemir Bayraktar returns to work without pause. Not long after, he will joke in the family circle: "We said let's take a holiday — look what that brought us."

In Selçuk Bayraktar's words: "Özdemir Bayraktar comes alive in rough seas, in storms — he never quite knows how to sail on calm, glassy waters."



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar visiting a shipyard with then-Minister of Industry and Technology Mustafa Varank.

Flight Demonstrations in Sinop

SELÇUK BAYRAKTAR ADJUSTED THE BAYRAKTAR TB1'S PARAMETERS TO MAKE THE AIRCRAFT CLIMB FASTER.

Following the test flights, the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries allocates Sinop State Airport for one month to Baykar and one month to the other firm to conduct demonstration flights. Haluk Bayraktar leaves for his military service a few days after his father Özdemir Bayraktar's surgery; the Baykar team, meanwhile, heads to the flight demonstrations in Sinop with two prototype aircraft. The objective is to climb to 18,000 feet within one hour and remain airborne for 10 hours.

On October 3, 2009, under the technical leadership of Selçuk Bayraktar, the Baykar team flies the Bayraktar TB1 before the official delegation after completing all preparations and tests. One hour in, the aircraft is at 17,000 feet. The ground control station is packed with delegation members, and Selçuk Bayraktar is at the aircraft's operator console. Members of the delegation begin pressing him: "This aircraft's climb rate is too slow," "Why can't it go higher?", "Why isn't it working?", "Come on, make it climb faster!" Selçuk Bayraktar adjusts the Bayraktar TB1's parameters and makes a move to accelerate the aircraft's climb. At that altitude, the aircraft's parameters shift suddenly, and the Bayraktar TB1 goes down.

ⓘ Scan, Watch



↗
Two Bayraktar TB1 prototypes on a tarmac.

Every aircraft has a minimum airspeed at which it can sustain flight. When an aircraft's speed falls below this threshold, the lift generated by the wings can no longer support the aircraft's weight — and a stall occurs. At that stage of development, the system lacks the advanced stall control capabilities it has today. The Bayraktar TB1 enters a stall and goes down. Haluk Bayraktar is away on military service in İzmir at the time; the team calls him and relays the distressing news. He obtains leave and travels to Sinop the following day in his capacity as CEO of Baykar. Özdemir Bayraktar calls his son Haluk to advise him not to allow any member of the observation committee into the ground control station cabin — as the committee's remarks are believed to have contributed to the loss of the previous aircraft.

The following day, after completing all test and inspection procedures, they launch the second prototype Bayraktar TB1 at 15:00 and bring it down at 23:00. All mission objectives have been successfully met.

Everyone waits at the hangar for the aircraft to taxi in and for the final report to be drawn up. As the Baykar team on the field sheds tears of joy — proud to have achieved a first in Türkiye — one member of the observer committee raises an objection during the drafting of the report, claiming the aircraft did not perform an automatic takeoff and landing, implying that a button had been pressed. At the time, the technologies in use — including the Heron — do not even feature automatic takeoff and landing; the operator pilot performs both manually via the control console.

Haluk Bayraktar, in his capacity as CEO of Baykar, attempts to explain the situation — that pressing the button is precisely what commands the aircraft to initiate automatic landing. But the military officer on the committee digs in, insisting that a button was pressed. When it is pointed out that the aircraft cannot receive an automatic landing command without a button being pressed, he refuses to listen or understand. Tensions rise.

The military officer on the observer committee turns to Haluk Bayraktar — present there as a civilian — and orders: "Stand at attention, you dishonorable sergeant." He hurls an insult at Haluk Bayraktar, who responds in kind. The situation reaches a breaking point. They attempt to have Haluk Bayraktar arrested by the military police.

Haluk Bayraktar — who had obtained leave from his military service to attend the demonstration flight in Sinop in his capacity as CEO of Baykar — is referred to a military court on charges of insubordination. Özdemir Bayraktar is in Istanbul at the time, recovering from surgery, but follows every step of the proceedings closely. With a defense personally written by Özdemir Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar is acquitted.



↗
Selçuk Bayraktar photographed inside a ground control station. Bayraktar TB1's flight being monitored.

IN THE END, THE BAYKAR TEAM SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THEIR FLIGHTS AND WON THE COMPETITION. YET WHAT FOLLOWED WOULD NOT BE AS EASY.

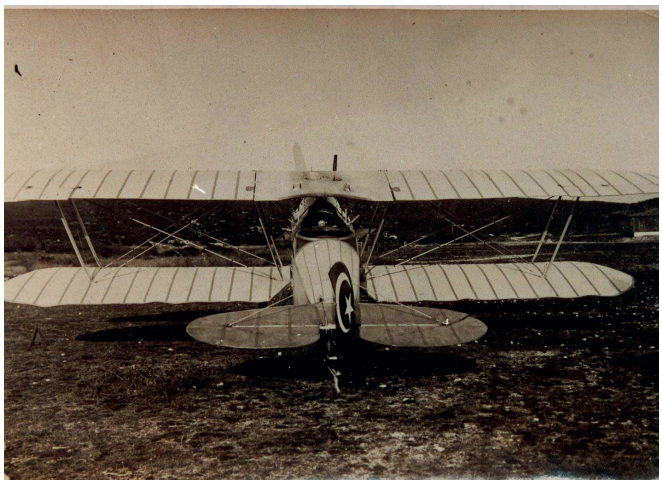
The soldier who had obstructed and insulted the Baykar team retires three months later and takes up a position at a rival firm.

The Baykar team ultimately completes its flights successfully, and Baykar wins the competition. But the process does not unfold easily. What they had experienced during the Bayraktar Mini UAV process appears to be repeating itself. Numerous obstacles are thrown in their path — as if to make them abandon the endeavor altogether.

First, a "NATO Compatibility Certificate" is demanded — a requirement that had not been part of the original tender specifications. Under normal circumstances, the terms of a tender do not change after work has begun unless absolutely necessary, but the situation here begins to take on an increasingly strange character. This creates difficulties for the Baykar team, yet Özdemir Bayraktar does not waver from what he knows to be right — he does not say, "I'll take this contract whatever it costs." Baykar states that no such condition existed at the outset and refuses the document request.

While the winning firm was to have been awarded 24 aircraft, the tender terms are changed overnight, and a contract is signed within one year with the other firm for 6 catapult-launched, parachute-recovery UAVs. The Bayraktar family had repeatedly pointed out how unnecessary this technical requirement was for the project — and it had in fact been removed from the tender. In the end, Baykar receives an order for 18 aircraft, 6 of which are optional. The other firm, despite the contract signed with it, neither produces nor delivers the UAV.

↘
VECİHİ K-VI, the first-ever Turkish aircraft built by Vecihi Hürkuş in 1925.



THE SAME FATE AS VECİHİ HÜRKUŞ

While awaiting the Bayraktar TB1 contract, Vatan newspaper correspondent İlker Akgüngör conducted an interview with Baykar General Manager Haluk Bayraktar. The following is an excerpt from that 2010 exchange:

"Even Vecihi Hürkuş, who built the first Turkish aircraft in 1930, was asked for a certificate. As there was no institution in Türkiye to issue one, Hürkuş dismantled his aircraft, shipped it by train to Czechoslovakia, and only after obtaining a certificate there was he able to fly it. Now history is repeating itself." Drawing attention to the debates of recent days, Bayraktar said: "This kind of work is, in essence, a war of independence. Çaldıran is currently flight-ready, awaiting its mission. If we do not act, we will face more situations like the intelligence vulnerability we experienced recently. Within the next fifteen to twenty years, there will be no manned combat aircraft left. Our next goal is to produce armed UAVs."

HE BEGAN A STRUGGLE ALONGSIDE HIS CHILDREN AND COMPANIONS, AND HE CARRIED ON THAT STRUGGLE WITH UNWAVERING RESOLVE. THE STATE DID NOT PROCURE THE PRODUCT FROM HIM — HE DONATED THE PRODUCT TO THE STATE. AND WHEN THAT DONATED PRODUCT WAS USED IN THE FIELD, WHEN IT PREVENTED EVEN A SINGLE SCRATCH ON A SOLDIER'S FINGERNAIL,THE MILITARY EMBRACED HIM AS ITS OWN.

Yaşar Kadıoğlu

HEAD OF GENERAL STAFF INTELLIGENCE,
LIEUTENANT GENERAL



↙ Introducing the Bayraktar TB1's small-scale prototype to visitors at the İkitelli workshop.

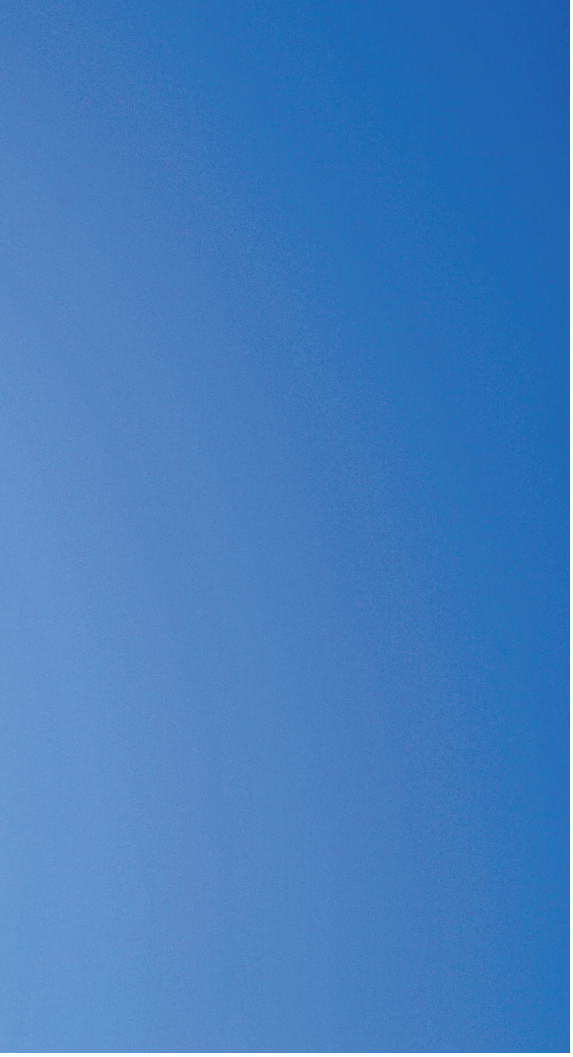
Contract Negotiations

In January 2010, by decision of the Defense Industry Executive Committee, contract negotiations with Baykar begin for twelve Tactical UAV systems. But here, too, the process does not move smoothly. While Baykar waits for signatures to be finalized, strangely enough, the very users who had originally requested the production of this UAV are now working to have the entire tender canceled. No payments are made during the waiting period. Despite this, production continues, the workforce must be retained, expenditures must go on, and research and development activities cannot be allowed to stall. For all these reasons, Baykar's resources gradually approach the point of exhaustion.

Let us hear from Orhan Öge, who was appointed as deputy undersecretary at the SSM during this period:



"I took up my post as Deputy Undersecretary for Defense Industries in September 2011. It was my second or third week on the job. The Unit Commander came to the Defense Industries Undersecretariat and informed me that Kale-Baykar had won the right to produce UAVs two years prior, yet a contract had still not been signed. He told me that some of the end users had come to the SSM and said: 'We intend to request the cancellation of the executive committee decision regarding Kale-Baykar. We are preparing to that effect.' He conveyed that if this were to happen, it would be a grave injustice — three firms had participated in the 2009 tender, two had been eliminated, and Kale-Baykar had won the right to produce the UAV. 'The end users signed a contract within a year with one of the losing firms — despite that firm having lost — yet they want to avoid signing with Kale-Baykar and cancel the right they legitimately won.



↖
Bayraktar TB1 photographed in the sky during a mission.

Could you possibly speak with the Minister about this?' he asked.

I wanted to bring the matter to the Minister's attention. The Minister had come to Istanbul. I traveled to Istanbul as well, met him at the airport, and laid out the situation. The Minister said: 'How can that be? See to it immediately — do whatever is necessary.'"

Following this intervention — of which Baykar was entirely unaware — talks with the SSM accelerate, and a contract is finally signed in December 2012, two years after the executive committee decision. In January 2012, the timeline for the Tactical UAV Development Project program is drawn up: the Baykar team has just four months to have twelve aircraft ready for delivery.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar giving Gen. Ahmet Yavuz a tour of the İkitelli workshop on 1 April 2009. Photo taken in the famous corridor lined with pictures from the Southeast, where he took all his guests.



AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE WORKSHOP, THE SOLDIERS GAZED UPON THE PHOTOS TAKEN WITH COMMANDERS. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR ASKED THEM: "HOW MANY OF THEM DO YOU THINK ARE STILL ALIVE?"

Who Will Provide the Letter of Guarantee?

As the winner of the "Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System Development Program," Baykar finds itself in need of a letter of guarantee. After considering how to resolve the situation, Baykar begins approaching banks — but the banks refuse, both because they do not fully grasp the significance of the work being done and because they assess the company's financial position as insufficient to bear the risk. For the banks, what matters is not entrepreneurial vision but figures.

Özdemir Bayraktar's youngest son, Ahmet Bayraktar, writes a letter to İş Bankası explaining the situation. İş Bankası General Manager Adnan Bali and his delegation decide to visit the Baykar workshop in İkitelli. From the moment he steps into the corridor — taking in the photographs on the walls — and then witnessing firsthand the extraordinary dedication, sacrifice, and projects of Özdemir Bayraktar and his sons, Adnan Bali is deeply impressed. At the meeting that follows, they cover remarkable ground in a short span of time.

The exchanges go beyond a typical business relationship. They agree to provide the guarantee without even reviewing the balance sheet. This support from İş Bankası is of immense importance to Baykar. In Adnan Bali's eyes, Özdemir Bayraktar is a man who demonstrates his love for his country and his patriotism through tireless work.

At the workshop entrance, as they look at photographs taken with soldiers and commanders, Özdemir Bayraktar asks, "How many of the people in these pictures are still alive?" Adnan Bey once again realizes — deeply and profoundly — the value of the work being done. In fact, Özdemir Bayraktar makes a point of showing the photographs in the corridor to everyone who visits the workshop. Each time, with the same excitement, as if he had just lived it that very day, he recounts the stories without ever tiring: "This one was taken in Şırnak, this one in Diyarbakır, this one in Van... This commander is still fighting heroically."

↘ Another photo from Gen. Ahmet Yavuz's visit to the İkitelli workshop. Selçuk Bayraktar also in attendance.



Bayraktar TB2

THEY DEVELOPED THE BAYRAKTAR TB2 WITH A NEW TAIL DESIGN, GREATER WINGSPAN, AND HIGHER TAKEOFF WEIGHT.

During the period between the contract negotiations and the actual signing of the contract, the Baykar team does not sit idle. They form a new team and begin developing the Bayraktar TB2 (Tactical Block 2). With extraordinary dedication, the entire team — despite the contract not yet being finalized — raises the specifications beyond what was originally requested: from 18,000 feet to 27,000 feet, from 10 hours to 27 hours. They design an aircraft with automatic taxi, takeoff, landing, and standard cruise capabilities, and build upon the Bayraktar TB1 prototype to create the Bayraktar TB2. They develop a design with a different tail configuration, a longer wingspan, and a higher takeoff weight. Perhaps they are moving closer to the aircraft they had wanted to build from the very beginning.



↘ Ömer Bayraktar holds a composite mold for the Bayraktar TB2 at the İkitelli workshop.

↘
The team assembling a Bayraktar TB1 at the İkitelli workshop.



Round-the-clock work begins to meet the delivery deadline. Özdemir Bayraktar and his family no longer have any connection to their home in Sarıyer. All family members have moved to the third floor of the İkitelli workshop. They sleep — if they sleep at all — two hours a day.

They try to keep Özdemir Bayraktar away from all kinds of stress and problems following the surgery he underwent earlier, but Özdemir Bayraktar's presence and support — both material and moral — puts the entire team at ease throughout the process. From resolving technical problems to offering words of encouragement the moment they are needed, Özdemir Bayraktar is ready and willing for everything. The team builds the Bayraktar UAVs to specification and prepares them for delivery. But the UAVs do not have their cameras. The cameras are expected to come from the contractor — Baykar will install them — but the contractor neither hands over the cameras nor allows them to be sourced externally.

In the meantime, the Baykar team is forced to install and remove the single camera in their possession onto 12 UAVs, one by one, for testing purposes. Let us hear the rest of this story from Orhan Öge at the SSM, who followed all of these developments closely:

"When the moment of delivery finally arrived, they used the user cameras as an excuse, saying, 'Am I supposed to take these UAVs and leave them sitting in a hangar? I have no need for a UAV without a camera.' This time, they began putting up a different kind of resistance. Interestingly, the integration of the cameras to be supplied by the contractor into the UAVs had even been budgeted as a separate cost, outside the UAV production fee. Özdemir Bayraktar refused to claim that fee. 'No, I don't want it. Everything is ready. I will integrate the cameras myself and handle the installation. I am absolutely not requesting any such payment,' he said."

Due to the bureaucratic obstacles that arose, the delays in the delivery of the Bayraktar TB2, while demoralizing for the Baykar team, also present an opportunity in their wake. Every second that the contract remains unsigned, the Baykar team devotes all of its time to developing the Bayraktar TB2. And finally, the time comes.



↙
Family photo next to the Bayraktar TB1 mold at the İkitelli workshop.

↙
Working on the intra-airframe system placement and electronics integration of the Bayraktar TB1 at the İkitelli workshop.



↘
Özdemir Bayraktar posing for a photo with the Bayraktar TB1.



↘
Özdemir, Selçuk, and Ahmet Bayraktar next to the Bayraktar TB1 with visitors.





↗
Özdemir Bayraktar and the Baykar team posing for a photo with the fully assembled Bayraktar TB1.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar at the workshop with engineers and technicians
during the assembly of the Bayraktar TB1.





↗
The team assembling a Bayraktar TB2.



THE DELIVERY ROOM

Ömer and Özdemir Bayraktar attend the Bayraktar TB2's first flights in Keşan as distant spectators. Selçuk Bayraktar keeps his father and uncle at a distance, because he knows that at the slightest setback, Özdemir Bayraktar will react intensely. Ömer and Özdemir Bayraktar sit in a small room there, barely venturing outside. From that room, they try to gauge from Selçuk Bayraktar's demeanor whether the aircraft will be taxied or take flight. That is why they call it the "delivery room" — because they endure labor pains, much like the pangs of childbirth, while waiting for the aircraft.



↗
Selçuk Bayraktar inside the Bayraktar TB2's ground control station.

AFTER 2004, BAYKAR FACED OBSTACLES THAT NO OTHER COMPANY IN TÜRKIYE HAD ENCOUNTERED. THOSE LOOKING FROM THE OUTSIDE MIGHT ASSUME THEY WERE EASILY OVERCOME — BUT THE DIFFICULTIES WERE IMMENSE. WITHIN BOTH THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY, THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE PROGRESS BEING MADE. BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, THERE WERE ALSO THOSE WHO STEPPED FORWARD TO HELP. AS ONE PLACED AN OBSTACLE, ANOTHER WORKED TO CLEAR THE PATH. THOSE WHO WITNESSED ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S SINCERITY AND SACRIFICE — IF THEY FELT EVEN A TRACE OF SHAME IN THEIR HEARTS — OPENED THE WAY FOR HIM. IT WAS ONLY THUS THAT THE OBSTACLES WERE OVERCOME.

Turgut Şenol

FOUNDING GENERAL MANAGER, TEKNOPARK İSTANBUL

↘
Selçuk Bayraktar being interviewed by TRT during the inaugural delivery of the Bayraktar TB2, November 2014.



Delivery in Keşan

On April 29, 2014, the first automatic flight test of the Bayraktar TB2 is completed. In June 2014, it breaks the altitude record in Türkiye by climbing to 27,030 feet at full load, and two months later sets another record by remaining airborne for 24 hours and 34 minutes...

Selçuk Bayraktar flies the aircraft flawlessly during the first six-aircraft delivery in Keşan. However, the delegation finds a few faults: The first concerns the computer mouse at the ground control station — the scroll wheel used for "zoom out" and "zoom in." It is claimed that the zoom in and zoom out on the scroll wheel work in reverse. The second issue is that the system has a power supply generator towed on a trailer, and the brake pad inspection report for the trailer wheel is missing.

The third fault they find is the radio issue. The ground control station includes communication systems with the aircraft, and the Bayraktar TB2, just like the Bayraktar TB1, is flown from the aircraft ground control station. The station and its internal systems were also developed by Baykar. Prior to flight, the ground control station has a radio that provides communication solely with the tower. The specifications describe the radio using a phrase such as "AM on these frequencies and/or FM on these frequencies." Because the Baykar team possesses a new-generation technology — one that is indigenous, national, and capable of meeting the soldier's needs in the field — they integrate ASELSAN-produced digital radios into the ground control station. In essence, these radios are not a component of the aircraft or the UAV system; they merely provide communication between the pilots at the ground station and the tower. Because the clause in the specifications uses "and/or," when interpreted as "or," it describes a radio produced in Türkiye by an American company; when interpreted as "and," it refers to ASELSAN's new-generation digital radios. The Baykar team, having the more advanced technology, installs ASELSAN's new-generation radio in the ground control station.



↙
Photos from the inaugural delivery of the Bayraktar TB2, 2014.



↗
Second serial delivery of the Bayraktar TB2. 1st Army UAV Battalion in Keşan, 7 February 2015.

↘
Photo following the presentation of the Bayraktar TB1. Mamak, Ankara, 2009.



However, this creates a problem. It is claimed that the radio in the specifications is not technically compatible with the one on the Bayraktar TB2. On the last day of delivery, Özdemir Bayraktar submits a written statement to the delegation: "I will not install a foreign-patented, legacy radio in a national system. I will install our own national radio. What you see as deficient, what you consider faulty — I will not change that radio, nor will I make any commitment to change it." The initial acceptance of the Bayraktar TB2 is granted as a conditional acceptance due to the radio issue. According to the conditional acceptance, they are required to commit to installing the legacy radio in the system. But Özdemir Bayraktar, furious, responds: "I have no such commitment — in fact, I have the exact opposite commitment — so how can you make this a conditional acceptance?" Because Özdemir Bayraktar refuses to back down, the ASELSAN-produced radio is accepted in place of the American-origin one. In the first phase, delivery preparations for six Bayraktar TB2s are completed in November 2014, acceptance procedures are carried out, and the Bayraktar TB2s enter service in 2014.



↗
Özdemir, Ömer, and Selçuk Bayraktar pose for a photo with the Bayraktar TB1.

BOMB OF A MAN

His close friend since their university years, Ekber Onuk, recounts:

"During the first UCAV trials, the Land Forces Commander of the time was going to visit Keşan, and serious security measures had been taken because of the visit. The Armed Forces bomb detection team had also arrived at the airport. Özdemir Bayraktar was watching the scene from there. Off in the distance, a bomb-sniffing dog had been going around, checking everywhere. He asked the colonel there, 'What is this?' The colonel said, 'When it sees something, it stops in front of it and barks — we do what needs to be done.'

At that very moment, the dog turned around, came back, walked up to Özdemir Bayraktar, stopped right in front of him, and started barking. Özdemir Bayraktar asked, 'What's this about now?' The official there said, 'Sir, it's saying he's a bomb.'

Özdemir Bayraktar asked, 'So what do you do when the dog does this?' The specialist team replied, 'We're neutralizing the bomb.'

Özdemir Bayraktar turned to those around him and said, 'Even the dog can tell I'm a bomb of a man, but you're trying to scrap me.'

Bayraktar would recount this anecdote many times throughout the rest of his life to those who needed to stand aside because of his toughness."

ⓘ Scan, Watch

“Our efforts will continue without pause, with everything we have, until our country achieves full independence and world leadership in UAV technologies.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR



↗
The famous family photo taken during the inaugural delivery of the Bayraktar TB2, November 2014.





↗
The Bayraktar TB2 prepares for a mission during the 2016 firing tests in Batman.



A Meeting with ROKETSAN, Years Earlier...

The year is 2005...

Özdemir Bayraktar visits ROKETSAN together with his sons. In this meeting, Özdemir Bayraktar has two agenda items: to share Baykar's future objectives, and to request that ROKETSAN develop munitions for the indigenous UAVs that Baykar will produce. At the time, there is no finished UAV to show. All Baykar has in hand are the work Selçuk Bayraktar has been doing in the United States and Özdemir Bayraktar's vision encompassing the company's future.Özdemir Bayraktar, always thinking years ahead with a visionary mindset, is essentially curious about one thing: "When we build unmanned aerial vehicles, can ROKETSAN produce munitions for them?"

↘
The Bayraktar TB2's flight being monitored from the ground control station ahead of its inaugural delivery in 2014.



↘
Batman, 2016. During the firing tests, the Bayraktar TB2 prepares for a mission with live munitions. On the missile, the inscription reads 8/17 — a reference to the Quranic verse: "You threw not, when you threw, but it was Allah who threw."



Following the meeting, ROKETSAN begins munitions development activities for indigenous UCAVs. Özdemir Bayraktar closely follows all of these developments over the years, consistently playing an encouraging role in providing the necessary support. The fact that in 2005 — while the Bayraktar Mini UAV's demo and acceptance processes are still underway — Özdemir Bayraktar visits ROKETSAN to request munitions production is a clear indicator of his visionary perspective. Approximately ten years after that meeting, as the Bayraktar TB2 enters service, ROKETSAN has also begun the Cirit project.

They work on a 70mm laser-guided smart munition system. This is a munition sized for what small UAVs can carry. Subsequently, mini smart munitions are developed — MAM-C, MAM-L, and MAM-T — which will be used alongside Türkiye's indigenous and national smart munitions and the Bayraktar TB2 UCAV, actively deployed against terrorist organizations, and go on to achieve export success.

For Özdemir Bayraktar, the objective was, in fact, set at the very beginning of the story: the paradigm shift. He had long since recognized how critical unmanned aerial vehicles were for Türkiye's fight against terrorism.

SENSITIVE TEST ACTIVITIES AND ROUND-THE-CLOCK INTEGRATION WORK LEADING UP TO THE FIRST FIRING IN 2015 CONTINUE INTENSIVELY.

His constant race against time is driven by urgency: this work is critical. With every report of a fallen soldier he sees on the television, the pressure he feels intensifies, reinforcing his conviction that the process must be completed as soon as possible. Even though the SSM has no formal project for the Bayraktar TB2's entry into inventory, the arming process begins. An agreement is reached with ROKETSAN, and the development of integration systems for the munitions to be carried has commenced. By 2015, Selçuk Bayraktar is in Keşan, working on unmanned aerial vehicles in a hangar allocated by the Land Forces. He is deeply focused on the Bayraktar TB2's landing systems and software. The Baykar team's intensive work in Keşan prompts the ROKETSAN team to begin traveling there as well. As the aircraft's systems mature, ROKETSAN concurrently advances munitions integration work. Through 2015, sensitive test activities and round-the-clock integration work leading up to the first firing continue intensively. When the decision is made to proceed with live testing, the necessary approvals to fire an integrated munition from the aircraft at a target are by no means forthcoming. This is because the Bayraktar TB2 has not yet been formally commissioned, and granting firing permission entails considerable risk. Someone willing to take the initiative on this matter is sought.



↘
Bayraktar TB2.


MAN

Scan, Watch

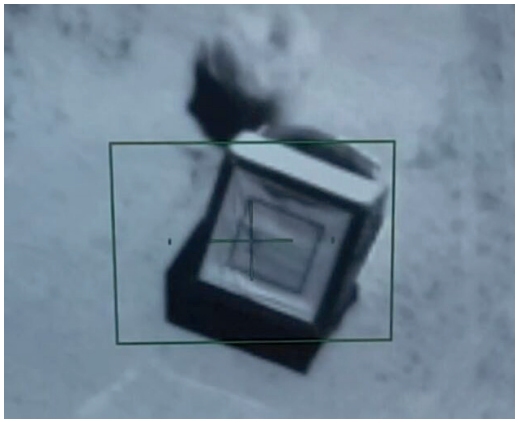
"I Don't Have Firing Permission"

The testing process for the mini smart munitions integrated onto the Bayraktar TB2 reaches such a critical point that Selçuk Bayraktar — who has been at Batman for months with his team to conduct test flights and provide technical support to the Turkish Armed Forces — devises a shortcut to resolve the matter. He writes "I don't have firing permission" on the mini smart munition and points the Bayraktar TB2's camera toward the munition while in flight. Özdemir Bayraktar does not hesitate to send this photograph to the relevant authorities. Following this, firing permission is granted.



↗
Target platform used in the 2016 firing tests with the Bayraktar TB2.

↘
The moment the Bayraktar TB2 locked onto the ground target during a 2016 firing test, as seen from the munition camera.



Toward the end of 2015, two MAM-L munitions — each weighing thirty-seven and a half kilograms — are mounted on the Bayraktar TB2, and a 2×2 meter target panel is placed in the field. The laser-guided munition on the Bayraktar TB2, reaching the appropriate firing position, is launched by the operator pilot at the ground station from an altitude of 16,000 feet, striking its target approximately 8 kilometers away with one hundred percent accuracy. The team succeeds on the first shot. Özdemir Bayraktar, never missing a chance to inject his wit into any setting, asks the ROKETSAN team: "Did you really hit it... or did you just make it look like you did?"

The next day, the news is reported on numerous newspaper websites and in both domestic and international media. Upon entering the Turkish Armed Forces inventory, the Bayraktar TB2s are first deployed in counterterrorism zones, followed by armed operations in Syria.

As for the procedures concerning UAVs in Türkiye, they are regulated under the "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems Directive – SHT-İHA" issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. In conjunction with these developments, several units utilizing UAVs are established within the Turkish Armed Forces. These include the 14th Unmanned Aircraft Systems Base Command stationed in Batman, the Elazığ Tactical UAV Unit Command deployed in Elazığ, and the 313th Naval UAV-S Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron Command located in Çanakkale.

↘
Munition photographed during a test on 3 December 2015, with the writing: "I don't have firing permission!"



ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S CONVICTION WAS THIS: "WE HAVE SUCCEEDED BEFORE — WE CAN SUCCEED AGAIN. THERE IS NO OBSTACLE THAT CAN PREVENT IT." THAT CONVICTION AND DETERMINATION OPENED AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT WORLD TO US. AT THE POINT WE HAVE REACHED TODAY, TÜRKIYE HAS BECOME A COUNTRY THAT EXPORTS UAVS AND UCAVS TO 35 NATIONS. BEHIND THAT SUCCESS IS ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S FIGHTING SPIRIT. IN THE OTTOMAN ERA, THERE WERE THE "DELILER" — THE FEARLESS ONES. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS, IN A SENSE, ONE OF THEM — A "DELI." HE DEDICATED EVERYTHING TO THE STRUGGLE. HE HAD NO ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUTURE. HE ONLY WANTED TO FIGHT AND TO DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER.

Oğuz Özbal

HEAD OF UNMANNED AERIAL
VEHICLES AND SMART SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT, SSB

↗
Bayraktar TB2.

Time Tunnel

News reports about the indigenous UAVs developed by Baykar

01



www.gazetevatan.com

VATAN

ÜLKENİN EN İYİ GAZETESİ

28 HAZİRAN 2010 PAZARTESİ | BAĞIMSIZ GÜNLÜK GAZETE | FİYATI 50 Kr

Çaldıran, 2300 km. uçuş, 600 km. haberleşme menziline sahip. Havada da tam 14 saat kalıyor.

Türk Heron'u 'Çaldıran' hazır, uçmayı bekliyor

■ Genelkurmay'ın isteği üzerine Türk mühendislerin ürettiği insansız hava aracı Heron'un rakibi Çaldıran, 10 aydır üretime hazır halde hangarda bekliyor. Test uçuşlarını başarıyla geçen Çaldıran'ı tasarlayanlar iddialı: "Çaldıran'ın sistemi Heron'da bile yok. Her yerden pilotsuz inip kalkabiliyor." 14'TE

HERON'un rakibi ÇALDIRAN göreve hazır

11 askerin şehit olduğu Gedikтepe saldırısından sonra çok tartışılan İsrail yapımı insansız hava aracı HERON'un, Türk yapımı rakibi ÇALDIRAN yaklaşık 10 aydır seri üretime hazır vaziyette hangarda bekletiliyor. Çaldıran'ı Genelkurmay'ın isteği üzerine geliştiren Baykar firması, Heron'a meydan okuyor

Türk yapımı insansız hava aracı Çaldıran, bugüne kadar yapılan testlerde 100 saatin üstünde başarılı uçuş yaptı.

	HERON	ÇALDIRAN
Uzunluk	8.9 mt	6.5 mt
Kanat Açıklığı	14.6 mt	9 mt
Maksimum Kalkış ağırlığı	1150 kg	500 kg
Maksimum hız	207 km/s	280 km/s
Menzil	3300 km	2300 km
Havada kalma	24 saat	14 saat
Maksimum yükseklik	27 bin feet (8 km)	23 bin feet (7 km)

Gözcü de onların eseri

İsrail yapımı Heron'la ilgili belirsizlik devam ederken, yazılım ve elektronik altyapısı dahil her şeyi Türk yapımı insansız hava aracı Çaldıran'ın uçuş ve seri üretime hazır halde 10 aydır hangarda beklediliği ortaya çıktı. 2000 yılından beri geliştirme sürecinde çok sayıda bürokratik engellerle karşılaşan projenin önündeki son engel, Türkiye'nin İsrail'den aldığı Heron ya da ABD'den almak istediği Predator'den talep edilmeyen ve kimden alınacağı belli olmayan uçuş sertifikası.

Devletin zirvesi onayladı

Kale-Baykar ortaklığında geliştirilen ilk Türk Taktik İnsansız Hava Aracı Çaldıran, bugüne kadar yapılan testlerde 100 saatin üstünde başarılı uçuş yaptı. Çaldıran'ın resmi test uçuşu Sinop Ereğlek'te 29 Eylül 2009'da tamamlandı. Proje aşamasında TSK tarafından 24 adet alınacağı belirtilen, Ocak 2010'da Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Başkanlığı'nda yapılan Genelkurmay Başkanı Orgeneral İlker Başbuğ ile Milli Savunma Bakanı Vecdi Gönül ve Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarı Murat Bayar'ın katıldığı Savunma Sanayi İcra Komitesi Toplantısı'nda 12 adet Çaldıran alımı için görüşmelerin başlaması kararı verildi. Ancak ne olduysa bu aşamadan sonra oldu. Şimdi şirketi ne arayan ne de soran var. Baykar Makina Genel Müdürü Haluk Bayraktar, "Bizden kimseden istenmeyen NATO tarafından İnsansız Hava Aracı Sistemleri Uçuşa Elverişlilik Sertifikası isteniyor. Ancak bu konu ise başlarken verilen şartnamede de yoktu. Bu sertifikayı kimden ya da nereden alacağımız da belli değil" diye konuştu.

İNSANSIZ hava aracı sistemlerine gönül vermiş bir aileden olusan Baykar Makina'nın basında mühendis olan Özdemir Bayraktar (61) bulunuyor. Özdemir Bayraktar projeyi biri işletme eğitimi almış diğer ikisi mühendis iki oğluyla yürütüyor. Ailenin en küçüğü Ahmet Bayraktar (27) projelerin idari kısmıyla uğraşarken, İHA projelerinde sirketin genel müdürü olan ABD'de Columbia Üniversitesi'nde master yaparmış endüstri mühendisi Haluk Bayraktar (31) ve yine ABD'de Pennsylvania'da Üniversitesi'nde İHA'lar üzerine master ve dünyanın en prestijli teknik üniversitesi MIT'de robotik kontrol sistemleri doktorası yapmış olan elektronik mühendisi Selçuk Bayraktar (30) öne çıkıyor. Baykar Makina Ege Bölgesi'nde yapılan Efes-2010 Tatbikatı'nda kullanılan Türk yapımı ilk İnsansız Hava Aracı Gözcü'nün de üreticisi. Geliştirme sürecinde Şırnak 6. İç Güvenlik Tugayı'nda 2 yıl kalarak çalışan Bayraktar kardesler bölgeyi inceleyerek, Türk Ordusu'nun ihtiyaç duyduğu sistemleri de yerinde geliştirmis. TSK ve Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarlığı ile birlikte geliştirilen mini İHA Gözcü'den 148, döner kanatlı İHA Malazgirt'ten ise 4 adet TSK envanterine girdi.

Menzil artırılabilir

BAYKAR Makina Genel Müdürü Haluk Bayraktar, VATAN'a, "Türkiye'nin ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda bizden 10 saat uçan ve 18 bin feet yüksekte çıkan İHA istemişlerdi. Üçağı ve yakıt deposunu büyüterek menzil 3 bin km.'nin üstüne çıkabilir. Elektronik altyapı ve yazılımı daha büyük bir uçağa koyup onu da uçuruyuz. 30 saat havada kalacak uçak istenseydi onu da üretirdik" dedi.

Kandil üzerinde saatlerce uçabilir

KARBON-KEVLAR alaşımlı zırh malzemesinden dış gövdeye sahip Çaldıran 600 kilometreden yayın yaparak elde ettiği görüntüleri istenilen merkeze gönderiyor. 35 kişilik bir ekip tarafından geliştirilen Çaldıran'ı, İ-Heron'lardan çok daha ileri bir teknolojiye sahip. Çaldıran İ-Heron'larda olduğu gibi kalkış iniş, uçuş sırasında yerde bulunan bir pilota ihtiyaç duymuyor. Agresif manevralar yapabilen Çaldıran için Baykar tarafından geliştirilen yazılımda 1 milyon satırdan fazla kod bulunuyor. Hedef tespit hassasiyeti Heron'dandaha yüksek olan Çaldıran, Türkiye'ye kuş uçuşu 90 km. olan PKK'nın Kandil Kamp üstünde saatlerce kesif uçuşu yapıp istihbarat görüntüsü aktarabilecek. Haberleşme kaybında ise Çaldıran otomatik olarak eve dönüp, inebiliyor. Bu özellik Heron'larda yok. Termal kamerasıyla gece de görüntü alabilen Çaldıran için Baykar Makina firsat açıklaması da tanesi yaklaşık 20 milyon dolar olan Heron'un 5'te birine malolduğu belirtiliyor.

Vecihi Hürkuş da engellenmişti

GENEL Müdür Haluk Bayraktar, "1930'da ilk Türk uçağını yapan Vecihi Hürkuş'un da sertifika istendi. Türkiye'de verecek kurum olmadığı için Hürkuş uçağını söküp tren vagonlarıyla Çekoslavakya'ya gönderdi. Oradan aldığı sertifikayla uçağı uçurabildi. Şimdi yine tarih tekerrür ediyor" dedi. Son günlerdeki tartışmalara dikkat çeken Bayraktar, "Bu tip çalışmalar aslında bir bağımsızlık savaşıdır. Çaldıran şu anda uçuşa hazır, görev bekliyor. Yoksa geçtiğimiz günlerde yaşadığımız istihbarat zaafı gibi durumları daha çok yaşarız. Önümüzdeki 15-20 yılda pilotlu savaş uçağı kalmayacak. Bundan sonraki hedefimiz silahlı İHA üretmek" diye konuştu.

Çaldıran
Malazgirt
Gözcü

190 milyon $
Türkiye İsrail'e 10 Heron siparişi verdi, 8'si teslim alındı. Toplam 190 milyon dolar ödenecek.

Haluk Bayraktar

↙
28 June 2010, Vatan

02

Yerli İHA'dan rekor



İnsansız Hava Aracı (İHA) sistemi bir rekora daha imza attı. Uçuş testleri kapsamında 24 saatlik uçuş gerçekleştiren İHA, Türk havacılık tarihindeki en uzun uçuş süresine sahip hava aracı oldu

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR HABER MERKEZİ

Kale-Baykar İş Ortaklığı tarafından geliştirilen Bayraktar Taktik İnsansız Hava Aracı (İHA) Sistemi yeni bir rekora daha imza attı. Keşan Askeri Havaalanı'nda devam eden uçuş testleri kapsamında 24 saatlik uçuş gerçekleştiren Bayraktar Taktik İHA, Türk Havacılık tarihindeki en uzun uçuş süresine sahip hava aracı olma unvanına erişti.

Dönüm noktası

5 Ağustos 2014 Salı günü saat 15:36'da otomatik kalkışını gerçekleştiren Bayraktar İHA, 18 bin fit irtifada gündüz ve gece 24 saat boyunca Saroz Körfezi üzerinde otomatik seyrini devam ettirdi. Bayraktar 6 Ağustos Çarşamba günü saat 16:10'da Keşan Askeri Havaalanı'na otomatik inişi yaparak toplamda 24 saat 34 dakikalık uçuşu başarıyla tamamladı. 250 litre yakıtla havalanan Bayraktar İHA, saatte 166 kilometreden toplamda 4 bin 43 km. menzil kat etti. Bayraktar İHA, 24 saatlik uçuşun 23 saat 50 dakikasını 18 bin fitte (5 bin 486.5 metre) kalarak gerçekleştirdi.

2014'te teslim edilecek

Bayraktar İHA, Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarlığı ile yapılan sözleşme sonunda 2014 içinde TSK envanterine girecek. Kabul testleri son aşamaya gelen Bayraktar İHA'dan TSK'ya ilk olarak 1 sistem yani 6 uçak ve 2 adet yer istasyonu teslim edilecek. İkinci partide yine bir sistem teslim edilerek TSK envanterine toplamda 12 Bayraktar İHA ve 4 adet yer istasyonu girmiş olacak.

İrtifa rekoru kırmıştı

Bayraktar Taktik İHA, 14 Haziran'da yaptığı test uçuş sırasında milli hava araçları arasında Türkiye irtifa rekoruna da imza atmıştı. Taktik-İHA sınıfındaki uçak, toplam 6 buçuk saat süren test uçuşu sırasında 27 bin 30 fit yani 8 bin 238 metreye çıkma başarısı göstermişti. 12 metre kanat açıklığı, 650 kg kalkış ağırlığına sahip Bayraktar Taktik İHA, sistem ve alt sistem bazında dünyada ilk kez geliştirilen birçok teknolojiye sahip. Otomatik olarak taksi, kalkış, seyir ve harici destek olmaksızın iniş ve park yapabilen 3 yedekli uçuş kontrol sistemi Dünya'da ilk kez Bayraktar Taktik İHA'da kullanıldı. Proje kapsamında ayrıca Türkiye'de ilk kez milli ve özgün olarak geliştirilen; 8 çeşit servo eyleyici, ısıtmalı pitot statik, 3 yedekli INS-GNSS seyrüsefer, akıllı dengeleme sistemine sahip lityum tabanlı batarya gibi birçok kritik sistem yer almakta.

Bayraktar Taktik İHA'nın elektronik donanım, yazılım sistemleri ve platform tasarımı tamamen milli olarak geliştirildi. Proje kapsamında Türk Savunma Sanayi tarihinde ilk kez, yüzde 93 gibi yüksek bir yurt içi katma değer oranı sağlandı. Kale-Baykar 2012'de Katar Silahlı Kuvvetleri'ne kendi üretimi olan 20 adet Gözcü yaptığı mini İHA'yı satarak Türkiye'nin bu alandaki ilk ihracatını gerçekleştirdi. Uçuş sonrasında konuşan Baykar Ar-Ge Lideri Selçuk Bayraktar, "Dün başlayan ve bugün tamamlanan uçuş, İHA teknolojisinde ülkemizi bu alanda lider konumuna taşınması hedefi adına önemli bir kilometre taşı. Geliştirdiğimiz otomatik uçuş kontrol sisteminin performansı dünyadaki en ileri teknolojik düzeyde. Yürütülen uçuş testleri sonucunda bizden talep edilen teknik kriterlerin neredeyse 3 katını sunma durumuna ulaştık. Bu kendi insanımıza güvenin bir sonucu" dedi.

İşte o ekip

Taktik İnsansız Hava Aracı İHA'nın yapımında emeği geçenler, hep birlikte kamera karşısına geçti.



↙
7 August 2014, Vatan

03



İLK 'BABA' YİĞİT

Özdemir Bayraktar, Şehit Yarbay Melih Gülova'ya verdiği sözü tuttu. Tamamı Türk yapımı insansız hava araçlarını üç oğluyla hayata geçirdi

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

Bayraktar TB2 kod adlı uçak Edirne Keşan Askeri Havaalanı'nda yapılan uçuş testlerinde 24 saat 34 dakika havada kalarak rekor kırdı.

Özdemir Bayraktar
Selçuk Bayraktar
Şehit Yarbay Melih Gülova
Haluk Bayraktar

Gabar'da atölye Özdemir Bayraktar (65), 2000'de Şırnak'ta Yarbay Melih Gülova ile tanıştı. Gabar eteklerinde bir atölye kurdular. Bayraktar ve biri pilot, ikisi ABD'de mühendislik eğitimi gören üç oğlu iki yıl çalıştı. 'Gözcü' adlı mini İnsansız Hava Aracı'nı (İHA) geliştirdiler. Yarbay 2007'de Şırnak'ta şehit düştü.

O sözü tuttular Bayraktarlar çalışmaya devam etti. Sonunda Türkiye'nin ilk yüzde yüz yerli 'orta irtifa, uzun menzil' İHA'sı Bayraktar TB2'yi geliştirdiler. İlk parti 6 İHA'nın üretimi ve testleri tamamlandı, bir iki hafta içinde TSK envanterine girecek. Özdemir Bayraktar 'Melih Yarbay'a sözümüzü tuttuk' dedi. Sayfa 15

↙
14 November
2014, Vatan

04

Milli İHA kabul testlerini geçti

TAMAMI milli Bayraktar TB2 İnsansız Hava Aracı 17-22 Kasım 2014 tarihlerinde Keşan'daki askeri havalimanında yapılan kabul testlerini başarıyla tamamladı. İlk etapta teslim edilecek 6 adet Bayraktar TB2 İHA, gece, sisli hava düşük görüş, buzlu bulut, havada 83 kilometre hızla esen darbeli rüzgar ve türbülansla karşılaştığı uçuşları başarıyla tamamladı. Şartnamede 18 bin feet'e 1 saatte çıkması gereken Bayraktar TB2, 38 kg. faydalı yükle 31 dakikada çıktı. Şartname gereği 18 bin feet'te uçması istenen Bayraktar TB2, 22 bin feet'te uçtu. İlk milli İHA, dünyada ilk kez kullanılan 3 yedekli uçuş-



lu sistemi ve yine bir ilk olan elektronik çift sinir ağına sahip. Bayraktar TB2 kabul işlemlerinde bilinmeyen bir özelliğini de sergiledi. Milli İHA uçuş sırasında hem Amerikan Küresel Konumlanma sistemi GPS'i hem de Rus Küresel Uydu Seyir Sistemi GLONASS'ı kullandı.

■ **İlker AKGÜNGÖR** HABER MERKEZİ

↙
25 November
2014, Vatan

05

Göçmenleri ölümden İHA'lar kurtaracak



İlker AKGÜNGÖR HABER MERKEZİ

TÜRK savunma sanayisinin gözdesi haline gelen milli İnsansız Hava Araçları'nı (İHA) Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı da kullanacak. Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı bu amaçla milli İHA'lar Bayraktar TB2 ve Karayel'i test ediyor. Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı, gece görüş ve termal kameraya sahip İHA'ları ilk etapta Ege Denizi ve Akdeniz'deki insan kaçakçılığı faaliyetlerini havadan takip ve tespit etmek için kullanacak. Türk karasularında insan kaçakçılığı ve düzensiz göç faaliyeti anlık olarak havadan gelecek görüntülerle karargahtan izlenecek. Böylece göçmenlerin açık denizde boğulmasının büyük oranda önüne geçilecek.

Tatbikata katılıyorlar

Kale-Baykar ortaklığında üretilen Bayraktar TB2, bu amaçla geçtiğimiz günlerde Keşan'da konuşlu 4'üncü Mekanize Piyade Tugay Komutanlığı içinde bulunan askeri havalimanından havalanarak Saroz Körfezi açıklarında test uçuşu gerçekleştirdi. Vestel tarafından geliştirilen Karayel de aynı amaçla test ediliyor. Bayraktar TB2 ve Karayel bu amaçla 14-28 Mayıs tarihleri arasında Marmara, Ege ve Doğu Akdeniz'de yapılacak TSK'nın en geniş ve en prestijli tatbikatlarından biri olan Deniz Kurdu 15 Tatbikatı'na katılacak. Keşan'daki pistten havalanacak İHA'ların Ege denizi üzerinde havadan aktaracağı görüntüler, yine Ege'de bulunan gemilerden birine kurulacak yer istasyonu aracılığıyla hem tatbikat merkezinden hem de Ankara'da karargahtan anlık olarak izlenecek.

Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı, Ege ve Akdeniz'deki insan kaçakçılığını milli İHA'lar BayraktarTB2 ve Karayel'le takip edip engelleyecek



Oramiral Bostanoğlu inceledi



ÖNCEKİ gün başlayan IDEF 2015 12. Uluslararası Savunma Sanayi Fuarı'na katılan Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanı Oramiral Bülent Bostanoğlu ve Genelkurmay 2. Başkanı Orgeneral Yaşar Güler, fuarda TSK envanterine giren ilk milli İHA Bayraktar TB2'yi yakından inceledi. İnceleme sırasında uçağı geliştiren ekipten Baykar Makina Genel Müdürü Haluk Bayraktar, Oramiral Bostanoğlu ve Orgeneral Güler'e Bayraktar TB2 ile ilgili bilgilendirme de bulundu.



↖
May 2015,
Vatan

06

12 yerli İHA, TSK envanterinde



İLKER AKGÜNGÖR HABER MERKEZİ

Yerli İHA Bayraktar TB2'nin ikinci grubu TSK'ya teslim edildi. TSK envanterine giren 12 yerli İHA askeri personelin eğitiminin ardından keşif ve istihbarat amaçlı olarak kullanılacak

Kale-Baykar Grubu tarafından üretilen yerli İHA Bayraktar TB2'nin ikinci paketi TSK'ya teslim edildi. 15-18 Haziran 2015 tarihleri arasında Keşan'da konuşlu 4'üncü Mekanize Piyade Tugay Komutanlığı'ndaki askeri havalimanında yürütülen test ve kabul süreci kapsamında ikinci pakette yer alan 6 uçak ve 2 yer istasyonu tüm teknik kriterlerin eksiksiz olarak tamamladı. Böylelikle TSK envanterine yerli olarak 12 İHA ve 4 yer istasyonu girmiş oldu.

Kara Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı'nın keşif ve istihbarat maksatlı operasyonlarında görev alması planlanan Bayraktar Taktik İHA'nın ilk paketinin kabul işlemi 22 Kasım 2014'te yapılmıştı. Teslim edilecek tüm İHA'ların uçurulduğu test ve kabul süreci boyunca Bayraktar TB2'ler fırtınalı, yağmurlu ağır hava şartlarında fonksiyonel ve performans uçuşları, otomatik taksi, otomatik kalkış, seyir, yarı otonom kullanım, otomatik iniş ve otomatik park işlemleri hatasız bir şekilde yaptı. Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı'nda bulunan İsrail yapımı 10 Heron ve yeni eklenen Bayraktar TB2'lerle beraber TSK'nın elinde toplam 22 tane İHA oldu.

↖
20 June 2015,
Vatan

07



SİLAHLANDI

Milli İHA Bayraktar silahlandı. Roketsan'ın geliştirdiği füze takılan Bayraktar, ilk atışında 8 kilometre uzaklıktaki hedefi yüzde yüz isabetle imha etti

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

Tank füzesi kullanıldı

Türkiye yerli savunma sanayiinde kritik eşiği aştı. TSK envanterine giren ilk yerli ve milli İHA Bayraktar TB2 bir yıldır süren çalışmalar sonunda silahlandırıldı. Bayraktar TB2'de mühimmat olarak Roketsan'ın geliştirdiği uzun menzilli anti tank füzesi UMTAS kullanıldı.

Askerler de takip etti

İlk deneme uçuşunda Bayraktar TB2'ye her biri 37.5 kg. ağırlığında iki füze takıldı. Lazer güdümlü füze, yer istasyonundaki operatör pilot tarafından 5 bin metre irtifada 8 km. uzaklıkta ateşlendi, 4 metrekarelik hedefi yüzde 100 isabetle vurdu. Sayfa 14

Dünyada 5. olduk

Bayraktar, yerli yapım antitank füzesi taşıyor.

UMTAS adlı füze tüm zırhları delebiliyor.

Türkiye, ABD, Çin, İsrail ve İran'la birlikte silahlı İHA üreten 5. ülke oldu. Bayraktar 24 saat 34 dakika ile sınıfında havada kalma rekortmeni.

↙
18 December
2015, Vatan

08

↙
18 December
2015, Vatan



Dünya rekortmeni

2014 Haziran ve Ağustos aylarında yaptığı deneme uçuşlarında 27 bin feet irtifa ve 24 saat 34 dakika havada kalma süresiyle kendi sınıfında dünya rekorunun sahibi olan Bayraktar TB2, 12 metre kanat açıklığı ve 650 kg toplam kalkış ağırlığına sahip.

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

UMTAS gündüz, gece ve tüm hava koşullarında görev yapabiliyor.

Tüm zırhları deliyor

BAYRAKTAR TB2'ye takılan ve Roketsan tarafından geliştirilen milli mühimmat UMTAS öncelikli olarak taarruz helikopteri kullanımı için geliştirilen uzun menzilli bir tanksavar füze sistemi. Yüksek teknolojisiyle tüm zırhlı tehditlere karşı etkili olan 160 mm. çapındaki UMTAS'ın, 8 km. azami ve 500 mt. asgari menzili var.

Milli İHA'ya yerli füze!

İlk yerli üretim İnsansız Hava Aracı Bayraktar TB2 silahlandırıldı. Üzerine Roketsan'ın geliştirdiği anti tank füzesi takılan Bayraktar, dün atış testlerini başarıyla tamamladı

Türk savunma sanayi bomba gibi bir gelişmeyle gündeme geliyor. TSK envanterine giren ilk yerli ve milli İHA Bayraktar TB2 yaklaşık bir yıldır süren çalışmalar sonunda silahlandırıldı. Bayraktar TB2 dün yapılan ilk atışlı testte attığı füzeyle hedefi tam isabetle vurdu. Bayraktar TB2'de mühimmat olarak Roketsan'ın geliştirdiği uzun menzilli anti tank füzesi UMTAS kullanıldı.

Hedefi 8 km'den vurdu

Milli İHA bir süredir UMTAS füzesiyle yüklü olarak test uçuşları yapıyordu. Dün uçağın kanatlarına her biri 37.5 kg. ağırlığında olan iki füze takıldı. Saat 12.00 civarı havalanan milli İHA için alana 2x2 metre büyüklüğündeki hedef paneli yerleştirildi. Saat 14.30'da uygun atış pozisyonuna gelen Bayraktar TB2'deki lazer güdümlü füze, yer istasyonundaki operatör pilot tarafından 16 bin feet (yaklaşık 5 bin metre) irtifada, 8 kilometre uzaklıkta ateşlenerek hedefi yüzde 100 isabetle vurdu.



HEDEFİ TAM İSABET VURDU

'Bu başarı Türk mühendislerinin'

Kale-Baykar İş Ortaklığı tarafından üretilen Bayraktar TB2'nin üreticisi Baykar Makina'nın Genel Müdürü Haluk Bayraktar, VATAN'a şöyle konuştu: "Savunma sanayinde milli ve özgün geliştirme modelinin ne kadar isabetli olduğunu bu aldığımız sonuçla gördük. TSK ve Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarlığı'nın büyük katkıları var. İlk atıştaki bu başarı Türk mühendislerinin alanlarında ne kadar yetkin olduğunu gösteriyor."

ABD 7 yıldır bekletiyordu

BU gelişme Türkiye'nin uluslararası alanda da rahatlamasına neden oldu. Türkiye, 2008'den beri Amerika'nın ürettiği silahlı İHA'dan almak istemiş ama ABD Kongresi'nden onay çıkmamıştı. Dönemin Genelkurmay Başkanı Org. Necdet Özel'in Pentagon ve dönemin Başbakanı Tayyip Erdoğan'ın ABD Başkanı Barack Obama nezdinde yaptığı girişimler sonuçsuz kalmıştı. ABD, son olarak İncirlik'te konuşlu iki predatörü silahlandırdı ve Suriye'deki İŞİD hedeflerine karşı kullandı. Uluslararası platformlarda ise Türkiye'nin Çin ya da İsrail'den silahlı İHA alacağı iddia edilmişti.

Sadece beş ülke üretiyor

ABD, Çin, İsrail ve İran'ın ardından Türkiye kendi silahlı İHA'sını üreten 5'inci ülke oldu. Silahlı İHA'lar arasında dünyada en bilinen operasyonel sistem ABD'ye ait Predator ve Reaper'lar. İsrail de Hermes isimli silahlı bir İHA üretiyor. CH-3 isimli silahlı İHA'yı üreten Çinli ALIT firması, uçağın kanatları altında ikişer adet kısa menzilli AR-1 füzesi kullanıyor. İran ise Sadid-1 füzesiyle donatılmış Shahed 129 adlı İHA'yı 2013'ten beri seri olarak üretiyor. İran İHA'ları Sudan, Irak, Lübnan, Venezuela ve Suriye'ye ihraç ediyor.

09



CUMARTESİ 19 ARALIK 2015 EDİTÖR: Ö

18 GÜNDEM

'ONU ATMA, BENİ AT'

İlk kez atış yapan milli silahlı İHA Bayraktar TB2 testlerini tamamladı. Roketsan'ın modifiye ettiği UMTAS füzesinin seri üretime geçmesiyle birlikte, TSK bünyesindeki 12 adet Bayraktar TB2 2016'da operasyonel olarak uçacak

Önceki gün tarihi bir uçuş gerçekleştirerek Roketsan'ın ürettiği UMTAS füzesiyle ilk silahlı atışını yapan milli İHA Bayraktar TB2 uluslararası savunma sanayinin de gündemi oldu. Milli İHA'nın Cumhuriyet tarihinde ilk defa gerçekleşen ve savunma sanayine kritik bir eşik atlatan atışından önce perde arkasında şunlar yaşandı:

Roketsan'dan özel

Roketsan'ın ürümü uzun menzilli anti tank füzesi UMTAS, 2005 yılında ATAK projesi kapsamında Milli Atak helikopteri T-129'un resmi tanksavar sistemi olarak geliştirilmeye başlandı. Hedef, Atak T-129'un güdümlü füze ihtiyacını karşılayabilmek ve füzeyi ihraç etmekti. Zarb edici başlığa sahip olan ve 'ateşle-unut' sistemiyle kullanılan UMTAS, silahlı milli İHA projesi için Roketsan mühendisleri tarafından modifiye edildi. Yani önceki gün ilk atışını yapan Bayraktar TB2 kendisi için geliştirilen özel bir füzeyi kullandı.

Veri toplama uçuşu

Bir yıldır devam eden silahlı İHA çalışmaları son dönemde giderek hızlandı. Özellikle geçtiğimiz hafta Bayraktar TB2, iki kanadına da 37.5'ar kiloluk iki UMTAS füzesi takılarak havalandı. Yüklü halde havalanan milli İHA, 2 kez tam kapasiteyle veri toplama uçuşu gerçekleştirdi. Veri toplama uçuşlarının başarılı olması üzerine silahlı İHA projesinin en kritik adımı olan atış testine geçildi.

Görev atışı yapacak

Merakla beklenen atış testi için Bayraktar TB2'ye 'cansız' yani patlayıcı mühimmatı olmayan iki UMTAS füzesi takıldı. Önceki gün nefeslerin tutulduğu an olan 14.30'da, operatör pilot tarafından yapılan atışta 5 bin metre irtifada ve yaklaşık 8 km uzaklıkta ve sadece 2x2 metre (4 metrekare) büyüklüğündeki hedef panelinin yüzde 100 isabetle vurulması aylardır proje için uykusuz çalışan ekibe büyük moral oldu. Atışın başarıyla sonuçlanmasının ardından test süreci de sona erdi. UMTAS füzesiyle donatılan Bayraktar TB2 bundan sonraki süreçte harp başlığıyla 'görev atışı' yapacak.

İLKER AKSUNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

Üstü yazılı roketler

TARİHİ uçuşta dikkat çeken bir diğer unsur ise milli İHA'ya takılan füzelerin üstüne yazılanlar oldu. Bayraktar TB2'ye takılan turuncu ve siyah renkli iki UMTAS füzesinden sadece biri atışta kullanıldı. Ekip üyeleri atılmayacak olan siyah füzenin üzerine bu yüzden 'Beni at, onu atma!' yazdı.

Atışın yapıldığı turuncu renkli füzenin üzerinde Kastamonu şivesiyle yazılan 'atcen deyon atmeyon' sözleri ise atış testini sabırsızlıkla bekleyen ekibin heyecanını yansıtıyordu. Öte yandan atılan füzenin diğer yanına ise ilk atışın zamanını gösteren 17.12.2015 tarihi ile tüm ekip üyelerinin imzası atıldı.

2016'da silahlı uçacak

PROJENİN kritik bileşeni olan Roketsan'ın geliştirdiği UMTAS füzesi AR-GE sürecinin son aşamasına gelmiş bulunuyor. Önümüzdeki süreçte Roketsan hem Atak T-129 helikopteri hem de milli İHA Bayraktar TB2'ye yönelik olarak seri üretime geçecek. Savunma sanayi kaynaklarından alınan bilgiye göre; UMTAS'ın seri üretime geçmesiyle birlikte 2016'ın ilk aylarından itibaren Kara Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı'na verilen 12 adet Bayraktar TB2 İHA, silahlı olarak operasyonel görev uçuşu yapmaya başlayacak.

↗
19 December
2015, Vatan

10

CUMA 15 OCAK 2016
16 GÜNDEM



Komutan milli İHA'yı uçurdu



HAVA Kuvvetleri Komutanı Orgeneral Abidin Ünal geçtiğimiz ay Roketsan tarafından üretilen UMTAS füzesiyle yapılan atış testini yüzde yüz isabetle geçen milli İHA Bayraktar TB2'yi Batman'da inceledi. Orgeneral Ünal, tamamen Türk mühendisleri tarafından geliştirilen milli İHA'yla ilgili son çalışmalar hakkında brifing aldı.

Ünal, incelemede Bayraktar TB2'yi eğitim sırasında bir süre kullandı. Orgeneral Ünal'ın projeyi geliştiren mühendislerden öncelikli olarak savaşan, muharip bir İHA istediği öğrenildi.

Silahlandırma çalışmaları anlatıldı

Projeyi yürüten Baykar Makina Teknik Müdürü Selçuk Bayraktar, "Tüm komutanlarımız en başından beri projeye sahip çıkıyor. Ancak Orgeneral Abidin Ünal 2000'li yıllarda Hava Harp Okulu Komutanı'yken maket uçak gövdesine ilk milli güdüm sistemi taktığımızdan beri projeyle çok yakından ilgilendi ve çalışmalarımıza destek verdi. Kendisine Bayraktar TB2 ile ilgili son gelişmeleri ve silahlandırma çalışmalarını anlattık" dedi.

Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı Orgeneral Ünal, geçen Ekim ayında Kuzey Irak Metina'daki PKK hedeflerini savaş uçağıyla uçarak vurmuştu. ■ **İlker AKGÜNGÖR** HABER MERKEZİ

↙
15 January
2016, Vatan

11

Milli İHA'ya milli istihbarat

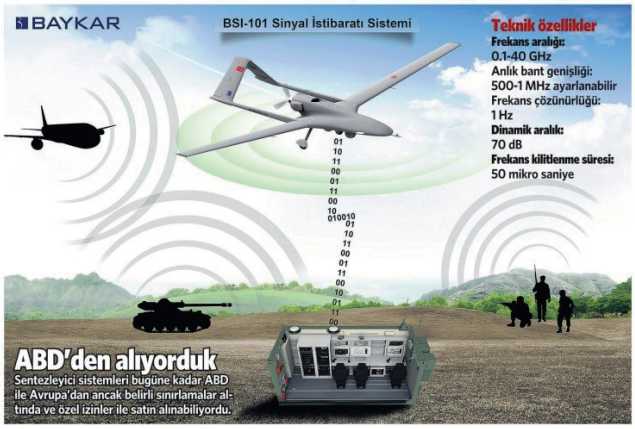
İlk kez tamamı milli yazılım ve donanımla yapılan sinyal istihbarat cihazı üretildi. Havadaki tüm elektronik verileri toplayan sistem, Bayraktar TB2'ye takıldı

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR HABER MERKEZİ

TÜRKİYE milli savunma sanayisinde kritik bir gelişmeye daha imza attı. TSK envanterine giren ilk ve tek milli insansız hava aracı olan Bayraktar TB-2'yi üreten Baykar Makina Ar-Ge ekibi, Türkiye'nin yazılımı ve donanımı tamamen yerli ilk sinyal istihbarat cihazını başarıyla geliştirdi. Havadan elektronik (ELINT) ve haberleşme istihbaratını (COMINT) toplamaya uygun elektronik donanım ve yazılımla geliştirilen sistemin ilk denemeleri milli İHA Bayraktar TB-2 üzerinde yapılıyor.

Radarları buluyor

BSI-101 adıyla geliştirilen sinyal istihbarat sistemiyle hem karadan hem de İHA'lar ile havadan, sabit ve hareketli düşman radarları, telsiz konuşmaları ve uydu sinyalleri tespit ve takip ediliyor. Ayrıca bu sinyaller üzerinden verici konumları hassas bir şekilde belirlenebiliyor. BSI-101'leri yüklenen İHA'lar, barış zamanında yaptığı keşif uçuşları ile sahada bulunabilecek bütün radar ve telsiz sinyallerini algılayıp kayıt ederek veri bankasının oluşturulmasına katkı sağlayacak. Sistemin dinleme ve kestirme kabiliyetleri sayesinde teröristlerin telsiz konuşmaları canlı olarak dinlenip yerleri tespit edilerek terörle mücadelede istihbarat desteği de sağlanacak.



↖ 3 March 2016, Vatan

12

İLK GÖREV KİLİS

GÜNÜN HABERİ

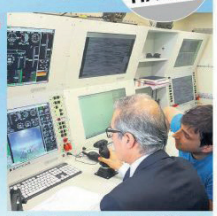
Milli İHA Bayraktar ilk kez harp başlığıyla atış yaptı, 8 km'den yerdeki hedefi yüzde 100 isabetle vurdu. İHA'lar IŞİD'in hedefindeki Kilis'i koruyacak

Konya'da atış tatbikatı

Kale-Baykar Ortaklığı'nın geliştirdiği milli insansız hava aracı (İHA) Bayraktar TB2, ilk kez harp başlığı silahlı atış yaptı. Bayraktar, Konya 3. Ana Jet Üs Komutanlığı'ndaki atışlarda, 8 kilometre uzaktaki yer hedefini yüzde 100 isabetle vurdu.

Dünyada 6'ncı ülkeyiz

Bayraktar TB-2 atışta Roketsan tarafından geliştirilen, harp başlığına sahip mini akıllı mühimmat MAM-L'yi kullandı. Türkiye böylece ABD, İsrail, Çin, İran ve G. Afrika'dan sonra silahlı İHA'sını üreten 6'ncı ülke oldu. Sayfa 13



Tatbikatı izleyen Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarı Prof. İsmail Demir 'Ne kadar gurur duysak az. Gözümüzdeki yaşlarla atışı izledik' dedi.



FÜZEDEKİ OKÇU SIRRI

Bayraktar'daki füzelerden birinin üzerinde 8/17 rakamı dikkat çekti. Bu Türk okçu ustalarının 700 yıllık sırrı. Ok ve yay teslim edilirken kulağa Kuran'ın 8. suresi Enfal'in 17. ayeti fısıldanırdı: Attığın zaman onu sen atmadın. Allah attı.

İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

↖ 30 April 2016, Vatan

13

17 November 2016, Vatan

Bayraktar İHA havada 10 bin saati geçti



İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

BAYKAR Makina tarafından milli ve yerli olarak üretilen Bayraktar TB-2 İHA, TSK bünyesinde görev uçuşlarına başladığı 2015 Eylül'ünden beri havada 10 bin saati geçti. Kritik bir eşik olan 10 bin uçuş saatini tamamlayan Bayraktar TB-2 silahlandırıldıktan sonra terör operasyonlarının da vazgeçilmez unsuru oldu. Milli İHA, Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri dışında Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü tarafından da kullanılıyor. Terör örgütü PKK'ya yönelik yurt içi ve Kuzey Irak'ta süren operasyonlarda yer tespiti ve harekat amacıyla kullanılıyor.

100 teröristi vurdu

Savunma kaynakları silahlı İHA'nın başarısıyla birlikte savaş uçakları kullanımının saat olarak azaldığını, savaş uçaklarının ise sıklıkla İHA'ların yer tesbitinde bulunduğu bölgeleri bombaladığını belirtiyor. Roketsan üretimi olan anti tank füzesi UMTAS MAM-L mühimmatı ile donatılan silahlı Bayraktar son iki ayda çıktığı görevlerde yaklaşık 100 teröristi etkisiz hale getirdi. Terörle mücadelede askerin gözü kulağı olan 12 uçaklık Bayraktar Taktik İnsansız Hava Aracı filosu Kuzey Irak ve Suriye'de düzenlenen operasyonlarda aktif rol oynuyor.

Suriye'de keşif yapıyor

Kuzey Irak ve Türkiye sınırında PKK'ya karşı mücadele eden Bayraktar TB-2, Fırat Kalkanı harekatı başladığından beri Suriye sınırında görev yapıyor. Bayraktar İHA, Suriye sınırında gözetleme ve keşif operasyonları gerçekleştiriyor.

14

Jandarma da SİHA'landı



İLKER AKGÜNGÖR
HABER MERKEZİ

PİLOT EĞİTİMİ TAMAM

Jandarma da Bayraktar TB-2 kullanımında görevlendirilecek personelin eğitimi uçakların tesliminden önce başladı. Milli İHA'yı geliştiren Baykar'ın Teknik Müdürü Selçuk Bayraktar da geçtiğimiz günlerde tamamlanan eğitime katıldı.

MİLLİ İHA Bayraktar TB-2'nin sahadaki başarısı üzerine güvenlik güçlerindeki sayısı arttırılıyor. Kara Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı (KKK) ve Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü'nün (EGM) ardından Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı da Silahlı İHA (SİHA) sahibi oldu. İkisi silahlandırılan toplam 6 adet İHA ile 3 adet yer istasyonunun, Elazığ'da jandarma birliklerine teslimatı yapıldı.

Jandarmada bir ilk

Daha önce Bayraktar mini İHA ve daha ufak drone'lar kullanan Jandarma ilk kez bu ölçekte hava aracı sahibi oldu. Jandarma silahlı ve silahsız İHA'ları düzenlediği mülki, adli ve askeri görevlerde operasyonel olarak kullanacak. İHA'ların kaçakçılıkla mücadeleden asayiş operasyonlarına kadar geniş bir alanda kullanılması hedefleniyor.

24 yerli İHA

Jandarmaya teslim edilen 6 adet İHA ile birlikte güvenlik güçlerindeki yerli İHA sayısı 24'e ulaştı. Bayraktar TB-2'lerin 12'si KKK, 6'sı ise EGM tarafından kullanılıyor. Eylül 2015'den itibaren aktif bir şekilde operasyonel olarak uçmaya başlayan Bayraktar TB-2, sınır içi ve sınır dışında toplamda 13 bin saat uçuşu geride bıraktı. Ayrıca Bayraktar TB-2'nin yaklaşık 200 km olan haberleşme menzili de çeşitli noktalara konuşlandırılan yer veri terminalleri ve dikilen haberleşme antenleri sayesinde 600-700 km 'ye kadar ulaştı.

6 March 2017, Vatan

15



Milli silahlar İHA, Atak, Cirit PKK'lı teröristleri 12'den vurdu

Milli İHA Bayraktar, Bestler Dereler'de ilk kez ATAK helikopteri için lazerle işaretleme yaptı. Teröristleri ise yerli üretim olan Cirit füzesi vurdu. Bölgede gün boyunca süren operasyonda 26 terörist etkisiz hale getirildi...

20'nci ATAK helikopteri TSK'da

T-129 ATAK helikopterinin 20'incisi, 9 Nisan'da TSK'ya teslim edildi. Manevra kabiliyetiyle dikkat çeken ATAK, milli tasarım havadan karaya Cirit ve tanksavar Mizrak roketlerini kullanıyor.

Yurt dışına da ihraç ediliyor...

ROKETSAN tarafından üretilen 8 km menzilli Cirit, hafif zırhlı/zırhsız sabit ve hareketli hedefleri düşük maliyetle vuruyor. Sınıfının en uzun menziline sahip füze lazer güdüm kiti ve termal tarayıcısıyla hedef isabetinde yüksek hassasiyetle başarı sağlıyor.

İLKER AKGÜNDÜR

15 bin saattir havada

Milli İHA Bayraktar TB-2, Eylül 2015'ten beri aktif olarak terör operasyonlarında kullanılıyor. Silahlandırılan Bayraktar TB-2 bugüne kadar yaklaşık 15 bin saat uçtu.

TERÖR operasyonlarında önceki gün bir ilk yaşandı. Daha önce F-16 için lazerle işaretleme yapan milli İnsansız Hava Aracı Bayraktar TB-2, Şırnak'ın Bestler-Dereler bölgesinde başlayan operasyonda ilk kez TAI tarafından yerli imkanlarla üretilen T-129 ATAK helikopteri için lazerle işaretleme yaptı. ATAK tarafından yerli roketsan üretimi milli füze Cirit kullanıldı. Önceki gece aniik istihbarat ile başlayan operasyon gün boyu devam etti. Operasyonun başlamasıyla havalanan ATAK helikopterine Bayraktar lazer ile hedefleri gösterdi, teröristleri ise ROKETSAN tarafından üretilen yerli Cirit füzesi vurdu. Şırnak Valiliği ve Genelkurmay Başkanlığı operasyonda 26 teröristin etkisiz hale getirildiğini açıkladı.

Varank açıkladı

İlk kez yerli İHA, helikopter ve füzenin kullanıldığı operasyon hakkındaki bilgiyi ise Cumhurbaşkanlığı Başdanışmanı Mustafa Varank paylaştı. Varank, sosyal paylaşım sitesi Twitter hesabında "Dün Şırnak'ta ilk kez milli İHA'mızın tespit edip lazerle işaretlediği terör hedefini, milli helikopter Atak, milli Cirit füzesiyle imha etti" diyerek duyurdu.

'PKK'nın eylem planlama noktası'

GÜVENLİK uzmanı Abdullah Ağar bölgenin önemini şöyle anlattı: "Kuzey Irak'tan Türkiye'ye giriş yapan teröristler önce Bestler Dereler'e geçer. Burası barınma, eylem hazırlığı ve depo alanıdır. Gerekli malzemeleri alıp, buradan bölgeye geçerler. Bölge iki geçiş noktasının üstünde. Hakkari ile Şırnak ve Pervari'den Diyarbakır'a kadar uzanan hat. Bestler Dereler, örgütün yığınak noktasıdır. Hatta terör eylemi yapmadan önce planlama yaptıkları bir yerdir. Bölgede yaşayan konuklar "Terör Bestlerde başladı, Beştlerde biter' derler. Bu kadar önemlidir. Bu operasyon özellikle bahar hazırlığı içinde olan örgüte çok büyük darbe vurdu."

Güvenlik uzmanı Abdullah Ağar

↖
21 April 2017,
Vatan

16



30 İHA 20 bin saattir havada!

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'a, milli İHA'ları üreten Baykar'ın Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Özdemir Bayraktar, Genel Müdürü Haluk Bayraktar ve damadı Baykar Teknik Müdürü Selçuk Bayraktar brifing verdi.

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, terör operasyonlarının gözdesi Bayraktar TB2 İHA'ların üretildiği Baykar'ın Ar-Ge ve üretim tesislerini ziyaret etti. Erdoğan'a yapılan brifingte İHA'larla ilgili detaylı bilgi verildi

Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan son dönemde terörle mücadele operasyonlarında öne çıkan ve TSK'nın envanterine girdiğinden beri PKK'nın kırsal alandaki etkinliğini kısıtlayan Bayraktar TB2 İHA'ların üretildiği Baykar'ın Ar-Ge ve üretim tesislerini ziyaret etti. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'a ziyareti sırasında Baykar Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Özdemir Bayraktar, Genel Müdür Haluk Bayraktar ve damadı Baykar Teknik Müdürü Selçuk Bayraktar tesisler ve üretilen İHA'lar hakkında brifing verdi.

İLKER AKGÜNDÜR

Tesisleri gezdi

Baykar'ın tesislerinde yaklaşık 1.5 saat kalan Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, 'Hava Aracı Elektronik Donanım Tasarımı', 'Hava Aracı Tasarım ve Analiz', 'Gömülü Yazılım', 'Montaj ve Kompozit İmalat' birimlerini inceledi. Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'a verilen brifingte, şu ana kadar güvenlik güçlerinin envanterinde bir kısmı silahlı 30 İHA'nın görev yaptığı anlatıldı. Kara Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı'nda 18, Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı'nda 6 ve Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü'nde 6 adet olmak üzere terör operasyonlarında aktif görev yapan toplam 30 İHA'ya 24 saat esaslı lojistik ve teknik destek verildiği ifade edildi. Ayrıca Bayraktar TB2'nin sorun yaşamadan havada 20 bin saatlik, yani kesintisiz 833.3 gün, yaklaşık 28 aylık uçuşu geride bıraktığı da belirtildi.

Yazılıma özel ilgi

Erdoğan'a tesisin montaj hattında üretimi devam eden yeni seri İHA'lar da gösterildi. Özellikle 'Hava Aracı Tasarım ve Analiz' ile 'Gömülü Yazılım' birimleriyle yakından ilgilenen Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, İHA'ların yapımında kullanılan karbon fiber elyafın yerli üreticiden tedarik edilmesini memnuniyetle karşıladı. Bayraktar TB2 İHA'nın en kritik unsurlarından biri olan yerli yazılımı üreten mühendislere de teşekkür etti.

'Bu ülkenin neleri başarabileceğini ispatlıyorsunuz'

TESİSTE çalışan mühendisler ve stajyerle de sohbet eden Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, özellikle Bayraktar TB2 gibi kendi klasmanında ileri teknoloji İHA sisteminin yazılım, elektronik, tasarım, aerodinamik vb. teknolojileri milli ve özgün olarak tasarlanıp geliştirmesinden dolayı duyduğu memnuniyeti dile getirdi. Mühendislere, 'Bu teknolojinin en önemli kısmı yazılım ve böylesine önemli bir teknolojinin milli olarak geliştirilmesine katılan sizler bu ülkenin neleri başarabileceğini ispatlıyorsunuz' dedi.

Selçuk Bayraktar

Haluk Bayraktar

↖
3 August 2017,
Vatan

17

↙
3 June 2021, The Wall Street Journal

WSJ



Armed Low-Cost Drones, Made by Turkey, Reshape Battlefields and Geopolitics

18



Turkey's military campaign beyond its borders is powered by homemade armed drones

November 29, 2020

↗
29 November 2020,
The Washington Post

19

TIME

TECH

Ukraine's Secret Weapon Against Russia: Turkish Drones

6 MINUTE READ



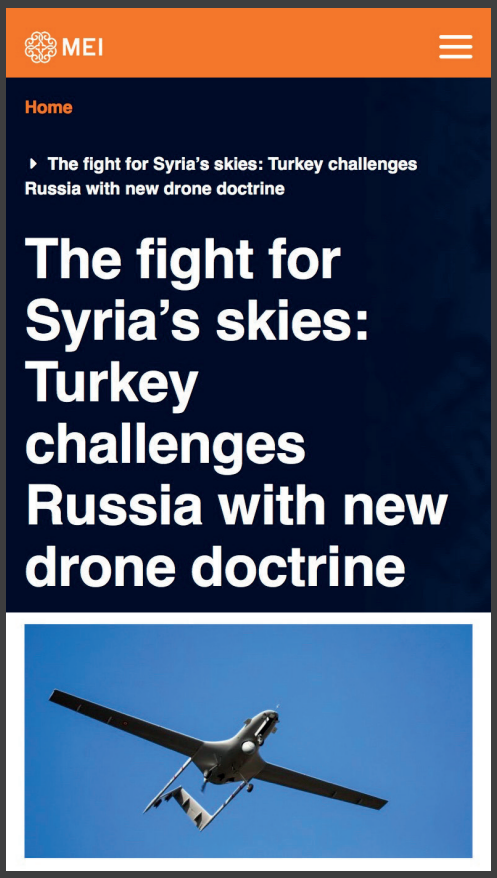
↙
1 March 2022, Time

20



↙
9 May 2022,
The New Yorker

21



↖
26 March 2020,
Middle East Institute
(MEI)

22



↙
17 April 2020, Jamestown

23



↙
12 February 2022, The Economist

24

ALJAZEERA

News | Khalifa Haftar

‘Largest drone war in the world’: How airpower saved Tripoli



↗
28 May 2020,
Al Jazeera



↗
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to the UAV Base in Batman, 4 February 2018.







04

FROM ROOTS TO THE SKIES
(2016-2021)

The Architect of the National Technology Initiative

A "Man of Action" on the Path to Independence

Özdemir Bayraktar is, in every phase of his life, a true "man of action." Speaking, making statements, debating — these are meaningful to him only as part of taking action. In fact, if this preamble drags on too long, if action is delayed, he grows frustrated, and the fierce determination he always carries in his nature surfaces. This "impatient," enterprising disposition — always eager to move to action as quickly as possible — is undoubtedly as much a reflection of his character as it is of the circumstances Türkiye finds itself in.

↘
At the development facility now known as the Özdemir Bayraktar National Technology Center, during the Bayraktar Akıncı development work. Beside Özdemir Bayraktar is his son Selçuk Bayraktar.





#MİLLİ TEKNOLOJİ HAMLESİ

↖ Logo of the National Technology Initiative.

Özdemir Bayraktar reflected an indigenous and national character in all of his actions; he dedicated his life to Türkiye's attainment of independence in every sense. The urgency he carried was so great that he saw every minute not spent in action as a significant loss. There was no time for talk — it was a time for relentless work. Without a thought for his health, without going home for years, Özdemir Bayraktar strove toward this cause with enormous sacrifice. To see the contribution that Özdemir Bayraktar — a man who lived as a "man of action" — made to Türkiye's story, one must look at the character and deeds that consistently defined his entire life.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar with Osman Güneş

An Indigenous and Original Engineer

National sentiment, talent, sharp intellect, dedication — these are among the qualities most frequently invoked when describing Özdemir Bayraktar. Yet what makes him a truly singular character is his originality: a quality that deepens the meaning of everything else about him. For Özdemir Bayraktar — a man of action — doing what everyone else does, or even repeating his own past work, is never enough. Something more, something more advanced, something more useful surely exists somewhere; and if it does, they must be the ones to find it. It is on this understanding that he builds his engineering practice. Ömer Bayraktar speaks to his professional meticulousness: "The Bayraktar Mini UAV, the Bayraktar TB2, AKINCI — everything we have built up to now is entirely Özdemir Bayraktar's design. He would work for hours, combing through every detail with the finest of combs."

It is through his originality and his relentless, compounding innovation that his talent and intellect shine. There may well be others in Türkiye of equal intelligence, talent, and patriotism. But the way he unites all of these qualities in a character of perpetual self-improvement makes his place unique — placing Özdemir Bayraktar among a select few in the history of the Republic.

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S STRUGGLE WAS ENTIRELY AIMED AT TRANSFORMING THIS CAUSE INTO A NATIONAL MISSION — ONE THAT BELONGED NOT TO HIM ALONE, BUT TO HIS COUNTRY. NOT AS AN ENGINEER, BUT AS A SON OF THIS LAND, HE HAD DEVOTED HIMSELF ENTIRELY TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGY. NO FALTERING, NO RETREAT. HE BELIEVED THAT NO MATTER WHAT, THE PATH MUST BE CONTINUED AND THE STRUGGLE MUST GO ON. "NO SURRENDER, PASHA!" HE WOULD SAY. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR GAVE THIS COUNTRY NOT ONLY HIGH TECHNOLOGY — HE GAVE IT SELF-CONFIDENCE. HE SHOWED THIS COUNTRY THAT SUCCESS IS POSSIBLE.

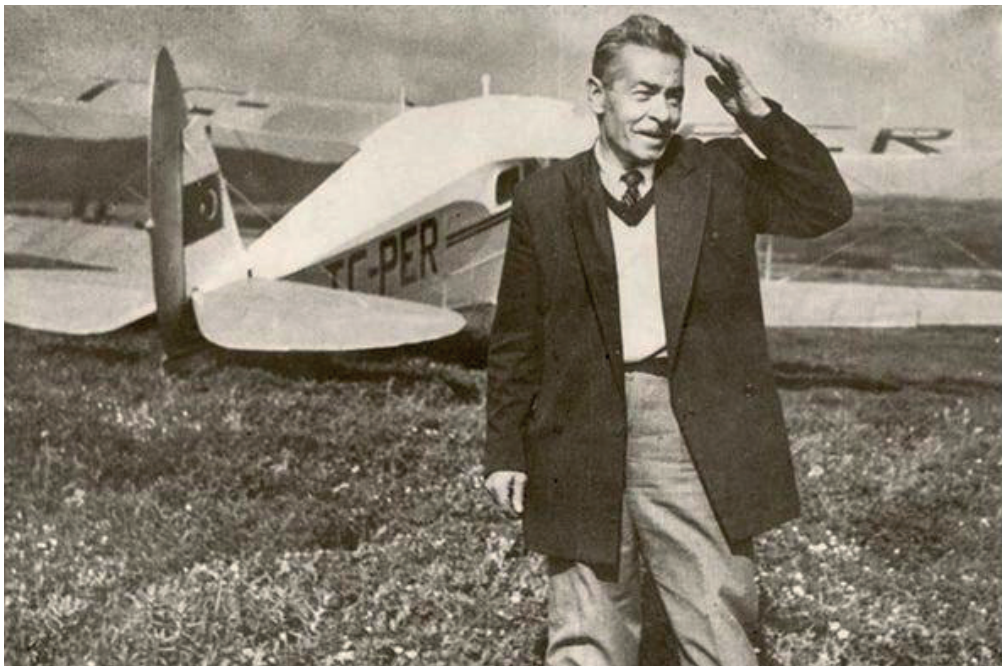
Arif Çetin

COMMANDER OF THE GENDARMERIE GENERAL COMMAND,
GENERAL (RET.)



↘
Bayraktar AKINCI Fleet





↗
Vecihi Hürkuş, in front of his TC-PER aircraft.

History Repeating Itself

Throughout the history of the Republic, there have always been men of action — those who accelerated Türkiye's march forward, who served as its driving force, who intervened in the course of events at the cost of their own comfort and that of those around them. When one considers the legacy left to us by the likes of Al-Jazari, Al-Khwarizmi, Hezarfen, and Taqi al-Din — their passion for knowing, learning, thinking, and making — it becomes clear that the same aptitude and inheritance lived on in the early years of the Republic in such figures as Şakir Zümre, Nuri Demirağ, and Vecihi Hürkuş. Özdemir Bayraktar studied the struggle of these pioneering figures with great discernment, and it fell to him to take up and bring to completion the projects that Şakir Zümre, Nuri Demirağ, and Vecihi Hürkuş had left unfinished.

WHAT MATTERS IS NOT MERELY A FEW HUNDRED PEOPLE DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY. WHAT MATTERS IS TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY.

Nuri Demirağ, who in 1936 set out to establish an aircraft factory with the conviction that "we can produce the best, so as to free the military from dependence on foreign sources," and Vecihi Hürkuş, who in 1924 built Türkiye's first aircraft, the Vecihi K-VI, using materials left behind by the Greeks — these are, without question, among the valued figures who shouldered and paved the way for Türkiye's pursuit of indigenous technology.

That Vecihi Hürkuş was punished on the grounds that he had conducted his first flight without authorization is, with history's cruel repetition, a striking parallel to the Bayraktar TB1's first flight being carried out without official clearance. Nuri Demirağ, who founded the Sky School in 1936, had a singular wish: to train pilots who could fly the aircraft being produced. In Özdemir Bayraktar's eyes, all these stories make plain that promising projects can only survive if they find support across all segments of society. Turkish society can succeed only by embracing the production of technology as a matter of culture — in the belief that doing so affirms a continuity and represents the strong Türkiye of the future. For Özdemir Bayraktar, therefore, the matter is not merely a question of a few hundred people producing technology. It is a question of societal transformation.

TO UNDERSTAND ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO LOOK ONLY AT THE PRESENT. TO TRULY UNDERSTAND HIM, ONE MUST ALSO CONSIDER THE MODERNIZATION PROCESS OF THE MILITARY FROM THE OTTOMAN ERA TO THE REPUBLIC. HE WAS NOT MERELY AN ENGINEER WHO FLEW THE BAYRAKTAR TB2 — HE WAS A GREAT VISIONARY. HE OPENED HIS HEART TO EVERYONE IN THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES, WHETHER THEY SUPPORTED HIM OR NOT. HE STOOD BY THEM IN THEIR MOST DIFFICULT DAYS, BUT HE NEVER ONCE DID SO FOR SHOW.

Ergüder Toptaş

MAJOR GENERAL (RET.)

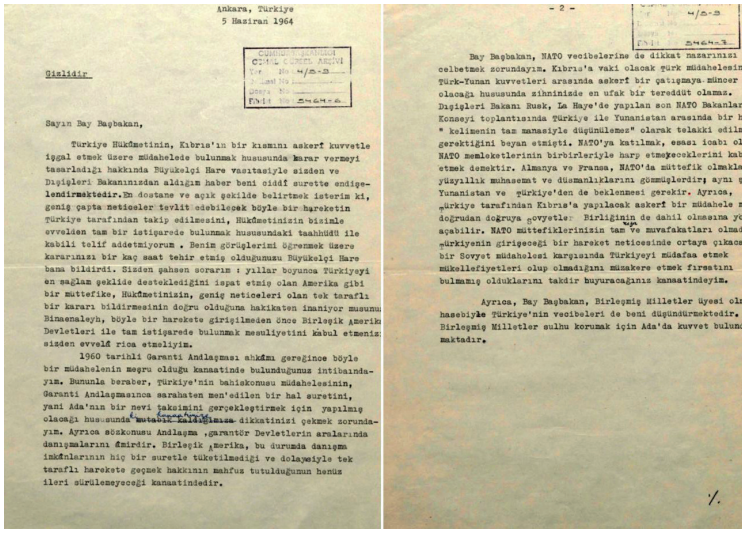

Milliyet
Halk Gazetesi
TÜRK - AMERİKAN İLİŞKİLERİ SORUNU
C. Senatosu, ABD Kongresi'ne teessüf mesajı gönderiyor
ECEVİT : ARTIK AMERİKA'YA GÜVENEMEYİZ
Irmak: «Bekleme dönemine girdik»
Milliyet
Liselerarası MÜZİK ve HALK OYUNLARI yarışması
Ecevit, Yunan TV'sine demeç verdi

↖ Milliyet newspaper, dated February 9, 1975.

A Search

The defining quality shared by those who devoted their lives to securing Türkiye's independence in every sense — who placed their talents in service of their country — is that they never strayed from the path Türkiye was on. Whatever happened, whatever obstacles stood in their way, the answer would be found here, and the substance so desperately needed would emerge from this very soil. To tell this story properly — a story whose thread extends all the way to Özdemir Bayraktar — one must examine Türkiye's long years of searching. What paths did Türkiye travel? What did it endure? And how did its road come, in the end, to intersect with Özdemir Bayraktar's vision?

Toward the close of the twentieth century, it was recognized with sorrow that Türkiye had failed to count itself among the pioneering nations of the industrial revolutions — that it had not advanced sufficiently on the path of development. In the wake of painful experiences, it became clear that Türkiye needed to possess its own indigenous technologies in order to ensure its security and pursue an independent foreign policy.



Ankara, Türkiye
5 Haziran 1964

Gizlidir

Sayın Bay Başbakan,

Türkiye Hükûmetinin, Kıbrıs'ın bir kısmını askerî kuvvetle işgal etmek üzere müdahalede bulunmak hususunda karar vermeyi tasarladığı hakkında Büyükelçi Hare vasıtasiyle sizden ve Dışişleri Bakanınızdan aldığım haber beni ciddî surette endişelendirmektedir. En doğrusu ve açık şekilde belirtmek isterim ki, geniş çapta mütecâviz tavsiyesi söz konusu olacak böyle bir hareketin Türkiye tarafından takip edilmesini, Hükûmetinizin bizimle evvelden tam bir istişarede bulunmak hususundaki taahhüdü ile kabili telif addetmiyorum. Benim görüşlerimi öğrenmek üzere kararınızı bir kaç saat tehir etmiş olduğunuzu Büyükelçi Hare bana bildirdi. Sizden şahsen sorarım: yıllar boyunca Türkiyeyi en sağlam şekilde desteklediğini ispat etmiş olan Amerika gibi bir müttefike, Hükûmetinizin, geniş neticeleri olan tek taraflı bir kararı bildirmesinin doğru olduğuna hakikaten inanıyor musunuz? Binaenaleyh, böyle bir harekete girişilmeden önce Birleşik Amerika Devletleri ile tam istişarede bulunmak mesuliyetini kabul etmenizi sizden evvelâ rica etmeliyim.

1960 tarihli Garanti Andlaşması ahkâmı gereğince böyle bir müdahalenin meşru olduğu kanaatinde bulunduğunuz intibaındayım. Bununla beraber, Türkiye'nin bahiskonusu müdahalesinin, Garanti Andlaşmasınca sarahaten men'edilen bir hal suretini, yani Ada'nın bir nevi taksimini gerçekleştirmek için yapılmış olacağı hususunda [illegible] dikkatinizi çekmek zorundayım. Ayrıca sözkonusu Andlaşma, garantör Devletlerin aralarında danışmalarını emirdir. Birleşik Amerika, bu durumda danışma imkânlarının hiç bir suretle tüketilmediği ve dolayısiyle tek taraflı harekete geçmek hakkının mahfuz tutulduğunun henüz ileri sürülemeyeceği kanaatindedir.

- 2 -

Bay Başbakan, NATO vecibelerine de dikkat nazarınızı celbetmek zorundayım. Kıbrıs'a yakı olacak Türk müdahalesin Türk-Yunan kuvvetleri arasında askerî bir çatışmaya münce olacağı hususunda zihninizde en ufak bir tereddüt olamaz. Dışişleri Bakanı Rusk, La Haye'de yapılan son NATO Bakanlar Konseyi toplantısında Türkiye ile Yunanistan arasında bir " kelimenin tam manasiyle düşünülemez" olarak telakki edil gerektiğini beyan etmişti. NATO'ya katılmak, esası icabı ol NATO memleketlerinin birbirleriyle harp etmeyeceklerini kab etmek demektir. Almanya ve Fransa, NATO'da müttefik olmakla yüzyıllık muhasemet ve düşmanlıklarına gömülmişlerdir; ayna Yunanistan ve Türkiye'den de beklenmesi gerekir. Ayrıca, Türkiye tarafından Kıbrıs'a yapılacak askerî bir müdahele doğrudan doğruya Sovyetler Birliğinin de dahil olmasına yo açabilir. NATO müttefiklerinizin tam ve muvafakatları olmad Türkiyenin girişeceği bir hareket neticesinde ortaya çıkmas bir Sovyet müdahalesi karşısında Türkiyeyi müdafaa etmek mükellefiyetleri olup olmadığını müzakere etmek fırsatını bulmamış olduklarını takdir buyuracağınız kanaatindeyim.

Ayrıca, Bay Başbakan, Birleşmiş Milletler üyesi ol hasebiyle Türkiye'nin vecibeleri de beni düşündürmektedir. Birleşmiş Milletler sulhu korumak için Ada'da kuvvet bulun maktadır.

↗
The Johnson Letter, dated June 5, 1964.

Following the embargoes imposed after the 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation, the way was paved for the establishment of defense industry companies — first ASELSAN, then ROKETSAN, TUSAŞ, and others. However, neither the Heavy Industry Drive envisioned in the 1970s, nor the efforts undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s, yielded significant progress. Advanced technologies could not be developed. Türkiye's political and economic instability did not provide sufficient opportunity to sustain research, development, and innovation processes.

With the adoption of Law No. 3238 in 1985, the Undersecretariat for Defense Industry was established under the Ministry of National Defense, along with the Defense Industry Development and Support Directorate (SAGEB), marking an important step in the development of the Turkish defense industry. The process that began with the 1964 Johnson Letter — which gave rise to Türkiye's determination to pursue an independent foreign policy and ensure its own security — reached its preparation phase through foundations established in the 1970s and was put into action in 1985.

The purpose of SAGEB, as stated in the first article of the relevant law, was defined as: "The aim of this law is the development of the modern defense industry and the modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces."

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The emblem of SAGEB (Defense Research, Development, and Training Directorate), established in 1985.

A Critical Threshold

The need arose for a new institutional framework to bring Türkiye's hard-won strategic objectives on this arduous path to fruition. Subsequently, the Defense Industry Supreme Coordination Board, the Defense Industry Executive Committee, and the Defense Industry Support Fund were established. The executive authority responsible for realizing strategic objectives became the Defense Industry Executive Committee. A meeting of the Defense Industry Executive Committee held on May 15, 2004, carries critical importance in this context. At that meeting, the approach of relying on foreign partners as prime contractors with local firms as subcontractors was abandoned; numerous tenders were canceled and replaced with new procurement models based on "domestic production" and "original design," with the decision to meet the needs of the Turkish Armed Forces within this framework. Although the aspiration for "an independent and strong Türkiye" had existed for years, and certain innovations had been introduced, it was only with the stability achieved in the early 2000s that a long-term perspective embracing technology, production, and innovation could truly take hold.

In Türkiye, as is the case around the world, the pioneering sector in the production of indigenous and original advanced technology has been the defense industry. From the establishment of the Undersecretariat for Defense Industry to the present day, over the course of a thirty-five-year effort, achievements have been made in building a modern national defense infrastructure, and significant defense industry institutions have been established to meet the needs of the Turkish Armed Forces from domestic and national sources.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar runs the final checks on the Mini UAV prototype — whose software and airframe were built by him and his team — ahead of a test flight at a military base. Samandıra, 2005.

The resolute dedication and effort of Özdemir Bayraktar and the companions who shared his vision now point toward the same destination as Türkiye's long years of searching. He may have seen this in the earliest years of his youth, repairing the foreign engines on his father's and friends' boats; or perhaps while working, during his university years and early career, to produce domestically — under foreign firms' licensed rights — goods that Türkiye was importing; or perhaps while manufacturing subcomponent products at Baykar. The idea and the search for indigenous technology is, in a sense, the translation of Özdemir Bayraktar's life — its very meaning. The National Technology Initiative vision is born of precisely this shared substance, and in this new era, doors open at last to the new vision Özdemir Bayraktar had spent years dreaming of. Türkiye, which had long been striving to find its way, is finally realizing the transformation it had been waiting for.

A PERSON CAN SAY, "I OWE A DEBT TO MY HOMELAND AND MY NATION, AND I MUST STRIVE TO FULFILL IT." BUT THERE IS A LIMIT TO SUCH EFFORT. BROTHER ÖZDEMIR TRULY DEVOTED HIS LIFE IN THIS SENSE. IMMEASURABLY, BOUNDLESSLY, WITH TOTAL DEDICATION...

Serdar Yılmaz

POLITICIAN (CLOSE FRIEND)



↗
The Bayraktar TB2 photographed on the runway upon landing at Geçitkale Airport on 16 December 2019.







The Vision of the National Technology Initiative

Inseparable from Türkiye's past, the National Technology Initiative is not a beginning, not an outcome, but a name given to an aspiration for continuity. As one of the steps taken toward the dream of a "fully independent and prosperous society" that Turkish society has pursued from the past to the present, this vision does not aim solely to develop the advanced technologies of the future; guided by ethical and moral principles, it aspires to serve society and humanity in the broadest sense. Moreover, it encompasses a multidimensional strategy and perspective that extends well beyond high technology across many different fields.



↙
Two Bayraktar AKINCI aircraft performing a formation flight.

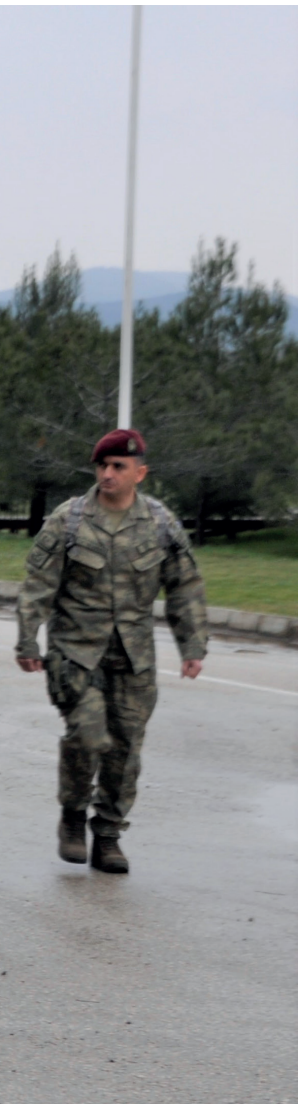
The various political, social, and economic ruptures Türkiye has experienced severed society's "organic" connection with science and technology. With this new technology drive — which took concrete shape at the state level in 2016 — the goal is to restore that connection through the right principles and perspectives, to ensure that Türkiye's science and technology movement becomes a societal one and fully independent, and furthermore, to transform all segments of society. Accordingly, the National Technology Initiative aims to nurture generations who advance science and technology by anchoring themselves in ethical and moral values. The intent is not to focus on the technology of today, but on the technology of the future — to develop indigenous and national technology by taking into account the paradigm shifts that will help Turkish society make up for lost years.

The sustainability of the National Technology Initiative will be determined only by consistent state policies and societal support. Backed by stable industrialization policies encompassing a wide range of technologies — from communications to defense, from energy to countless other fields — the National Technology Initiative demonstrates that it will continue on its path tomorrow with even greater strength.

The spark that ignited this initiative is, without question, Özdemir Bayraktar. Standing at a turning point in the history of Türkiye and the Turkish military, the sparks Bayraktar struck will turn into flames, and the National Technology Initiative will rapidly gain momentum.
It has become clear that the story will be strengthened through human capital in original and national production in technology, technology entrepreneurship, and the continuation of research, development, and investment incentives; furthermore, if supported by all segments of society, the technology journey will accelerate, and this success will be as beneficial to humanity as it is to Türkiye. Özdemir Bayraktar's and Baykar's journey stands at the very center of this story.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar, with military personnel, in Keşan.





Baykar's Pioneering Role and Story

In the past, many unmanned aerial vehicles purchased out of need for technologies belonging to other nations could not be used efficiently due to insufficient technical support and various problems encountered in the field. When one considers the "national and indigenous" success achieved in unmanned aerial vehicles — with the Baykar team living alongside soldiers in the field, continuously receiving feedback, and thus constantly refining the aircraft — it becomes clear that this success instilled hope and confidence in the National Defense Industry, setting in motion a valuable and exciting process for Türkiye.

Considering the reconnaissance, surveillance, stationary/moving target detection, identification, designation, and tracking missions, as well as real-time imagery intelligence tasks performed by unmanned aerial vehicle systems, an invaluable achievement has been attained in terms of security and defense. This success in the defense industry has inspired and empowered civilian efforts as well, bringing to life a comprehensive "National Technology Initiative."

Through various long-term policies, research, development, and public support for innovation, the 2000s mark the beginning of a process in which national and indigenous efforts take root. It is also the scene where the "intention" Özdemir Bayraktar envisioned for Türkiye converges with the passage of time — as the team led by Haluk Bayraktar and Selçuk Bayraktar produces indigenous and indigenous unmanned aerial vehicles.



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar with Gendarmerie General Commander, General Arif Çetin.

In those years when the fight against terrorism is at its most intense, the Bayraktar Mini UAV and the Malazgirt Mini UAV — designed to save lives, protect civilians and soldiers, and provide technical support to the Turkish Armed Forces — will be actively deployed in the southeast, continuously refined based on feedback from the field, and will lead Turkish soldiers to ask, "Did we really build this?" Thanks to this technology — equipped with high-level components that can be adapted to changing conditions — and because the steering wheel is in the hands of those who produce it, confidence, success, and stability will be achieved on many fronts. Under the leadership of Özdemir Bayraktar — who knows no obstacles — and inspired by his faith, the story of Baykar, which began with a drill press and continued with great strength against all odds, alongside his companions, does not take long to converge with the destiny of Türkiye.

As a result of the Mini Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Development Project in 2005, Türkiye's first national and indigenous Mini UAV successfully takes flight. Four years later, in 2009, the Bayraktar TB1 flies with more advanced features and an original design — including automatic takeoff and landing capabilities not found in the popular unmanned aerial vehicles of the era. The Bayraktar TB2, whose contract will be signed in 2010, will enter service in 2014. Not long after, weapons integration is achieved on the platform, and following the Hendek operations, it will take on missions in Syria and in Operation Euphrates Shield, be exported to dozens of countries, and more. The unmanned aerial vehicles developed by Baykar as national and indigenous systems will be deployed as a "game changer" in the operations where they are used, transforming war doctrines.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar, at the İkitelli workshop.



Indigenous, National, and Visionary Character

IN THE WORDS OF HALUK BAYRAKTAR, ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S STORY WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE.

Without a Second Thought

Özdemir Bayraktar is not merely an actor in the National Technology Initiative; he is one of the founding minds who owns and shapes this vision. In Haluk Bayraktar's words, Özdemir Bayraktar is the "embodied life story" of the National Technology Initiative. Every piece of his life, once it concerns Türkiye, becomes a detail. His actions, conversations, worries, joys... Everything about Özdemir Bayraktar — who devoted his life to independence and was passionately attached to freedom — is, in fact, connected to a single emotional center. That center simultaneously marks both Türkiye's and Özdemir Bayraktar's lifeline and rhythm.

National Issues at the Heart of Life and Conversation

In Özdemir Bayraktar's gatherings with friends, the most important agenda items are invariably national issues. Particularly when it comes to Cyprus and the Blue Homeland, he looks at things from angles no one else considers, and he is persistent about whatever he sets his mind to.

The Cyprus Issue

ⓘ Scan, Watch

He consults people from all segments of society — active and retired soldiers, civilian bureaucrats, businesspeople, academics, and anyone with a national conscience — on the subject of Cyprus. Consultation, as a method he never abandons, is behind all of his actions. Together with retired General Ergin Saygun and Lieutenant General Zekai Aksakallı, they bring the Cyprus issue to the table through a WhatsApp group they have formed.



↗
In the photograph, the book "International Maritime Law" by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emete Gözügüzelli is seen — a work whose publication and distribution Özdemir Bayraktar supported.

On the Cyprus question, he raises the issue of the many Turkish properties that ended up in the South following the island's division — on the basis that foundation (vakıf) property cannot be transferred. He wants to know whether the Immovable Property Commission is functioning fairly and correctly, and to what extent the rights of Turkish Cypriots are being protected. Özdemir Bayraktar makes plans to establish a civil initiative to address this problem. "Let us do our part in the civilian sphere — the state can act on it as it sees fit," he says, and begins by having academics working on the subject identified. For instance, to support the maritime law scholarship of Associate Professor Dr. Emete Gözügüzelli, he has hundreds of copies of the International Law of the Sea printed and personally arranges their distribution to relevant parties.

In the wake of these efforts, another concrete step is taken by Türkiye in the Eastern Mediterranean and Cyprus. The Council of Ministers adopts a decision for Geçitkale Airport to be made available for UAV operations. The Bayraktar TB2, stationed at Dalaman Naval Air Base Command, takes off at 05:00 on the morning of December 16, 2019. After a flight of approximately five hours, it lands at Geçitkale Airport at 09:00 local Cyprus time. This development is a sign that Türkiye has entered a new phase in Cyprus — not merely through words, but through its presence on the ground. UCAVs are thus deployed to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and with the contribution of Özdemir Bayraktar's persistent follow-through, a powerful message is sent to the world.



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The Bayraktar TB2 landing at Geçitkale Airport in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on 16 December 2019.

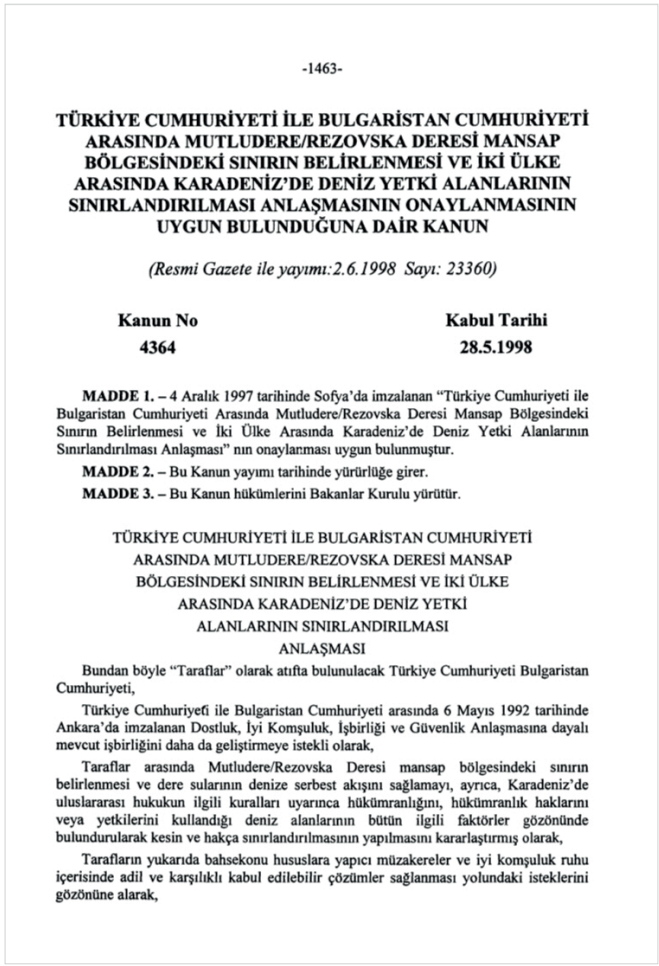
Blue Homeland

Türkiye's maritime zones — over which it exercises sovereign rights as recognized under international law — are referred to as the Blue Homeland. These zones encompass all of Türkiye's maritime areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, the Sea of Marmara, and the Black Sea. The Blue Homeland is among the issues Özdemir Bayraktar devotes the most attention to. There are many in Türkiye who work and strive on the Blue Homeland question, but what matters is spreading awareness of it across the country — and in particular, raising consciousness among younger generations. Aware of this, Özdemir Bayraktar supports Blue Homeland efforts and has thousands of books distributed. Without receiving support from any institution, he coordinates the dispatch of these books to schools, organizations, and relevant individuals. He establishes a civil initiative for the Blue Homeland and demonstrates his foresight and sensitivity even to potential disputes in a stream on the Bulgarian-Turkish border.

The Agreement on the Delimitation of the Border in the Estuary Area of the Mutludere/Rezovska River and the Delimitation of Maritime Zones in the Black Sea Between the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Bulgaria, signed in 1998, is among the matters he focuses on most closely.



A provision in Article 4 of the agreement — stating that the issue will be renegotiated by the parties "in the future" — drives him to work toward ensuring that Türkiye will never find itself conceding so much as a meter of the Blue Homeland. When this issue comes back onto the agenda, he wants Türkiye's hand to be strong. "Let us do what falls to us — they can act on it when the need arises," he says, and takes the matter upon himself as a personal mission. He obtains supplementary documents from the Grand National Assembly, acquires detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation, and takes every opportunity to impress upon those around him the importance of the situation. He pays close attention to every point on a map he has drawn by a naval colonel, and follows up diligently on all work he commissions. He has the discrepancies between the maps on the Bulgarian side identified and works on those as well. The prospect of Türkiye being caught unprepared on this issue unsettles him so deeply that he sometimes sets all other work aside to attend to it. In the final years of his life, he dedicates himself to this cause — serving, in every sense of the word, as a standard-bearer of the Blue Homeland.



-1463-

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ İLE BULGARİSTAN CUMHURİYETİ ARASINDA MUTLUDERE/REZOVSKA DERESİ MANSAP BÖLGESİNDEKİ SINIRIN BELİRLENMESİ VE İKİ ÜLKE ARASINDA KARADENİZ'DE DENİZ YETKİ ALANLARININ SINIRLANDIRILMASI ANLAŞMASININ ONAYLANMASININ UYGUN BULUNDUĞUNA DAİR KANUN

(Resmi Gazete ile yayımı:2.6.1998 Sayı: 23360)

Kanun No	**Kabul Tarihi**
4364	**28.5.1998**

MADDE 1. – 4 Aralık 1997 tarihinde Sofya'da imzalanan "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Bulgaristan Cumhuriyeti Arasında Mutludere/Rezovska Deresi Mansap Bölgesindeki Sınırın Belirlenmesi ve İki Ülke Arasında Karadeniz'de Deniz Yetki Alanlarının Sınırlandırılması Anlaşması" nın onaylanması uygun bulunmuştur.

MADDE 2. – Bu Kanun yayımı tarihinde yürürlüğe girer.

MADDE 3. – Bu Kanun hükümlerini Bakanlar Kurulu yürütür.

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ İLE BULGARİSTAN CUMHURİYETİ ARASINDA MUTLUDERE/REZOVSKA DERESİ MANSAP BÖLGESİNDEKİ SINIRIN BELİRLENMESİ VE İKİ ÜLKE ARASINDA KARADENİZ'DE DENİZ YETKİ ALANLARININ SINIRLANDIRILMASI ANLAŞMASI

Bundan böyle "Taraflar" olarak atıfta bulunulacak Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Bulgaristan Cumhuriyeti,

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Bulgaristan Cumhuriyeti arasında 6 Mayıs 1992 tarihinde Ankara'da imzalanan Dostluk, İyi Komşuluk, İşbirliği ve Güvenlik Anlaşmasına dayalı mevcut işbirliğini daha da geliştirmeye istekli olarak,

Taraflar arasında Mutludere/Rezovska Deresi mansap bölgesindeki sınırın belirlenmesi ve dere sularının denize serbest akışını sağlamayı, ayrıca, Karadeniz'de uluslararası hukukun ilgili kuralları uyarınca hükümranlığını, hükümranlık haklarını veya yetkilerini kullandığı deniz alanlarının bütün ilgili faktörler gözönünde bulundurularak kesin ve hakça sınırlandırılmasının yapılmasını kararlaştırmış olarak,

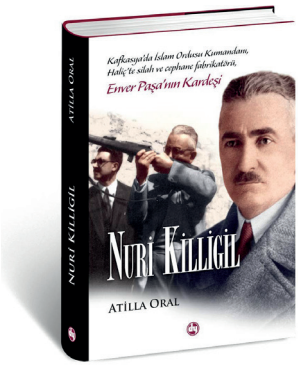
Tarafların yukarıda bahsekonu hususlara yapıcı müzakereler ve iyi komşuluk ruhu içerisinde adil ve karşılıklı kabul edilebilir çözümler sağlanması yolundaki isteklerini gözönüne alarak,

↗
Law No. 4364 (1998) regarding the demarcation of maritime boundaries between Türkiye and Bulgaria in the Black Sea, as published in the Official Gazette.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar visiting Nuri Killigil's grave at the Edirnekapı Military Cemetery.



↘
Özdemir Bayraktar commissioned the printing and distribution of a biography of Nuri Killigil, Commander of the Islamic Army of the Caucasus.



He places national issues at the center of his life and, in conversations with friends, speaks about Cyprus and the Blue Homeland. The civilian initiatives he establishes on both matters are, in truth, an extension of his friendship circles and companionship. He brings together friends who share a national cause, further strengthening the sense of solidarity that comes with being strong together. Companions forged through civilian initiatives, bonds born of shared purpose, old acquaintances...

"Alongside his groundbreaking work in the defense industry, he followed very closely the lives of all those who had worked in defense in the past — important figures in the service of our state. In fact, God rest his soul, he had a book printed on the life story of Nuri Pasha, Commander of the Army of Islam in the Caucasus, and distributed it among us. As a man who, like Nuri Pasha, devoted his entire life to himself, his homeland, and his nation, he has — in my view — entered the pages of history."

In Özdemir Bayraktar, the feeling of friendship and national sentiment are so deeply intertwined that it would be impossible to assess the two separately.

HE ALSO HAD WORK UNDERWAY ON THE STRAITS. WE WOULD OFTEN SPEAK WITH HIM ABOUT HOW THE ÇANAKKALE AND ISTANBUL STRAITS MIGHT BE DEFENDED — HE HAD INVALUABLE WORK ON THE SUBJECT. HE KNEW THE LOCATIONS OF THE FRENCH, BRITISH, AND AUSTRALIAN SHIPS SUNK DURING THE BATTLES OF ÇANAKKALE, AND WOULD ASK: "WHAT IF WE RAISED THESE VESSELS AND PUT THEM ON DISPLAY ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA?" ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT AREA OF OUR WORK TOGETHER WAS THE INTEGRATED USE OF UAVS WITH NAVAL FORCES. WE FOCUSED ON HOW DATA OBTAINED FROM UAVS COULD BE TRANSFERRED TO SUBMARINES. WE ALSO CARRIED OUT IMPORTANT PROJECTS ON THE COORDINATED USE OF UAVS IN AMPHIBIOUS AND AIR-TO-AIR OPERATIONS ALONGSIDE USVS (UNMANNED SURFACE VEHICLES). WE ACTIVELY WORKED ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS UAVS COMMANDING USVS IN SWARM FORMATION, AND THE INTEGRATION OF CONTROL STATIONS INTO VESSELS SO THAT UAVS COULD BE OPERATED FROM SHIPS — AND ACHIEVED VERY SUCCESSFUL RESULTS.

Ercüment Tatlıoğlu

ADMIRAL , COMMANDER OF THE NAVAL FORCES

True Friendships, True Bonds

Özdemir Bayraktar builds his relationships on trust. The fixed foot of his compass rests in trust; the other sweeps freely among people of different cultures and different worldviews. He converses with equal warmth with people of every age and every background. The position, rank, or status of the person before him holds no weight for him. When he finds trust — when he catches the right frequency of mutual understanding — he sustains that connection for years.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar at the Kale Baykar stand, together with Kale Group Chairman of the Board İbrahim Bodur, Osman Okyay, and Haluk Bayraktar. 2017, IDEF.



When he sees that the common ground is service to the country, he begins to cultivate a devoted companionship — a friendship of real worth. He consistently values those who call him ağabey, the young people to whom he plays a fatherly role, and his friends across every rank — from soldiers to generals — always reaching out to check on them. He takes an interest not only in his friends but in their families and their troubles, and works to help resolve their problems. Even with friends whose views are diametrically opposed to his own, he engages in spirited debate — yet because he is always in pursuit of truth, he listens to everyone's opinion, regardless of whether they are his senior or junior. Fatih Kacır — who at the time was an engineer roughly his son's age and would later be appointed Minister of Industry and Technology — describes this quality: "'Özdemir Bayraktar would say, "This is how I interpreted it — how do you see it?" and he genuinely valued your perspective.'"

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar with Arif Çetin, then Commander General of the Gendarmerie.



He loves to talk, to converse, to question — and equally, to be questioned. Some conversations with his friends go on so long that they stay together until someone finally says, "We've caught all the fish this stream has to offer — time to go." Özdemir Bayraktar argues with citation, with conviction, defending his views with courage — and it is easy to argue, even quarrel, with him. But beneath those quarrels lies a deep intention and a persistent question: "How do we become more useful to this country?" "How do we serve this homeland?" "How do we develop this country through indigenous means?" Across an admirable lifetime, his enthusiasm, his energy, and his fighting spirit never run dry. Anyone who met or knew him — even for five minutes — can attest to this.

Sometimes he talks with his friends about the events of the day; other times, about serious matters concerning the country or the world. He picks up a pen and, if he cannot find paper, draws and scribbles on a napkin to illustrate what he is trying to say.



↙
Özdemir Bayraktar with Arif Çetin, then Commander General of the Gendarmerie.

One day they debate at length about a hospital the Ministry of Health is building in Palestine; another day, the idea of constructing a thousand-bed hospital ship; another still, the prospect of raising and exhibiting the ships sunk during the Naval Battles of Çanakkale that still lie on the seabed.

When Özdemir Bayraktar wants to connect with someone, he does so with ease. Yet it is equally true that people sometimes feel a certain apprehension in his presence. His instincts are extraordinarily sharp. When he is explaining something to someone — ideas that, at the time, seem difficult to conceive — he can tell whether they truly believe him or not. He has no patience for false sincerity or dishonesty, and turns sharp in an instant. He pays attention not only to what the person before him says but to how they carry themselves. While he speaks, he notices where their eyes are, what their hands are doing — he observes and draws his own conclusions. He is particularly sensitive to the word zan — conjecture — and will say: "Don't conjecture. Know."

Özdemir Bayraktar's friendship is something to be valued. He honors those he is fond of with wit, and is often a source of delight. When something happens, he invariably reaches for a story from the past and has everyone around him laughing. He calls in the middle of the night: "Come on, we're going out for fish."

UNCLE ÖZDEMIR WOULD SAY: "CONJECTURE IS THE MOST DANGEROUS THING. EVERY DECISION MUST BE GROUNDED IN REASON AND FACT. IF YOU PASS JUDGMENT BY CONJECTURE, PERCEPTION OVERTAKES REALITY. BUT REALITY MUST ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER PERCEPTION. IF YOU DECIDE BY CONJECTURE, PERCEPTION DEFEATS YOU." THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I LEARNED FROM HIM.

Bülent Ardıç

LIEUTENANT COLONEL (RET.)

That you are at home, in your pajamas, and about to sleep is of no concern to him. "Up you get — we're going." When a late-night call comes in, his friends' wives say straight away, "That's Özdemir Bey, isn't it?" — it has become that familiar a routine.

There are times, of course, when he is absorbed in thought and unable to see or attend to his friends. But he is quick to extend a helping hand to the many people — and friends — who find themselves in difficulty. Whoever calls Özdemir Bayraktar, even in his busiest moments, he glances at his phone. And if he cannot answer at that moment, he always calls back.

Just as Özdemir Bayraktar holds justice in the highest regard, he expects the same of his friends. Regardless of where he is, what setting he is in, or who he is speaking to, he expects you to tell the truth. Not incompletely, not with distortion — the truth, in full. He does not compromise on his principles, and when he sees friends behaving wrongly on matters of fundamental importance, he removes them from his life without hesitation.



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Brothers and sisters, together. Left to right: Salih, Nilgün, Özdemir, Ömer Bayraktar.

"EROL IS RIGHT"

Özdemir Bayraktar's generosity is well known to those around him, and he is recognized in Sarıyer for his warm and open-hearted manner. For this reason, people frequently come to him with requests. One such task that falls to him is taking Deli Erol — one of Sarıyer's colorful local characters — to Bakırköy Psychiatric and Neurological Hospital for an examination. He is around thirty-five at the time. Özdemir Bayraktar jumps in the car with his sister Nilgün Hanım and drives Erol to Bakırköy. Never one to hold back from genuine conversation with anyone whose sincerity he believes in, he links arms with Erol and walks him, chatting all the while, to the doctor's office. Erol, for his part, seems perfectly fine. The moment they step inside and Erol catches sight of the doctor, he grabs Özdemir Bayraktar by the arm, gives him a shove, and says: "Get out of here! I caught this illness from you in the first place." The doctor is left speechless.

This mischievous story becomes a recurring source of laughter in family gatherings for years. Ömer Bayraktar, embellishing the tale, adds his own ending — that the doctor said: "Erol, you may go. Özdemir, you stay." Whenever the story is told, Özdemir Bayraktar laughs and rounds it off with: "Erol was right. Erol was right..."



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Özdemir Bayraktar at his desk in his office.

THE TECHNOLOGY IS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE — IT HAS PROVEN ITSELF. BUT THE PROJECT HAS NO SHORTAGE OF OPPONENTS. OR PERHAPS CERTAIN LONG-ESTABLISHED HABITS PERSIST, AND THEY MUST BE BROKEN FREE OF.

AS THE POET SAYS: "SAKARYA, ARE YOU CLIMBING A HILL OR WHAT?" AND INDEED, SUCH A HILL MUST BE CLIMBED. IN THAT STRUGGLE, THE BAYRAKTAR UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE TRULY REPRESENTS SAKARYA. IT REPRESENTS ANATOLIA. IT REPRESENTS THE WILL AND THE CREATIVE FORCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ANATOLIA.

Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
İLİM YAYMA FOUNDATION

Never Straying from What Is Right and Just

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR, DEEPLY AFFECTED BY THE ERGENEKON AND BALYOZ TRIALS THAT SHOOK TÜRKİYE, VISITS THE SOLDIERS HE BELIEVES TO BE INNOCENT.

With his strength of character and identity, his ethics and virtue, Özdemir Bayraktar is a source of inspiration to his friends as well. Many of those around him notice, from time to time, that they have begun to think and act as he does. Never straying from right and justice, keeping one's work free of wrongdoing — these are among the important principles they learn from Özdemir Bayraktar. He expects nothing from the person before him and harbors no fear of harm. His sharp outbursts directed at high-ranking individuals sometimes leave those around him stunned. He does not hesitate to make contact with the wronged, and reaches out to anyone who has the country's future and wellbeing at heart. The measure by which Özdemir Bayraktar stands by someone is not the prospect of personal gain or the risk of personal harm — it is whether that person has been wronged, whether they are in the right or in the wrong. "I say what I know to be true," he says.

Those around him know his commitment to truth, yet — cautiously — warn him: "Don't do it, ağabey. Not every truth can be spoken in every place." During the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, which shook Türkiye deeply, he visits soldiers he believes to be innocent; he stands by those he knows closely — Staff Colonel Mustafa Köseoğlu, Retired Lieutenant General Metin Yavuz Yalçın, Retired Major General Ahmet Yavuz, Retired General Ergin Saygun. He maintains his companionship with them and, as he has done throughout his life, takes a stance grounded in fairness. Alongside his deeply felt sense of solidarity and fellowship, his sense of justice is equally pronounced. He continues to speak and live by what he knows to be right.

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Özdemir Bayraktar with Arif Çetin, then Commander General of the Gendarmerie.



"WE MUST STAND BY THEM"

A friend of Özdemir Bayraktar recounts:

"During the Ergenekon and Balyoz processes, Özdemir Bayraktar once again demonstrated his foresight, his prudence, and his vision. At the time, there was a perception management campaign in the public sphere. During that period, he called me one day, asking for a lawyer, and said, 'Go to Silivri — retired General Ergin Saygun Paşa is inside, caught up in the Balyoz case. I believe he is innocent. A conspiracy is being set up against him. They are against imperialism, and these cases are being used against them,' he said, making a statement of sorts. When I told him, *'When we look at what's written in the newspapers, even if five percent of it is true, how can we defend them — how can we stand beside them?',* he said, '*No, we must support them. We must do whatever we can.'"*

His conduct during the Balyoz and Ergenekon trials is met with both astonishment and gratitude by the friends who were tried in those proceedings and later acquitted. Ahmet Yavuz, who was prosecuted on charges of plotting a coup, recalls those days and Özdemir Bayraktar:

"During the Ergenekon and Balyoz proceedings, I was accused of staging a coup against the government — of drawing up a coup plan. I had attended a seminar held at the First Army. I was one of the First Army's brigade commanders. It was, in other words, a fabricated charge. We understood from the very first day that it was a plot. But they managed to make Türkiye — to make the public — accept this plot."



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Özdemir Bayraktar in his Bayrampaşa workshop.

HE POSSESSED THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL QUALITIES THAT DEFINE A TRUE LEADER: JUSTICE, PRUDENCE, COURAGE, AND RESOLVE. I WITNESSED ALL OF THESE EMBODIED IN THE PERSON OF ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR.

Jekai Aksakalli

LIEUTENANT GENERAL,
COMMANDER OF SPECIAL FORCES (RET.)

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR VALUES BEING JUST AS MUCH AS HE VALUES BEING LOYAL, AND MORE THAN THAT, HE REFLECTS THIS INTENSELY IN HIS FRIENDSHIPS.

"Özdemir Bayraktar had a scientific mind. He was a man of complete moral integrity. That is why he was one of those who did not fall for this game. And on the day I was released from Silivri Prison, Özdemir Bayraktar was among those who came to meet me. He is, in that sense, the very embodiment of loyalty. He was a man who understood the game being played. Özdemir Bayraktar had a scientific mind — but a scientific mind alone is not enough; one must also possess a high moral character. Özdemir Bayraktar combined both. He came to the hearings of his own accord as well. That is another dimension of who he was. He did not come out of obligation — not with the thought, 'We have a connection, I suppose I must show up.' He came because patriotism demanded it."

In keeping with his sense of justice and his patriotism, Özdemir Bayraktar stands by his wronged friends — even when it means standing alone. Retired General Ergin Saygun, himself one of the victims of that period, remembers Özdemir Bayraktar with gratitude: "Another important quality of his — he was a deeply loyal friend, and he was compassionate. Throughout the Balyoz trial process, through the hospital visits, the prison, the court proceedings, he never left me or my family alone. I had to undergo a very serious operation. He waited at the hospital

ⓘ Scan, Watch

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Özdemir Bayraktar with his friends from the Welfare Party. Next to him are Ali Güner and Altan Yavuz.



with my children and my wife until morning. This is something for which I will remember him with loyalty and gratitude for the rest of my life."

Özdemir Bayraktar values loyalty as much as he values justice — and what is more, he reflects this deeply in his friendships. Every feeling he holds for his friends is the product not only of a shared national purpose, but of a profoundly human disposition and a desire to be part of the same story. He is always there for his friends — and even in the most turbulent, storm-ridden days, he sustains his sense of fellowship with unwavering consistency.

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Özdemir Bayraktar, at his home in Sarıyer, at his computer.



A CLEAR STANCE IN THE FACE OF WHAT IS RIGHT

Serdar Yılmaz recalls: "During the Ergenekon and Balyoz process, Brother Özdemir's stance — his approach to events, his reading of people — reflected his characteristic way of standing firm. He did not abandon that stance before, during, or after.

Because for him, there were certain criteria by which a person could be judged good or bad. If, when you applied those criteria to someone, that person came out as good — then it mattered very little to him what anyone else said about them. Ağabey Özdemir did exactly that throughout those processes. If he believed that someone was good — someone everyone else was condemning, someone everyone else had turned against — he stood behind them sincerely, and felt not the slightest discomfort in doing so. His criteria were not ideological; they were measured more by a common denominator. That is to say: the homeland, the nation, the state, human integrity — if someone had no fundamental flaw or failing in relation to these, then what others said about that person mattered very little to Brother Özdemir."

THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE EVENT FOR ME AND MY FAMILY IS THE NIGHT OF JULY 15TH. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR CALLED. IN AN AGITATED VOICE, HE SAID: "YOUR COMMANDOS HAVE SEIZED HALF THE BRIDGE!" I SAID: "AĞABEY, WE HAVE NO COMMANDOS LEFT — THEY ARE ALL IN THE SOUTHEAST. THERE IS NOT A SINGLE COMMANDO OF OURS IN ISTANBUL." HE KEPT ON. I SAID: "AĞABEY, HANG UP." I IMMEDIATELY CALLED HÜSEYİN KURTOĞLU. "HÜSEYİN, WHAT IS HAPPENING?" I ASKED. "COMMANDER, IT APPEARS TO BE A COUP ATTEMPT BY FETÖ," HE SAID. "HANG UP AND IMMEDIATELY INFORM ÖZDEMIR AĞABEY OF THE SITUATION — LET HIM ACT ACCORDINGLY," I SAID. AFTER I HUNG UP, AROUND 23:00–23:30, FOUR TERRORISTS IN OFFICIAL UNIFORM ARRIVED. THEY POINTED THEIR WEAPONS AT MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER AND TOOK ME AWAY. MY PHONES WERE LEFT IN THE ROOM. FROM THAT HOUR ON, ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR CALLED MY FAMILY EVERY FIFTEEN TO TWENTY MINUTES TO KEEP THEIR SPIRITS UP. GOD BLESS HIM. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS A STRAIGHT, TRULY STRAIGHT MAN.

Ata Kalkan

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)



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Baykar's first export, the Bayraktar Mini UAV. From the demo presentation to the Qatari delegation, 2012.

"DID I BEAT YOU UP TOO MUCH?"

His close friend Turgut Şenol describes how their arguments would unfold:

"I and others would sometimes reach a breaking point in our arguments with Özdemir Bayraktar. There were times we hurt him, and times he hurt us. But I cannot recall a single instance where things stayed that way.

Özdemir Bayraktar would somehow pick up the phone and say: 'Did I come down too hard on you yesterday? Did I push too much?' Maybe not the next day — maybe a week later, I would call: 'Özdemir Bey, you really laid into us the other day.'

We would burst out laughing, and the matter would end right there. For Özdemir Bey to truly hold a grudge — that would only be something he could do to an enemy. If even an enemy came to Özdemir Bey with a request, he could not sleep without taking some positive step on their behalf. Because that request had been made to him. Setting it aside was simply not something he was capable of."

The Sea's Rough and Gentle Waves

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR'S TEMPERAMENT — FULL OF WAVES LIKE THE SEA — IS ACCEPTED BY EVERYONE.

Though Özdemir Bayraktar's quick-to-calm heart and his argumentative nature appear to be complete opposites, they are waves of the same sea. It is a harmony all his own. On one occasion, he shouts at his friend Osman Arslan — "You'll break it!" — because gears are grinding. Osman Arslan, by now thoroughly tired of such outbursts, is on the verge of leaving. Özdemir Bayraktar catches him at once. "Don't go, Osman!" he says. His friend is exasperated. He delivers just two sentences: "We argue every single day. I'm leaving." He has almost certainly had a similar moment with nearly every one of his friends.

On another occasion, Özdemir Bayraktar visits a friend. They eat, drink, talk, and a long while passes before Özdemir Bayraktar takes his leave. Once the family's young daughter is certain that Uncle Özdemir has gone, she runs to her father, fixes him with curious eyes, and asks — hoping for an answer: "Papa, you and Uncle Özdemir sit together and argue, and then you hug and say goodbye. I don't understand it." Özdemir Bayraktar's sea-like, wave-filled temperament has by now become something everyone simply accepts.

One day, walking alongside Kale Group General Manager Osman Okyay, Özdemir Bayraktar takes his arm and says: "Look — however harsh I am, however little I mind my manner, you are my exact opposite. You are a gentle, calm man. And yet look: your work doesn't get done, and neither does mine. So it seems this is not a matter of manner at all. Clearly, the two of us walk around together just to prove that point."

IF YOU ASKED, “WHAT UPSET ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR THE MOST?”, THE ANSWER IS CLEAR: THE FETÖ PLOTS AND THE FACT THAT HE COULD NOT DO MORE FOR HIS FRIENDS WHO FELL VICTIM TO THOSE PLOTS. HE TRIED TO HELP THEM IN EVERY WAY HE COULD. HE VISITED THOSE IN PRISON, KEPT THEIR SPIRITS UP, STOOD BY THEM. BUT WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING MORE HE COULD DO, HE FELT THAT HEAVY BURDEN DEEP WITHIN AND WAS DEEPLY SADDENED BY IT.

Ata Kalkan
LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)

Just like the sea, there are also times when Özdemir Bayraktar's turbulent temperament settles into calm. His sons Haluk and Selçuk know that their father has a soft spot for some of his friends and does not get angry with them. For instance, he has a particular weakness for Staff Colonel Mustafa Köseoğlu — because of his patriotism and because of their shared memories in Şırnak Gabar. When there are things that might cause stress or provoke anger, Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar ask Köseoğlu, "You tell our father." Özdemir Bayraktar is, of course, aware of the situation. When he sees him at the door, he says with a smirk, "Did they send you? I have a soft spot for you — I can't get angry," and that is that. He calls his friends, checks on them, looks after them. He is always by their side on special and important days and occasions.

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Özdemir Bayraktar at the Baykar stand at IDEF in 2017. In the photograph are Ömer Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar, Selçuk Bayraktar, then-Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal, and Mustafa Köseoğlu



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Photo taken at IDEF 2017. Left to right: Selçuk Bayraktar, Defense Minister Fikri Işık, Ömer Bayraktar, Özdemir Bayraktar, and Haluk Bayraktar.



ⓘ Scan, Watch

On September 19, Veterans Day, Özdemir Bayraktar calls his friend Murat Caner — a veteran he has mentored and befriended — to honor him. Naturally, to celebrate Veterans Day. His friend says, "Ah, Özdemir Ağabey — you never change. What a wonderful person you are." The two friends share an emotional moment on the phone. His friend glances at the clock: 5:00 PM. He realizes that only Özdemir Bayraktar has called to wish him a happy Veterans Day, and he calls his friend to express his gratitude. Özdemir Bayraktar hangs up. Within an hour, guests begin to arrive from every walk of life — from the district governor to the local representative, from the mayor to the military commander — people who celebrate his veteran friend's Veterans Day with him, who make him feel like the hero he is... Özdemir Bayraktar calls his friend İsmail Yüksek, who is serving as a university rector, about a Cypriot academic. "Do you know this name? Look into it and get back to me," he says. This academic is a woman who, in public forums on the "Blue Homeland," delivers compelling speeches defending Türkiye and Türkiye's values in Cyprus. Özdemir Bayraktar's purpose is to ensure that this academic is not victimized. "Why aren't you protecting a woman like this?" he says to his friend. He says that this academic must be brought back and reinstated at the university, and that protecting such a patriot is vital. In essence, Özdemir Bayraktar wants to see his own sensitivities and awareness of solidarity and mutual aid reflected in his friends as well.

His Benevolence

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR IS ONE OF THOSE RARE SOULS WHO WANTS TO CREATE THE WORLD HE WISHES TO LIVE IN.

In Özdemir Bayraktar's book, a person is valuable simply for being human. His worldly intention is fair; whatever he can do — material or moral aid, support, compassion, care, respect — he carries it forward. Wanting to create the world he wishes to live in, he is one of those rare souls in essence. As both an elder brother and a role model, he embraces those around him with his help, his charity, and his attention — settling in the most precious places in people's hearts. When he is not occupied with work, he looks carefully at those around him and seems to think, "How can I be of use?", "Who can I help?", "How can I fix this situation?"

Spending time with children and giving them pocket money at every opportunity; holding the hands of young people with dreams and supporting their projects; boosting soldiers' morale with pocket money; taking an interest in his friends' material and spiritual problems; walking, taking a breath, and thinking for their sake — all of this comes naturally to him. His nature is one of giving, sharing, and helping. Moreover, he does it so quietly that even his own family does not know whom he is helping. As Ömer Bayraktar puts it:

"When it came to his benevolence, we never knew who he was helping. He had a principle that the left hand should not know what the right hand gives."

Özdemir Bayraktar has many martyrs' families around him in all four corners of Türkiye, and he takes a close personal interest — especially in the children of fallen soldiers. Furthermore, he expects the same sensitivity from his friends.

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Özdemir Bayraktar with his father Lütfü Reis, among friends.



One day, he calls a friend who serves as a university rector and asks, "How can you be a rector and not take an interest in the veteran in your province?" he asks. Another time: "There's a martyr's child in Adana, a university student. Why aren't you looking after that child?" Yet another time: "A martyr's daughter has come to Alanya — take an interest in her. Don't send money — I'll take care of that. Just look out for her, that's enough."

A story that Özdemir Bayraktar always tells his friends reveals the roots of his benevolence. According to his account, there was a man in one of the neighborhoods called Deli Nuri. He used to go to the mosque. During one of the Friday prayers, he went up to the pulpit and asked the imam to let him deliver the sermon. The imam put him off with various excuses. One day, a funeral arrived. Deli Nuri wanted to lead the funeral prayer. The imam again bypassed Deli Nuri. They buried the deceased, and after everyone left, it came time to offer the talqin — the final words of guidance to the departed. Deli Nuri was there too. The imam, seizing the chance to humor Deli Nuri, said, "Come on. You give the talqin."

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Özdemir Bayraktar, with his brothers Ömer and Salih Bayraktar.



ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR SUPPORTED FAMILIES OF MARTYRS ACROSS TÜRKIYE, TAKING PARTICULAR CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Deli Nuri began the talqin: "Peace be upon you. If you did not lie in this world, if you did not eat what is forbidden, if you did not violate anyone's rights, then your business on the other side is settled. But know this: if you received here, you will give there; if you gave here, you will receive there. What you took, you shall give back; what you gave, you shall receive..."

The imam said, "In all my years, I have never heard advice expressed so concisely and so beautifully."

Özdemir Bayraktar reminds both himself and others of the necessity of having a strong conscience — not merely calculating what one gets in return — and helps a great many people along the way.

On one occasion, his friend retired General Ergin Saygun describes the situation in a village to Özdemir Bayraktar: "The children come to school, but they can't go home at lunchtime because it's too far. They eat whatever they can find in the fields — tomatoes, cucumbers. 'Let those children have a proper meal,' he said, and he sent money and arranged help for that place. A school's roof blew off — he had it repaired. It wouldn't be known that he was the one behind it, but that was his rule. He helped, and no one ever knew it came from him. Whenever he learned that an acquaintance — or even someone he'd only heard of by name — had a sick wife, he'd rush to help however he could. He was a warm-hearted, good-hearted person."

"Upholding what is right is our life's purpose."

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR



↘ Özdemir Bayraktar with Arif Çetin, then Commander General of the Gendarmerie, and a group of local children.

HELPING TO THE POINT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

The year is 1993. Yusuf Tülün has taken office as deputy mayor at Bağcılar Municipality following the 1992 local elections. Özdemir Bayraktar comes to visit him. Let us hear the rest from Tülün himself:

"By then, we were exhausted from drinking tea with every visitor and listening to everyone's problems — particularly those in my district. Each person who came would tell their troubles and explain their needs. I noticed that Özdemir Bayraktar would silently reach into his pocket. He would pull something from his palm and press it into the hand of whoever had come with a need or an expectation, and send them on their way. The next person in line would come in and tell their problems. Again, Özdemir Bayraktar would reach into his pocket, press something into their palm, and off they would go. Eventually, after so many people that I lost count, Özdemir Bayraktar stopped reaching into his pocket. When I sent off the last person I had been listening to, I said, 'Özdemir Ağabey, what do we do now?' Özdemir Ağabey believed in giving whatever he had. As one of the qualities of a Muslim, he had embraced the principle of helping to the point where it hurts — of sacrificing from what is dearest to you. Whatever Özdemir Bayraktar had, he considered it his duty to share it with those in need. This was the fulfillment of his faith, the essence of his belief."

"ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR WAS DEEPLY MOVED — HE TOOK OUT WHATEVER MONEY HE HAD IN HIS POCKET AND PLACED IT IN FRONT OF THE SOLDIER."

Politician Mahmut Vanlıoğlu, appearing as a guest on a television program, shares that the district where he has just become mayor is in dire need — so much so that a child had frozen to death just recently — and that he has launched the necessary efforts and campaigns to address the situation. Özdemir Bayraktar is among those who wake for the pre-dawn meal, turn on the television, and hear what his friend Vanlıoğlu has to say. He calls Vanlıoğlu immediately and begins, with pointed irony, to reproach him: "What right do you have to disturb us like this in the middle of the night? We had eaten our meal in peace at home and were about to drift off to sleep — what right do you have to rob us of that peace?" he says. He then asks whether what Vanlıoğlu has described is true. Vanlıoğlu replies: "If you want to see for yourself, come with me one evening — we'll go around the district and you'll see." The following day, Özdemir Bayraktar arrives at the municipality with his son Ahmet Bayraktar. As evening draws in, they begin making their way through the district. Mahmut Vanlıoğlu continues the story:

"We entered the home of a soldier who had lost his foot during his military service in the East. The soldier was covered with a tarpaulin, and because he was ill, they had turned an electric heater toward him and were trying to keep him warm. We could find nowhere to sit in the house and stood there, rooted to the spot. Özdemir Bayraktar was deeply moved. He took out whatever money he had in his pocket and placed it in front of the soldier. We were all deeply moved. We walked through the district until three in the morning that night. Özdemir Bayraktar was a truly generous man — a truly open-handed brother. I believe he joined us for five or six nights of our work during that Ramadan."



↖
Photo taken during the visit of Arif Çetin, then General Commander of the Gendarmerie, to Baykar. Also pictured are Özdemir Bayraktar, Ömer Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar, and Selçuk Bayraktar.

A LEGACY FROM HIS FATHER, LÜTFÜ BEY

Ömer Bayraktar describes how utterly unstinting Özdemir Bayraktar was in matters of generosity — and how this quality passed to him from their father Lütfü Bey:

"My brother had bought a historic building by the sea in Sarıyer and was having it restored. Our late father, Lütfü Bey, used to work there like a laborer. He would come home for lunch at midday, covered head to toe in dust. One day, as he was walking home from the construction site in that state, he was passing by Telli Baba when a brand-new Mercedes pulled up beside him on its way back from Telli Baba. The man got out, reached into the boot, and pulled out votive roosters and chickens. He held them out to my father. 'Uncle, take these — you can feed them to the children at home,' he said. My father looked at him and said: 'You are very kind, God bless you. But if I take these chickens home and feed them to the children, and the children develop a taste for chicken — where would I ever find you again? So give these chickens to someone more in need a little further along.' And of course, he didn't take them. Our father would never turn anyone away empty-handed. Rather than simply saying 'I have no need,' he found a way to honor the man's gesture — and in doing so, he was teaching my brother something as well. He was a man who knew how to share, who gave away whatever he had beyond his own needs. Some of that passed on to my brother."

I KNOW VERY WELL — THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THEY HAD EXHAUSTED EVERY LAST PENNY. BUT THEY NEVER STOPPED. AT ONE POINT, HE SAID SOMETHING VERY BEAUTIFUL TO ME: “WE'VE STARTED MAKING MONEY NOW. AND NOW WE'RE GOING TO START HELPING PEOPLE TOO. IF YOU LET US KNOW WHO IS IN NEED, I WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL.”

Ata Kalkan

LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RET.)

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR SENDS COUNTLESS TURKISH FLAGS TO POLICE STATIONS, POLICE DIRECTORATES, BRIGADES, AND BORDER UNITS.

There are soldiers whom Özdemir Bayraktar supports financially, but they receive this aid under the name of "pocket money" and do not know it comes from Özdemir Bayraktar. He demonstrates his support for and devotion to the Turkish soldier in every way, and instills this feeling in those around him as well. When delivering his aid, Özdemir Bayraktar says, "Look, don't tell anyone — you distribute it to the right places. This stays between you and me." He makes his donations without hurting anyone's pride or making a show of it. On one occasion, the subject becomes the mosque of the Corps Command in Çorlu. Alparslan Erdoğan, the Corps Commander at the time, recounts:

"During my time as corps commander in Çorlu, our unit had a mosque. The carpets had worn out — no budget, no funds. The mosque was in need of maintenance and repair. Özdemir Bayraktar heard about the situation and called: 'Commander, have the mosque's carpets replaced and the maintenance carried out. Send me the invoice.' That was all. We replaced all the carpets in our mosque and met its needs. We sent the invoice to Özdemir Bayraktar."

Özdemir Bayraktar, who considers it his duty to see the Turkish flag fly for eternity, sends countless Turkish flags to police stations, police directorates, brigades, and border units. He gives them to people around him, to his friends, and even to his friends' children. So much so that at Baykar's first workshop in Bayrampaşa, there is still a Turkish flag waiting there.



↗
From the photographs of the Bayraktar TB2 during Operation Olive Branch.

"DON'T LET MY NAME BE MENTIONED"

Brigadier General Kemal Kırış recalls:

"Throughout the [Olive Branch and Euphrates Shield] Operations, he would call frequently and ask: 'Is there anything I can help with?' On one occasion he called again and said: 'I want to help these soldiers — the Mehmetçiks — with some pocket money.'

Because company commanders closely follow the family circumstances of the soldiers in their units, they know which ones receive no money from home and which are in financial difficulty. I told him we had no such existing practice, but that I could inquire with our base command about the list of accounts opened for military service and, if deemed appropriate, send it to him. He was very pleased with what I said. In the end, his proposal was approved and we drew up the lists. In the first instance, a list of 800 people — and, as we later learned, he deposited considerable sums per person into their accounts. He had, of course, asked that his name not be mentioned to the soldiers."

ⓘ Scan, Watch

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR HAD AN INCREDIBLE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS. HE WAS A PERSON WHO COULD EMPATHIZE WITH EVERY SEGMENT OF SOCIETY, WHO COULD TALK TO EVERYONE. EVEN WITH THOSE WHOSE WORLDVIEW WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM HIS OWN, HE HAD ONLY ONE RED LINE: HOMELAND, FLAG, NATION. IF THE PERSON BEFORE HIM HAD NO ISSUE WITH THOSE VALUES, ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR WOULD SIT DOWN WITH THEM, TALK, AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND THEM. THAT WAS THE DEEP CONSCIENCE WITHIN HIM.

Bülent Arduç

LIEUTENANT COLONEL (RET.)

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar giving a tour of the İkitelli workshop to Murat Bayar, then Undersecretary of Defense Industries, with his sons Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet Bayraktar.



Work Is One Thing, Friendship Is Another...

A saying circulates about Özdemir Bayraktar at the factory: "Özdemir Bayraktar works until the early hours of the morning, and when sleep comes, he uses the machine as his pillow." Those who know him are, of course, well aware of how hard he works. Some of his close friends are even people he does business with. Over time, business relationships turn into friendships. His rapport with his employees is always good. They do not snap to attention or stand at the ready just because Özdemir Bayraktar arrives. Everyone goes about their work comfortably, and when Özdemir Bayraktar comes by, he asks a question. He addresses the person in front of him by name when asking, and if they have a question for him, he gives his answer. He is not someone who directs and manages his workers from above — he is someone who works alongside them.

↘
Defense Minister Vecdi Gönül and officials from the Undersecretariat of Defense Industries visiting the İkitelli workshop in 2009.



It is impossible for anyone to speak incorrectly or carelessly in Özdemir Bayraktar's presence without being noticed. "Don't guess — look it up and give me an answer" is his signature phrase. True to his nature, he never lets a day pass without raising his voice, getting angry, or calling someone out. "If you don't know, don't answer — say 'I'll look into it, I'll find out, and then I'll explain,'" he says.

He does not tolerate mistakes in business. Özdemir Bayraktar wants things to always be perfect and to keep moving forward. Even a single word can be enough to anger him. When working with his sons, the father-son dynamic is set aside: whether Selçuk gets taken on or Haluk gets taken down is of no concern. His sons have long since accepted this as well.



For Özdemir Bayraktar, who builds his character through his actions, nothing is more important than getting the job done right and fast. The job must be completed swiftly so the next one can begin. He sees nothing beyond his work — because his work is far more than a profession or an occupation. Türkiye, which is approaching and even exceeding what he has always envisioned, will keep striving, and neither his advancing age nor his health problems will stand in his way. The second half of the 2010s are the years when both his sacrifices reach their peak and Türkiye fully grasps the significance of what Özdemir Bayraktar has accomplished. At the threshold of a new era in which Türkiye plays a leading role, Özdemir Bayraktar preserves the same excitement he had in his twenties.



↗
The Bayraktar TB2 performing a mission with live munitions.



At the Threshold of a New Era

With the stability it has gained in recent years, Türkiye begins to play a more active and powerful role in regional security. The contribution of indigenous and national technologies developed in the defense industry — particularly UAVs and UCAVs — to the preservation and strengthening of this stability cannot be denied. The Bayraktar TB2, as one of the most significant examples of these technologies, transforms the role it plays in Türkiye's domestic and foreign security affairs and becomes a key actor in strategic operations.

Having entered the Turkish Armed Forces inventory in 2014, the impact of the Bayraktar TB2 is first felt in the Trench operations in November 2015. Rapidly deployed in the field, the Bayraktar TB2 plays a significant part in the success of these counterterrorism operations.

This period marks a turning point in terms of both testing the Bayraktar TB2 and recognizing the critical role it will play in future operations. In particular, the performance demonstrated by a domestically produced UAV under such challenging field conditions becomes a pioneering story for larger and more strategic operations. The Bayraktar TB2's early success in deployment reshapes Türkiye's security strategies and operational capabilities.

Özdemir Bayraktar and the Baykar team have worked for years with great dedication to develop unmanned aerial vehicle technology. With both material and moral sacrifices, and with Özdemir Bayraktar pressing forward on this path even at the risk of his own health, the Bayraktar TB2 is finally deployed in the right place at the right time. The labor of years finds its reward on the battlefield.



↖
Live footage transmission from the operational theater with the Bayraktar TB2, EFES 2018 Exercise.



↗
Bayraktar Akıncı and TB2 together in the sky.

The Bayraktar TB2 is not merely a technological product — it becomes a symbol of Türkiye's quest for independence. The Bayraktar family's vision elevates Türkiye to the status of a country with a voice among the global players in the defense industry. Operation Euphrates Shield, which begins in 2016, is one of the first major steps Türkiye takes toward securing its borders and ensuring regional stability. In this operation, the Bayraktar TB2 is used effectively in clearing terrorist elements, demonstrating Türkiye's cross-border operational capability. The subsequent Operation Olive Branch in 2018 puts the Bayraktar TB2's power and effectiveness even more squarely in the spotlight. During the clearing of terrorist elements from Afrin, the Bayraktar TB2 becomes one of the most critical elements in accelerating military success on the ground and marking the operation's turning point. It takes on a role not only in reconnaissance and surveillance but also as a lead actor in active combat operations, playing a decisive part in bringing the operation to a successful conclusion.

Operation Peace Spring, carried out in 2019, is conducted with the aim of neutralizing the terrorist corridor in Syria and the terrorist elements in the region. In this operation, the Bayraktar TB2 once again proves its strength and effectiveness on the battlefield.

The Bayraktar TB2 does not merely protect borders — it becomes an element that shifts the strategic balance along Türkiye's southern frontier. The leading role played by UCAVs during operations elevates the Bayraktar TB2 from a mere support tool, making it a primary element of warfare.

The Spring Shield Operation of 2020, meanwhile, comes to the fore as a campaign in which the Bayraktar TB2 makes its mark on the history of warfare. In this operation, Bayraktar TB2s fly in a joint operational concept as formations, setting a first in world military history. Having previously served as a combat support element, the UAVs, together with Spring Shield, become a principal combat element. The Bayraktar TB2's success in these operations proves not only Türkiye's military capabilities but also its technological independence to the entire world.

In conclusion, the impact and transformative power of the Bayraktar TB2 in operations lends speed and effectiveness to Türkiye's military campaigns. From Euphrates Shield to Spring Shield, the role the Bayraktar TB2 plays in every operation reinforces Türkiye's strategic strength in the region and underscores the success of its defense industry. The Bayraktar TB2 goes down in history as a key technology in Türkiye's pursuit of an independent policy. This process becomes a symbol of Türkiye's determination in the defense industry and its quest for regional stability.

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS TRULY ONE OF THE RARE FEW WHO FEARED ONLY GOD. HE FEARED NOTHING ELSE. HE WALKED WITH RESOLVE, NEVER RETREATING FROM HIS CONVICTIONS OR THE TRUTHS HE KNEW. THIS PERSISTENT AND SELFLESS WORK GAVE RISE TO A PRODUCT OF THE HIGHEST TECHNOLOGICAL CALIBER. THAT PRODUCT WAS NOT MERELY A TECHNOLOGY — IT WAS A PARADIGM SHIFT. IT LED TO THE REDEFINITION OF NATIONS, FORCES, AND BATTLEFIELD TACTICS IN THE DOMAINS OF WAR AND DEFENSE. A SOLUTION THAT CALLED INTO QUESTION DECADES OF CONVENTIONAL INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGY, IT BECAME AN AGILE, FAST, LOW-COST FORCE THAT MINIMIZED LOSS OF LIFE. IT DELIVERED A PROFOUND GAIN — NOT ONLY FOR OUR COUNTRY, BUT FOR FRIENDLY AND ALLIED NATIONS AND FOR THE ISLAMIC WORLD. AS IT WAS DEPLOYED, ITS IMPACT ON THE BATTLEFIELD BECAME CLEAR, AND IT EVOLVED INTO A PRODUCT ADMIRED THE WORLD OVER.

Haluk Görgün

PRESIDENT OF DEFENSE INDUSTRIES

Against Oppression, Beyond Borders

On the Side of Legitimacy and Peace

The civil war in Libya becomes one of the turning points in the Bayraktar TB2's effective use in the international arena. In 2019, under the agreement Türkiye signs with the Libyan Government of National Accord, it begins providing military support to the legitimate government. In the fight against Khalifa Haftar's forces, who are attempting to seize power through a coup, Bayraktar TB2s assume a strategic role. The withdrawal of Haftar's forces shifts the balance, and with the aerial support Türkiye provides through the Bayraktar TB2, the Government of National Accord's victory is accelerated. This resonates across different parts of Africa as well. In Mali, security forces combating terrorism turn to these systems, which deliver effective and reliable results in the field. In Ethiopia, Bayraktar TB2s are deployed during the most critical phases of the conflict; over time, they become an element that influences the course of fighting. At many points across Africa, Türkiye is now recognized not merely as a producer but as a trusted partner in times of need.

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Bayraktar TB2 in the sky.



Karabakh: The Technology That Changed the Course of War

One of the most defining conflicts in which the Bayraktar TB2 played a role is the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War of 2020. The Bayraktar TB2 becomes the decisive element in the campaign Azerbaijan launches to reclaim its territories. Unlike conventional instruments of war, whose maneuverability is limited in mountainous terrain, the Bayraktar TB2s provide the Azerbaijani army with a major advantage. Neutralizing 535 out of 772 targets against Armenian forces over the course of 44 days of fighting, the Bayraktar TB2 plays a critical role in the liberation of Karabakh. This success enables the Bayraktar TB2s to go down in the history of warfare as the first "war won by UAVs."

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Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev presents the Karabakh Medal to Selçuk Bayraktar on April 1, 2021, for his contribution to the development of the TB2 UCAVs, and to Haluk Bayraktar on June 15, 2021.



Following the war, Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev honors the individuals who contributed to this success with the Karabakh Medal. On April 1, 2021, Selçuk Bayraktar is presented with the medal for his technical leadership; on June 15, 2021, Haluk Bayraktar receives the medal for his contribution to Turkish-Azerbaijani relations. Likewise, Özdemir Bayraktar is also deemed worthy of the Karabakh Medal for his years of effort and pioneering role. However, unable to attend the ceremony due to his health, his son Selçuk Bayraktar accepts the medal on his behalf.

Haluk Bayraktar describes his father's heartfelt bond with the Karabakh cause:

"In my father's final days, whenever the subject came up, even just saying 'We couldn't give them helicopters back then — later we gave them UCAVs' would bring him to life for a moment. That story moved him deeply."









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Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev presents the Order of Karabakh to Selçuk Bayraktar (1 April 2021) and Haluk Bayraktar (15 June 2021) for their contributions to the development of the Bayraktar TB2.

BAYRAKTAR TB2S CHANGED TÜRKİYE'S STRATEGY. NOT JUST OURS — THEY EVEN CHANGED AZERBAIJAN'S STRATEGY. TÜRKİYE HAS NOW BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT ACTORS IN UAV AND UCAV TECHNOLOGY. THIS SUCCESS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S PERSISTENCE AND BELIEF.

Orhan Öge

FORMER DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY
FOR DEFENSE INDUSTRİES

Ukraine: A Symbol of the Struggle for Independence

During the Russia-Ukraine war that began in 2021, the Bayraktar TB2 becomes a symbol of Ukraine's resistance. The Bayraktar procurement campaigns launched to support the people's struggle become an example of international solidarity. Baykar reinforces the strength and meaning of this cause further by donating the Bayraktar TB2s free of charge — the very aircraft that the donation campaigns had aimed to purchase. The Bayraktar TB2 becomes a symbol of hope across the world, giving voice to the oppressed and to justice.



↙
A Bayraktar TB2 UCAV belonging to the Ukrainian Air Force.



↙
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky shaking hands with Özdemir Bayraktar. Haluk Bayraktar is also present.

↘
In Ukraine, the poster symbolizing "Bayraktar TB2 Flying Girl" reflects the people's resistance and struggle for freedom in an artistic expression.

Marches are composed in its honor by Ukrainian soldiers. Haluk Bayraktar and Selçuk Bayraktar are presented with state decorations by the Ukrainian government in recognition of their contributions to Ukraine's struggle for independence. The dreams Özdemir Bayraktar built have now converged with the vision of a new and greater Türkiye.

The vision of a greater Türkiye speaks to a country that is strong, clear-eyed, and resolute — both in domestic and foreign policy, with its feet firmly on the ground. Türkiye's stance during the Russia-Ukraine war — opposing the occupation, standing on the side of peace, and maintaining a conciliatory posture — is the finest example of this. That stance both demonstrated Türkiye's strength and earned the admiration of the international community for the way in which that strength was exercised.



HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO SUCCEED. BUT HIS GOAL WAS NEVER TO MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY. WHAT MATTERED TO HIM WAS ACHIEVEMENT ITSELF. THE POINT HE WANTED TO PROVE WAS THIS: "I AM AN EXCEPTIONAL ENGINEER, AND I WILL SHOW THE WORLD."

Mehmet Seymenoğlu

BUSINESSMAN, ENGINEER (CLOSE FRIEND)



↙
This stamp, featuring the Bayraktar TB2, was printed by PTT in 2017.

A Pioneer in Every Aspect of Life

A Mind That Transformed Türkiye

As a leader who takes revolutionary steps in the world of Turkish engineering, Özdemir Bayraktar integrates the mindset of an engineer into every area of his life throughout his career. Even as a young engineer freshly graduated from İTÜ — one who could already deploy his abilities and talents at the highest level — he believes that he and his nation can always accomplish great things, and he builds his entire struggle on the premise of proving the statement: "We can do this."

Bayraktar's technical genius makes him not only an architect of engineering but also an architect of societal progress. Rather than leaving knowledge on the surface, he always strives to grasp the essence of matters through deep research and analysis. His disciplined approach allows him to develop original solutions in engineering projects and technological innovations. He questions everything that is dismissed as "the way it's always been done" and proposes alternative solutions by seeking new paths beyond established and accepted norms.

In this way, he pioneers projects that prioritize Türkiye's independence — especially in the development of indigenous and national technology — by keeping the reduction of foreign dependency at the forefront.Özdemir Bayraktar's entire struggle is dedicated, in the fullest sense of the word, to the development of indigenous and national technology — giving his very life to the cause. He devotes himself to this mission, convinced that Turkish youth, with the right education and proper understanding, will produce technology suited to the task, and that these technologies will make Türkiye prosperous and fully independent. He is deeply committed, patient, and at the same time extremely persistent in turning his dreams into reality. His fight — against the difficulties he encounters, his resistance to obstacles, and the battles he wages — never ceases.

For Özdemir Bayraktar, engineering is not merely a technical profession but a philosophy of life. Before embarking on any new project, he meticulously examines every detail and works to resolve every problem he encounters, down to its finest point. The fact that the methods he develops achieve success gives him the conviction that "We can do it." This conviction does not only shape Özdemir Bayraktar's own life — it creates a revolution in the lives of everyone around him as well. From the engineers he trains to the young people he inspires, he works with all his might to instill this belief in everyone.





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Photo from the Advanced Technologies in Aviation Symposium (HITEK 2004).

THE REVERSE-OPERATING COMPOSITE OVEN

The specialized ovens used in composite parts manufacturing are known as "composite ovens," and there are many firms around the world that produce them. Yet when manufacturing parts for the TB1 and TB2 aircraft to be delivered to the Turkish Armed Forces, the Baykar team chooses to build their own oven rather than procure one externally. This work is carried out in İkitelli.

The oven they build is unlike anything conventional. Normally, the part is placed inside the oven. Here, the part remains stationary; the oven moves toward the part on large wheels underneath it, the lid closes, and the process begins. Özdemir Bayraktar describes this approach with a grin: "That's how a Laz thinks." The logic is simple: if making aircraft requires an oven, then we build the oven too.

This approach is not limited to the oven. Even the electrical outlets in the control cabin bear the inscription "Baykar Makina." The aircraft's servos are also produced in-house. Normally, motors and servos can simply be purchased off the market and fitted — but the Baykar team notices that the available servos do not run smoothly enough, their movements jerky and discontinuous. Wanting a system with softer, more precise motion, they design and manufacture the servos themselves.

As a result of this philosophy, the indigenous content ratio rises significantly. According to an assessment by the Defense Industry Agency, the aircraft's national content ratio stands at 93%. Osman Okyay sums it up:

"Imagine a massive oven on wheels. The part stays in place, the oven comes over it, the lid closes, and the process is carried out. You could think about it for a long time with conventional engineering logic and it would never occur to you. But for them, it is perfectly natural. The parts for the first twelve aircraft were produced this way. Building a system like that from scratch is something else entirely. In the end, you find yourself asking: does a company that makes aircraft also make ovens? They do."



↘ During the work at İkitelli.

A Transformation to Be Achieved Together

One of Özdemir Bayraktar's most important qualities is his tendency to reject established knowledge and assumptions. With an inquisitive nature, he does not confine himself to topics within his own field of interest but takes an interest in projects that will benefit Türkiye in every domain. His broad perspective makes him a thinker who reaches different segments of society. He has the mindset of someone who never backs down on any subject, who starts from scratch like a student, always working and open to learning.

His brother Ömer Bayraktar, himself a mechanical engineer, describes with admiration how Özdemir Bayraktar worked on the aircraft being developed: "These designs could not have been made without knowledge of aerodynamics and aircraft dynamics. My brother possessed more knowledge about aircraft design than many an aircraft engineer — that always amazed me.



He researched, he read. He made all of these designs taking all those calculations into account. That is precisely why those aircraft were always successful in their first trials and first flights. The initial tests were done in a wind tunnel before the actual flight was conducted." Bayraktar never shies away from conducting in-depth research on a subject he does not know. For example, his interest in strategically important projects for Türkiye — such as Defense Industry projects, submarine defense systems, or developments in the energy sector — is a reflection of his engineering acumen and broad vision. He presents new ideas to pioneers of the naval defense industry like Ekber Onuk, engaging in lengthy, spirited discussions and exchanges of ideas with him on topics such as "Can we build a large composite attack boat with advanced composites?" He takes a keen interest in Türkiye's drilling activities in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, establishes contacts with engineers working on those ships, asks them questions about their fields, and emphasizes the importance of these projects on every platform.



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Photo from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's 4 February 2018 visit to the UAV Base in Batman.

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Left to right: Ahmet Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Selçuk Bayraktar, Özdemir Bayraktar. MÜSİAD, 2009.



For him, engineering is a profession without boundaries; playing an active role in every area where Türkiye has a need and contributing to the future are among his greatest objectives. This approach underscores the importance of collective contributions and collective intellect in carrying Türkiye's engineering and technological standing further forward. Bayraktar believes not only in individual effort but in a technological future that will develop through the collective labor of all of Türkiye. This collective endeavor, which forms the foundation of the National Technology Initiative, defines the critical role of technology in Türkiye's struggle for independence.

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The Bayraktar TB2 stands before the Turkish flag.



ADDING VALUE FOR TÜRKİYE

One of Özdemir Bayraktar's friends describes the support he extended to companies working on products that would open new horizons for Türkiye:

"He would even give companies that would become his competitors his own technology and know-how so that they could develop themselves technologically. No other commercial company would ever share knowledge with a firm that could become its rival. But Özdemir Bey — if someone in that field was producing something, he would go to them without fail. He would provide them with CNC support, software support, or sometimes financial support. Özdemir Ağabey gave a great deal of support in this way. As long as he believed that an institution in Türkiye would create added value, he would support it as if it were his own company. He placed great value on people who produce — regardless of what background they came from, he would do everything in his power to support them. He attached enormous importance to production."

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR'S DEEPEST CONVICTION WAS THIS: MAY THIS COUNTRY REMAIN INDEPENDENT, UPHOLD ITS NATIONAL VALUES, STAND BY ITS PEOPLE — AND MAY THERE BE NO OBSTACLE TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE WHO ARE BOUND TO THESE VALUES.

Prof. Dr. İsmail Göksel

RECTOR EMERITUS

For Future Generations

Özdemir Bayraktar's pioneering role in engineering endeavors is not limited to technical achievements alone. He places great importance on the training of young engineers and, by blazing difficult trails like an "icebreaker," aims to set an example for future generations. From Baykar's earliest days, he interacts closely with the engineers he recruits, contributing to their development. This personal attention and mentorship shapes not only the technical skills of young engineers but also their professional ethics and sense of responsibility. Bayraktar places particular importance on the training of intern engineers. While most companies generally view interns as a burden, Bayraktar sees them as the engineers of the future and gives each one individual attention.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar with Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar.



↘
Haluk Bayraktar speaks with a group of young people about the Bayraktar TB2.



That Baykar consistently hosts more intern engineers than any other firm is a reflection of this philosophy. Under Özdemir Bayraktar's guidance, these young engineers take meaningful steps toward building the Türkiye of the future. Each one, in his view, will go on to draw from Özdemir Bayraktar's technical knowledge and vision — advancing as a pioneer who will contribute to Türkiye's National Technology Initiative. For him, engineering is not confined to individual achievement; true engineering requires contributing to the shaping of future generations.

The many who have witnessed the struggle of Özdemir Bayraktar — who placed his talents and vision in service of "a Türkiye that can succeed" — and of the Baykar team, with their extraordinary effort and sacrifice, will no longer even pause to ask: "Can we do this?"

For before them stands an example as devoted, as steadfast, and as selfless as Özdemir Bayraktar. When one looks at the story as a whole, Özdemir Bayraktar's true concern is not so much the making of armed unmanned aerial vehicles as it is the ability to close the distance between Türkiye and the technologies and shifting paradigms of the age. Taking up the mantle of "Bayraktar" (standard bearer) and instilling his passion in his children, Özdemir Bayraktar — as a pioneer and a leader — opens this path for many a brilliant mind, and in a deeper sense, for Türkiye itself.

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Özdemir Bayraktar and Ömer Bayraktar inspecting a small-scale prototype of the Bayraktar TB1 at the İkitelli workshop.



Taking a remark made at a meeting of the Defense Industries Undersecretariat as an obstacle and weeping — "This is my life's purpose" — never returning home after seeing how soldiers lived in the mountains, sleeping and waking for years in a windowless room in his workshop, moving his hospital bed into his factory, feeling deeply, with every hardship he faced, as though he were casting wheat seeds onto concrete — yet never for a single moment abandoning the sowing, striving with struggle and effort to break through that concrete, saying "My work is not in triumph, but in the striving" — devoting his life and every resource he had to Türkiye: this is how he opens the path.



I NEVER ONCE HEARD ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR COMPLAIN. NOT ONCE. CAN A PERSON TRULY NEVER GRUMBLE? HE WOULD GET ANGRY, YES — HE WOULD REACT. BUT HE NEVER COMPLAINED, NEVER LAMENTED HIS LOT. IT HAD NO PLACE IN HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. HE WOULD THINK: "IF I CAN DO SOMETHING FOR MY COUNTRY, I WILL. BUT IN DOING SO, THERE IS MARTYRDOM — AND THERE IS COMING THROUGH WOUNDED."

Osman Okyay

VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, KALE GROUP

In Search of a Foundation for National Service

Özdemir Bayraktar believes that every product he creates and every success he achieves belongs not to him alone, but to the Turkish nation. For him, technological advancement finds its true meaning not in individual gain but in societal benefit. He therefore begins searching for ways to channel the proceeds and achievements back to society. His philanthropy is part of this understanding — yet his vision extends beyond it, aiming for a deeper and more enduring contribution.

THE DREAM OF A FOUNDATION THAT OPERATES LIKE A COMPANY

A friend summarizes what transpired in response to Özdemir Bayraktar's idea of transforming Baykar into a foundation: *"I had opposed the idea at the time, on the grounds that as a foundation it would not be able to operate as freely as a joint-stock company — that far more varied factors could obstruct the foundation's work — and that it would therefore be better positioned to act commercially as a joint-stock company. We stopped him then. But later, so that many more 'Baykars' might be built, we established the Turkish Technology Team Foundation with Özdemir Ağabey's support and guidance. And we established a foundation through which the majority of Baykar's profits would be channeled — toward the production and proliferation of similar technological products in Türkiye, and toward the training and education of young people capable of producing them."*

Bayraktar's Legacy: The Turkish Technology Team Foundation

The establishment of the T3 Foundation emerges as a reflection of Özdemir Bayraktar's sense of responsibility toward society. Under Özdemir Bayraktar's pioneering leadership, and with the contributions of Haluk Bayraktar, Selçuk Bayraktar, and founding team member Fatih Kacır, the Turkish Technology Team Foundation is established on December 12, 2016.

The Foundation aims to make the production of technology products lasting and genuine; to bring about societal transformation in this field; to support research, development, and entrepreneurial activity; and to bring the National Technology Initiative to life. It sustains its activities through its own resources, accepting no external donations.

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Left to right: Fatih Kacır, Selçuk Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar, T3 Foundation's establishment, 2016.



ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WOULD SAY:

"MY WORK IS IN THE STRIVING, NOT THE TRIUMPH. TRIUMPH IS A GIFT FROM GOD — IT COMES IF IT COMES. BUT MY DUTY IS TO SET OUT ON THE CAMPAIGN. WE DO WHAT WE CAN; IF GOD WILLS VICTORY, GOD GRANTS IT."

Mustafa Köseoğlu

STAFF COLONEL (RET.), BAYKAR DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

The T3 Foundation develops training programs in areas such as entrepreneurship, creative and critical thinking, effective communication, and teamwork — with the aim of contributing to the cultural transformation of children and young people. Taking as its guide Necmettin Erbakan's words, "One flower does not make a spring," it holds that individual effort alone will not suffice for Türkiye's future. The Foundation's core intention is to deepen young people's engagement with technology and to provide them with an environment in which they can bring their projects to life.

DENEYAP Technology Workshops — one of the Foundation's first projects — becomes one of the initiatives that excites Özdemir Bayraktar most, through the opportunities it offers to aspiring young engineers. These projects are a reflection of the National Technology Initiative he believed in and worked toward throughout his life. Seeing young people forge a connection with technology and broaden their vision is among his most deeply held aspirations.

"FROM NO ONE..."

In the days when the Turkish Technology Team Foundation is about to be established, the founding board of trustees gathers at the workshop in İkitelli. As the deed of foundation is being discussed, Özdemir Bayraktar joins the meeting and listens in silence for a while. Then he speaks — and his first words are:

"You will accept donations from no one."

In such moments, Özdemir Bayraktar often reaches for the words of Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz: *A mistake made in the first deployment carries through to the end of the war."*

ⓘ Scan, Watch

He makes clear that the Foundation must be financed solely by its founders — and that if it were not, he would oppose its establishment from the outset. And so it is: the Turkish Technology Team Foundation operates without support from any external source, financed solely by its founders.

DENEYAP Technology Workshops

DENEYAP Technology Workshops were launched in 2017 under the "Technology Stars of the Future Program" within the Turkish Technology Team Foundation. First opened in Istanbul, the number of DENEYAP Technology Workshops has grown steadily. Operating through the Ministry of Industry and Technology, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and TÜBİTAK, they begin operating with over one hundred workshops across all 81 provinces. Realized in line with Türkiye's National Technology Initiative vision, the DENEYAP Workshops provide training to middle school and high school students.

Selected students receive free technology education over a 36-month program under topics such as "Design and Manufacturing," "Robotics and Coding," "Electronic Programming," "Cybersecurity," "Artificial Intelligence," and "Aviation and Space Technologies."

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Front row, left to right: Haluk Bayraktar, Ahmet Koca, Mustafa Varank, Selçuk Bayraktar, Fatih Kacır, Özdemir Bayraktar, Yunus Arıkan — a photograph from their visits to the DENEYAP workshops.





The training process consists of two phases: the first 24 months are dedicated to "Project-Based Courses," and the final 12 months to the "Teams Period." The instructor body is drawn from undergraduate and postgraduate students at relevant university departments, graduates, teachers, and industry professionals. All instructors are required to complete an "Instructor Training" program before teaching at the workshops. In practice-oriented sessions, each classroom is staffed by both an engineer and a teacher. A psychology intern also conducts weekly in-class observations to monitor the effectiveness of the lessons.

DENEYAP Workshops aim to provide opportunities for talented and motivated young people, and to cultivate productive and innovative generations in line with the National Technology Initiative. This vision goes beyond the development of technology — it also seeks to build a future grounded in the values of justice and compassion.

↖ A photograph taken during an event held with students at a DENEYAP workshop. Özdemir Bayraktar appears in this photograph alongside Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar.

AT ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEETINGS OF THE TURKISH TECHNOLOGY TEAM FOUNDATION, HE ARRIVED IN THE EVENING, LISTENED FIRST, AND THEN SPOKE IN A FIRM TONE: "THIS FOUNDATION WILL BE FINANCED BY ITS FOUNDERS ALONE! NO FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM ANY OUTSIDE SOURCE!" WHAT HE SAID THAT NIGHT WAS ETCHED INTO THE FOUNDATION'S PRINCIPLES. AND YEARS LATER, WHEN ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO DRAW THE FOUNDATION INTO CERTAIN POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES, WE ALL REMEMBERED THAT EVENING — AND SAW ONCE AGAIN HOW RIGHT ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR HAD BEEN.

Fatih Kacır

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

Joyful as a Child

The moment Özdemir Bayraktar hears about the first DENEYAP Technology Workshop established in Bakırköy, he comes to visit. He is overjoyed that day. The first thing he does upon leaving the workshop is call a few people and give them the address. Some friends he takes by the hand and brings to the workshop himself. Around the time robotics coding courses are being offered at the DENEYAP Technology Workshops, a team is assembled to make the initial selection of robotics kits. The kits are laid out for review. Özdemir Bayraktar picks up the most complex robot among them. "Let me work on this a bit," he says, and leaves. The next day, he returns with the robot he has built. In all likelihood, he did not sleep at all that night — such is the excitement he feels.

↘
Selçuk Bayraktar, at a DENEYAP technology workshop examination.



The intention behind taking his son Selçuk Bayraktar, as a child, to the place where he received his amateur pilot training and letting him ride in an aircraft; behind having a toy room made for his sons filled with nothing but aircraft; behind supporting the projects of students at the Air Force Academy and various universities — that intention is the same as the intention behind the DENEYAP Technology Workshops: to raise a generation capable of producing technology and of using that technology guided by its foundational values. Özdemir Bayraktar does not wish any person to endure the struggle he has lived through, and does everything in his power to smooth the path ahead. Above all, he wants the meaningful work he has undertaken alongside his sons to spread throughout society. This is the intention behind the National Technology Initiative's effort to transform society as a whole.

↘
A photograph from the DENEYAP Türkiye practical examination held across all of Türkiye.



TEKNOFEST: Aerospace, Space and Technology Festival

Under Özdemir Bayraktar's leadership, the T3 Foundation team decides in 2018 to organize TEKNOFEST with the aim of bringing the National Technology Initiative to wider audiences.

Organized under the auspices of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Industry and Technology, together with Türkiye's leading institutions, TEKNOFEST is not merely a technology festival — it is a platform for the vision that will shape Türkiye's future. Özdemir Bayraktar takes an active role at every stage of this major project, engaging directly with young people. One of his greatest goals is to instill in Türkiye's youth the conviction that "We can do this too." In service of that goal, he gives everything he has to TEKNOFEST.

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Özdemir Bayraktar, at TEKNOFEST held in 2019.





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Family photo taken next to the Bayraktar AKINCI at TEKNOFEST. Left to right: Selçuk Bayraktar, Sümeyye Erdoğan Bayraktar, Emine Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Esra Erdoğan Albayrak, Özdemir Bayraktar. Also pictured are the children.


ERDOĞAN
ALBAYRAK
RAKTAR



↗
View from the TEKNOFEST venue featuring the Bayraktar AKINCI.

TEKNOFEST: "You Are the Future"

Setting out with the slogan "You Are the Future," TEKNOFEST aims to share the aspiration of advancing technology with society, fostering a common enthusiasm and belief among people of all ages.

Having started in 2018 with 20,000 competition applications and 550,000 visitors, the festival reached 1.6 million competition applications and millions of visitors by 2024.

Competitions are organized across dozens of categories — from chip design to flying cars, from model satellites to artificial intelligence in healthcare — and hundreds of teams are awarded.

The core intent is to prepare young people today for the "technologies of the future."

What began with the idea of "Let a child come and touch an aircraft," TEKNOFEST moved from Istanbul to Anatolia, and from there, for the first time, abroad — to Azerbaijan.

"LET A CHILD COME"

When Selçuk Bayraktar first proposes organizing TEKNOFEST at the Turkish Technology Team Foundation, he reaches back to a cherished memory: the day his father Özdemir Bayraktar put him on an aircraft at the age of seven or eight and sat him in the pilot's seat. The intention behind the words "Let a child come, let them touch an aircraft — perhaps one day they will work in our country's space program" is clear: touching an aircraft — that first contact with the "future" — will skillfully kindle the curiosity, the spirit of discovery, and the wonder within that child.





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Özdemir Bayraktar, who introduced his children to aviation at a young age, transformed his son Selçuk's first physical contact with an aircraft into TEKNOFEST years later: an event that inspires thousands of children.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar at TEKNOFEST 2019.



"AN EXCITEMENT THAT COULD NOT FIT INTO ONE LIFETIME"

Özdemir Bayraktar holds TEKNOFEST in the same high regard as the DENEYAP Technology Workshops. Walking through TEKNOFEST, his expression is that of someone about to enter the competition himself. Before TEKNOFEST even begins, during the construction phase, he goes to the site every day and oversees the work personally — from the pitching of tents and the building of stands to the transport of materials and the laying of asphalt. He will follow every project closely, speak with students, engage with visiting guests, rejoice like a child, and make everyone a witness to an enthusiasm that could not be contained within a single lifetime. For the Türkiye he wants to see — his vision of Türkiye — looks exactly like this. Özdemir Bayraktar has placed his ideals, his devoted life, his determination, his effort, his conviction, his commitment to truth, his integrity, and his hope at the very heart of the National Technology Initiative. So much so that in his will, he will ask his sons to personally support and stand behind the Turkish Technology Team Foundation and TEKNOFEST.

ⓘ Scan, Watch

Uniting Our Strengths

Knowing that societies must produce their own science and technology in order to achieve prosperity and full independence, Özdemir Bayraktar lived with this awareness throughout his life and believed that Türkiye must wage a struggle for independence grounded in science and technology. Well aware that the embargoes imposed following the Cyprus Peace Operation laid bare how vulnerable Türkiye was in areas of foreign dependence, he argues that the National Technology Initiative gains its greatest significance precisely at this point. He frequently emphasizes that the only way to overcome the obstacles created by foreign dependence is for Türkiye to produce its own science and technology. With this vision, he advocates for Türkiye to forge a strong bond once more with science and technology — and works to strengthen that bond by anchoring it in timeless principles and values.

Drawing on the lessons of history, Bayraktar dreams of a prosperous and fully independent Türkiye, and begins laying its cornerstones through the Turkish Technology Team Foundation, TEKNOFEST, and the DENEYAP Technology Workshops. The projects initiated under his leadership are brought to life not only to build the present, but to build the future — to motivate society toward the production of technology. Through this work, Özdemir Bayraktar serves as a bridge, guiding young people toward technology and investing in Türkiye's future.



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In this photograph, taken at what is today the Özdemir Bayraktar National Technology Center, Özdemir Bayraktar, Haluk Bayraktar, Selçuk Bayraktar, Sümeyye Erdoğan Bayraktar, and author Alev Alatlı pose for a commemorative photo with engineers.

The intense participation and public interest in TEKNOFEST clearly demonstrates the kind of societal transformation Özdemir Bayraktar's vision has pioneered. The undercurrent, swelling beneath the surface of the "Turkish sea" with faith, hope, and triumph, counts each day as Türkiye develops an ever-growing presence against global injustice. This process, which Özdemir Bayraktar set in motion with his belief that "We can do it, too," will continue to shape the future as a sign that the National Technology Initiative has begun bearing fruit.



A blossoming intent

All the intentions to which Özdemir Bayraktar dedicated his life — working alongside his family and the Baykar team through days and nights — and the precious principles and values he translated into action, even transcending his own lifetime, have opened a grand and invaluable chapter that determines the course of an entire country and, indeed, the world. Led by Özdemir Bayraktar himself, his sons Haluk Bayraktar, Selçuk Bayraktar, and Ahmet Bayraktar, his wife Canan Bayraktar, his brothers Ömer Bayraktar and Salih Bayraktar, the entire Baykar team, and the Turkish defense industry — all have pledged their intent to channel this effort for the benefit of humanity, with the conviction that a fairer world is possible in the face of the ever-deepening chasm of "global inequality" between nations in terms of economic development and prosperity, and to contribute to world peace.



While having the option of producing either the airframe or the software domestically in the 2005 UAV competition, he declared, "Let's make both indigenous and original." He spent years in Şırnak and Gabar, eating from the same pot as soldiers, and — as though descending by parachute and being launched from a catapult as stipulated in the contract — designed a system with automatic takeoff and landing capabilities. He exceeded the criteria set by the SSM several times over within a few years by producing the Bayraktar TB2, and moreover, arming the aircraft. He achieved all of this using his own resources without any research and development support, thereby demonstrating Özdemir Bayraktar's core intent and effort in full.



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The Bayraktar TB2 performing a reconnaissance and surveillance flight.

The fact that Özdemir Bayraktar's goals were achieved and Baykar's story grew is, of course, not meaningful in isolation. The real issue is for this strength to be united with Türkiye's greater story, always standing on the side of justice, the oppressed, and peace. This, undoubtedly, is a reflection of the principles Özdemir Bayraktar envisioned and upheld since his youth. Having adopted Necmettin Erbakan's motto "Morality and Spirituality First" as his guiding maxim, Bayraktar embedded this principle into the very foundation of the story he built and never once compromised on it throughout his entire life.



↙
Özdemir Bayraktar with his grandchildren Demir and Ayşe Beren.





↘
Özdemir Bayraktar with his granddaughter Aybike.



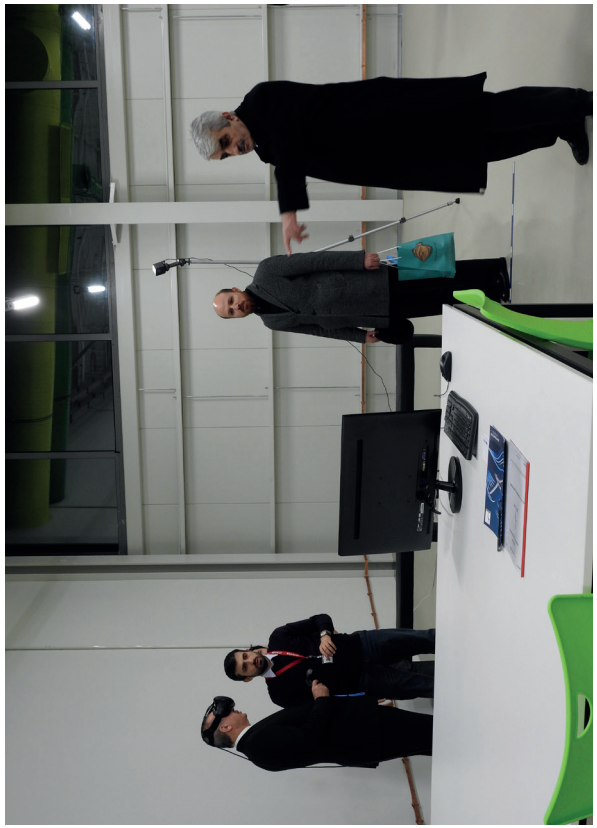






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President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to the Baykar campus in Hadımköy with his family.







One Last Journey

Where does a story end?

When a lifetime spent with hope, resilience, passion, and struggle comes to a close?

When the dusty pages of memory yellow and recollections are erased one by one?

Perhaps in all of these. Perhaps in none.

When one thinks of sleepless nights that gave rise to growth, of strength forged through struggle, of stories pursued with faith, of lifetimes devoted to upholding what is right?

Where does a story truly begin — with the call to prayer heard in the distance?

Where does a story end — when one is bid farewell on a final journey?

In the pages of history?

In the hearts?

On the earth... or in the sky?

When the story of Özdemir Bayraktar is remembered — a man who nurtured the goodness, the truth, and the beauty within every person he touched...

What exactly is it that ends?

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Özdemir Bayraktar and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with their grandchildren.



A patient who could not stay still

After his aortic surgery in 2009, Özdemir Bayraktar continues to follow the Bayraktar TB1 and Bayraktar TB2 processes, albeit from a slight distance. Haluk, Selçuk, and Ahmet Bayraktar begin paying greater attention on behalf of their father to ensure he does not overexert himself; however, asking Özdemir Bayraktar to step back from the struggle to which he dedicated his life is no easy task. He will have his hospital bed brought to the factory, tour the factory in an electric vehicle, and — with a blood pressure monitor permanently attached to his arm — continue to carry on with his life "as usual."



↙
Özdemir Bayraktar and his wife Canan Bayraktar at the breakfast table.

Following the emergency surgery he underwent in 2009, Özdemir Bayraktar enters a period of monitoring his condition. After examinations, test results, and scans at the hospital, surgery is recommended to him from several quarters. He wants to hear the opinions of many doctors on the matter; they have detailed conversations and review the scans together. Özdemir Bayraktar obtains various schedules from his own doctor, says he wants to take measurements and that he will manage this process himself. After several months pass, he asks his doctor how the surgery would be performed, what the risks are, what lies ahead for him, and the details of the procedure. Upon receiving the answers, he says "I will think about it" and leaves again. Finally, after a few more months, he has made his decision: he tells his doctor that he will not have the surgery — that he will wait and monitor his condition. And he goes further, narrowing his eyes: "I don't think you'd be able to perform this operation anyway."

HE HAD NO HESITATION WHATSOEVER ABOUT DEATH. HE WOULD ALWAYS SAY: "NO ONE CAN DO ANYTHING TO ME BEFORE MY TIME COMES. AND IF MY TIME HAS COME, NO ONE CAN DO ANYTHING EITHER."

Prof. Dr. İsmail Yüksek

RECTOR EMERITUS

He will at times put his doctors to the test with his questions, pulling up three-dimensional models of blood vessels on the computer and engaging them in discussions almost as a physician would. And indeed, the surgery his doctors recommend is an extraordinarily difficult and risky procedure. Özdemir Bayraktar wants to focus on the work and projects ahead of him. Between 2012 and 2016, he follows his treatment regimen without fail, never missing his medication.

In 2016, however, another unexpected health crisis strikes. His fatigue that day does not escape Selçuk Bayraktar's notice, yet every time he is asked how he is feeling, he insists: "I'm fine." Before long, Ahmet Bayraktar rushes his father Özdemir Bayraktar to the hospital: his aorta has ruptured for the second time, and he is taken into emergency surgery. Had they arrived even a minute or two later, it would have been too late. Despite the odds of surviving two aortic surgeries being one in a thousand, Özdemir Bayraktar's operation is a success. He will spend approximately a month in the hospital this time — and the first place he goes upon discharge is, of course, Baykar.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar National Technology Center.



↘ Özdemir Bayraktar National Technology Center.



ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR EVEN INVITES HIS DOCTOR TO THE FACTORY ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

From this point in his illness, Özdemir Bayraktar monitors his blood pressure with great care, constantly consulting his doctor to ask whether any new developments have occurred. Since even minor fluctuations in his blood pressure cause him serious pain, he attaches enormous importance to keeping it under control. He begins checking it every ten minutes. He now wears a blood pressure monitor on his arm at all times. His doctors tell him that he must have surgery without fail. Remarkably, the reason he has been able to go on for so long without operating is precisely this diligent monitoring of his blood pressure. He has found a blood pressure device that records data every ten minutes and converts it into graphs — and his doctor makes considerable use of these graphs when adjusting his medications. They are in constant discussion about non-surgical and non-interventional drug treatment options. Özdemir Bayraktar even invites his doctor to the factory on several occasions. During this period, the Baykar team at the factory is working on the development of the Bayraktar TB2 and the Bayraktar AKINCI project. For this reason, he will of course pay no attention to his working hours or his sleep. Despite requests from his doctor and family to rest, they will not succeed.



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Photo of Özdemir Bayraktar during the preparation of the Bayraktar AKINCI mold.

↘
Özdemir Bayraktar at the MÜSİAD Exposition, 2009.



"IF YOU PUT ME UNDER..."

During the 2016 operation, his doctor Aydın Yıldırım and the team are faced with a decision that must be made quickly. Özdemir Bayraktar, however, is under anesthesia. Aydın Bey continues the story:

"We normally obtain consent forms from patients. Before the 2016 operation, we obtained one from him and then performed the procedure as an initial angiography. But unfortunately, as things did not go as expected, a second operation became unavoidable. Özdemir Bayraktar was still under general anesthesia, and we obtained consent from his family. Because we had told him we would only be performing an angiography, when he woke up and felt the surgical marks and the pain, he was furious — and for many years he held it over me, saying we had proceeded without his consent. Later, he would often joke about it: 'Put me to sleep once and there's no telling what you'll do to me.'"

ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NOT A COMPLIANT PATIENT. HE HAD A SOMEWHAT FORCEFUL CHARACTER. WHENEVER HE MET WITH HIS DOCTORS, HE ALWAYS HAD AN INQUISITIVE MANNER — AN APPROACH WE WERE NOT PARTICULARLY ACCUSTOMED TO. IT WAS NOT ENTIRELY NEGATIVE, OF COURSE, BUT WHENEVER WE PROPOSED A TREATMENT, HE WOULD EXAMINE IT WITH THE FINEST OF COMBS AND SHARE HIS OWN VIEWS ON THE OUTCOMES QUITE OPENLY. WITH MEDICATION, WE GENERALLY HAD NO PROBLEMS. BUT WITH SLEEP AND WORK HABITS, WE STRUGGLED. HE WORKED EXTREMELY INTENSELY, AND WE ASKED HIM TO SLOW DOWN A LITTLE — BUT WE COULD NOT PREVAIL. IN MY PROFESSIONAL CAREER, I CANNOT RECALL ANOTHER PATIENT WHO QUESTIONED ME AS MUCH AS HE DID. WHEN SOMETHING CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION, HE WOULD RESEARCH AND LEARN EVERY DETAIL ABOUT HIS CONDITION. HE WAS A PASSIONATE, CURIOUS, AND QUESTIONING MIND.

Prof. Dr. Aydın Yıldırım

CARDIOLOGIST (HIS DOCTOR)

“We are guaranteed to live until we die.”

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR

A sentinel at the factory

ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR'S BODY WILL EXPEND CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO KEEP UP WITH HIS EVER-YOUTHFUL SPIRIT.

Resting, taking a break, and resorting to excuses — even health-related ones — do not exist in Özdemir Bayraktar's vocabulary. It is unthinkable that a man so work-focused that he would even invite his doctor to the factory would step aside or slow down his pace due to health problems. As always, he sleeps and rises at the factory, receiving his guests there. At every opportunity, he continues to speak about his work, his goals, and his dreams. Even if his health demands greater caution, the same excited and passionate Özdemir Bayraktar living within him cannot be held back. For Bayraktar — who spent his entire life with the same passion and energy — stepping aside is out of the question, let alone slowing down. In this process, he wants to recover as soon as possible, regain his health, and carry out his work more comfortably. Özdemir Bayraktar's body will expend considerable effort to keep up with his ever-youthful spirit.

All of Özdemir Bayraktar's efforts will be seen by those around him, and his ability to maintain his work ethic despite aging and health problems will at times be met with admiration and at times with astonishment. Özdemir Bayraktar is not one to approach even his illness with solemnity; rather, he often faces it with a sense of humor. No matter his condition, he wants to focus on the work at hand.

AFTER ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR BECAME RELATED BY MARRIAGE TO OUR PRESIDENT, HE BEGAN TO SHOW FAR GREATER SENSITIVITY IN THIS REGARD. I WITNESSED THIS FIRSTHAND. HE WOULD SAY: "WE HAVE A FAMILY CONNECTION — IF WE BID ON THIS, PEOPLE WILL TALK. LET US NOT ENTER THIS TENDER. LET US NEVER ACCEPT SO MUCH AS A PENNY IN INCENTIVES FROM THE STATE." BAYKAR DEVELOPED ITS PROJECTS WITHOUT RECEIVING ANY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES OR SUPPORT, FUNDING THEM THROUGH ITS OWN RESOURCES — BORROWING WHERE NECESSARY. ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR WAS NOT SIMPLY A MAN WHO DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGY — HE WAS A MAN WHO DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THIS PATH. THAT IS WHY HE WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE BOTH HIS FAMILY AND THOSE AROUND HIM.

Mustafa Varank

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY (2018–2023)



↗
Özdemir Bayraktar, giving President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a tour of Baykar's Hadımköy facility.

After the second aortic rupture, although his outings have decreased, he continues to command every detail of the work, intervening where necessary. Not even a single bolt escapes his attention. He sees his work not merely as a duty but as an inseparable part of his life. He has always lived his life with this mentality, after all.

Regardless of the circumstances, life for Özdemir Bayraktar always continues with the same struggle. Serdar Yılmaz states, "Even when he was ill, he carried on both his work-related endeavors and



his passion, as well as his brotherly bond with those around him," emphasizing that even when Özdemir Bayraktar's health did not permit it, he continued chasing after his work and concerning himself with the troubles of those around him. Even in his most difficult times, Özdemir Bayraktar does not speak about his illness. His intent is to acknowledge his illness, to manage it, and — even if it requires great self-sacrifice — to continue working in this manner.

Özdemir Bayraktar has such command over all matters related to his illness, treatment, medications, and follow-ups. That is why, before any medication therapy is to begin, he reads and researches the prospectus with all its details — the definite side effects, whether it can or cannot be used.

Yıldırım recounts that at a subsequent consultation, Özdemir Bayraktar thoroughly explained to his doctor the issue of how the blood pressure monitor detects systolic and diastolic pressure, having researched the subject on his own. Because if you explain something to Özdemir Bayraktar and do not provide sufficient detail, he will inevitably find a gap and retort, "You're just trying to convince me."

From the very beginning of his treatment, Özdemir Bayraktar commands every aspect. While discussing treatment with his doctor, they also proceed carefully with treatment plans. Özdemir Bayraktar's questioning is not the kind that would derail the treatment. His doctor Aydın Yıldırım describes his questioning as follows: "I would say, 'Özdemir ağabey, look, we are doing these things, but we need to implement this right now. I consider this risky for you at this stage. Let's have our discussion afterward.' He would agree on the spot. But he would always make sure our discussion continued later."

Özdemir Bayraktar is already under constant monitoring due to the aortic dilation. Imaging scans are performed, and inevitably a radiation load accumulates, which can also trigger cancer. His doctor advises him to minimize the frequency of scans as much as possible. What they fear comes to pass in another form. After a minor fall, Özdemir Bayraktar begins experiencing pain in his back. It is initially thought to be an ordinary bruise.

I REMEMBER SETTING UP HIS COMPUTER FOR HIM COUNTLESS TIMES WHILE HE LAY IN HIS HOSPITAL BED. IN A PLACE WHERE HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN RESTING, HE WOULD WRITE, ATTEND TO HIS WORK, AND HELP OTHERS. TIME AND AGAIN WE MARVELED AT HOW HE MANAGED ALL OF THIS IN THAT STATE OF ILLNESS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY ATTENTIVE TO OTHER PEOPLE'S TROUBLES AND ALWAYS READY TO HELP. I FOUND MYSELF IN GENUINE ADMIRATION OF HIM FOR THIS. TO SPEAK PLAINLY: I WOULD HAVE VERY MUCH LIKED TO SEE ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR AS A PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE. HE GAVE US A GREAT DEAL. EVEN THOUGH WE WORK IN A SMALL BRANCH OF MEDICINE, WE LEARNED MUCH FROM ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR.

Prof. Dr. Aydın Yıldırım

CARDIOLOGIST (HIS DOCTOR)



As the pain intensifies over time, physiotherapy is sought, but no improvement is observed. Further examinations reveal the true cause: Özdemir Bayraktar has lung cancer. The disease has been diagnosed early, but despite this, it progresses rapidly. For his family and friends, who are caught unprepared, this marks the beginning of a difficult period.

It is a critical juncture as well. Özdemir Bayraktar will follow the treatment process — both in accepting and coping with the progression of his illness — just as he always has. The doctors know that Özdemir Bayraktar's life revolves around the factory and that he will continue working. They only advise him to be careful during helicopter trips. Because Özdemir Bayraktar is the kind of person who can travel to somewhere in the Southeast for morning prayers on a religious holiday. What is more, he can remain on his feet there for hours on end.

Just as he has lived, just as he has made the act of working inseparable from his life, he will not cease living in "Özdemir fashion" during his illness either. No matter how difficult the circumstances, Özdemir Bayraktar will unfailingly prioritize his work. He will even go so far as to request a computer from his doctor and write articles in his hospital room.

As Özdemir Bayraktar's illness progresses, Selçuk Bayraktar stands by his side at every step. On one hand, he carefully follows the doctors' guidance while, on the other, exploring alternative treatment



methods. He consults foundational references in the field of oncology, reviews the scientific literature, and participates in consultations with doctors. If his father wants to approach this process in a certain way, he acts with the same care himself. He assembles a team of specialists in the field and navigates this process by making decisions collectively with the team. Some promising medications are also tried, but they too prove ineffective.

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Özdemir Bayraktar inspecting the Bayraktar AKINCI and offering technical recommendations.

“Love is on the Bird’s Wing”

HAVING STRICTLY WARNED HIS FAMILY NOT TO DISCLOSE HIS ILLNESS, ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR BARELY MANAGES TO SEE HIS FAMILY, CLOSE ONES, AND A FEW FRIENDS DURING THIS PERIOD.

Özdemir Bayraktar's acceptance of his illness and his sense of submission to God's will are profound. He has surrendered to the great current called fate. In his final period, he begins to tire. The vitality of earlier years is gone. He sits with friends and family at the tea garden in Liseliler Park in Sarıyer. His old passion for the sea resurfaces during this time. He finds himself having to withdraw from work to a degree he never had before.

As time passes, the effects of his illness grow increasingly pronounced. What begins as hospital stays and check-ups one or two days a week gradually evolves, toward the end, into periods when he spends nearly the entire week in hospital. Having firmly asked his family not to let word of his illness spread, he barely manages to see even his family, close ones, and a handful of friends during this time. He can barely find the strength to speak. During the period when he is not receiving visitors, Naval Forces Commander Admiral Ercüment Tatlıoğlu insists that he will see Özdemir Bayraktar regardless. Admiral Ercüment arrives in full uniform. Upon entering the hospital room, he comes to attention and salutes: "The Navy stands ready at your command, Commander!" Özdemir Bayraktar smiles at Admiral Ercüment: "Those shoulders of yours are rather crowded — they're dazzling my eyes."

↘
A comic strip that Özdemir Bayraktar sent to friends and family in his final days. Unable to work, he would joke that he was no longer of use to anyone.



When TEKNOFEST 2021 begins, Özdemir Bayraktar — who would normally ask about every detail and involve himself in every particular — can only manage a smile when told: "TEKNOFEST went beautifully." He has begun to see the ship that will come for him on the horizon. He narrows his eyes and gazes out into the vast sea, that ancestral inheritance. He watches the familiar pier, the sound of stubborn waves, the birds carrying love on their wings, the lighthouse casting its gentle light over all around it, the wind humming endless songs, the fish crossing seas with all manner of skill — finding in each a fragment of his own story, seeing in each a mirror of his own truth.

Around this time, Özdemir Bayraktar comes across a cartoon and sends it to everyone. In it, a seaside scene is drawn: on the dock stands a rusty old mooring bollard. A rope is tied to it, but the line has snapped, its end trailing into the sea. An old man sits down beside the bollard and says to it: "At least you still have a purpose." As his illness advances and he is forced to withdraw from his work, Özdemir Bayraktar begins using the phrase "mooring bollard" often. "I have become a mooring bollard now," he says, teasing those around him.

On October 18, 2021, in the final hours of the last day he spends in the hospital, his consciousness fades. The entire family is at his bedside; his brother Ömer Bayraktar is right there. The hospital's imam comes and begins reciting Surah Yasin, and Özdemir Bayraktar passes away with that recitation.

Özdemir Bayraktar — who spent his entire life at work — passes away in Istanbul after three months during which he was unable to go to Baykar. With his entire life, he had already given his own answer to the question, "How does one live a life?" His is also an apt example of how one's story will be written. So much so that after Özdemir Bayraktar's passing, when the children open his computers, they find on every one of them various drawing programs and analysis programs. The drawings and analyses that Özdemir Bayraktar worked on until his very last breath...

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At the front of the scene, the body of Özdemir Bayraktar, draped in the Turkish flag.





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Özdemir Bayraktar, carried on shoulders at Baykar.

On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, Özdemir Bayraktar's remains are first taken to Baykar — to the factory where he lived more than he did at home. As he bids farewell to the factory, to his true home, the friends who worked shoulder to shoulder with him for years, who shared the same purpose, are by his side one last time. The second funeral ceremony, where all who loved Özdemir Bayraktar will gather in deep grief, is held at Fatih Mosque. That day, Fatih Mosque is filled with an extraordinary crowd — people from every walk of life, united as one, gathered to send Özdemir Bayraktar off on his final journey: a man who spent his entire life in search of Türkiye's soul. Many distinguished figures speak at the ceremony.



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Photo from Özdemir Bayraktar's funeral service at Baykar.



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Selçuk Bayraktar bidding farewell to his father.

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Prelude to Özdemir Bayraktar's funeral prayer, Fatih Mosque.



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Thousands attended the funeral prayer for Özdemir Bayraktar at Fatih Mosque.



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Mourners bid farewell to Özdemir Bayraktar with prayers.





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Özdemir Bayraktar's remains departing Fatih Mosque amid prayers.



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President Erdoğan, who could not attend Özdemir Bayraktar's funeral due to an official visit to Africa, offering his condolences at the Özdemir Bayraktar National Technology Center.

I BELIEVE THAT HISTORY WILL
IMMORTALIZE ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR
AS A STANDARD-BEARER.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

BAYKAR'S FOUNDER ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR, ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF THE NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE IDEAL, IS NOT MERELY A SUCCESSFUL ENGINEER FOR TÜRKİYE.

His son Selçuk Bayraktar's address is moving, sincere, and deeply felt. He draws a true portrait of his father Özdemir Bayraktar, honoring his spirit with these words: "He was our guide, our inspiration, our compass, and our closest companion in cause and in path. He walked straight and upright along the truth he believed in, along the righteous path he knew."

After the funeral prayer at Fatih Mosque, Özdemir Bayraktar's coffin, draped in the Turkish flag, is carried on shoulders and taken to where the story began — to the village of Garipçe where he was born — and laid to rest in the family cemetery. As the crowd walks toward his grave, the same witty remark of his is in everyone's mind: "I have a plot of land overlooking the Bosphorus." When those hearing it for the first time asked "How many acres?", he would reply: "One and a half square meters" — and then take them to the cemetery in Garipçe village and say: "There — that is my plot." On that day, as everyone walks slowly toward that plot overlooking the Bosphorus, they also bear witness to Özdemir Bayraktar's submission to God's will. Özdemir Bayraktar — who played a pioneering role in every stage of the development, design, prototyping, and manufacturing of indigenous unmanned aerial vehicle technology, and who was one of the architects of the National Technology Initiative — is not merely a successful engineer for Türkiye.

Scan, Watch

ONE DAY, WE WENT TO GARIPÇE — THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS BORN AND WHERE HE IS NOW BURIED. I FOUND IT BEAUTIFUL. "GARIPÇE IS A LOVELY PLACE — LET'S BUY A PLOT HERE," I SAID. "ALL RIGHT, TURGUT BEY — I'LL SET ASIDE A SPOT FOR YOU RIGHT NEXT TO MINE," HE SAID. I WAS PLEASED. HE TOOK ME UP TO A PLACE HIGHER ON THE HILL. IT TURNED OUT THAT THE SPOT HE HAD SET ASIDE FOR ME WAS A GRAVE PLOT. ALL THAT ÖZDEMIR BAYRAKTAR EVER AWAITED IN THIS WORLD WAS A TWO-METER PATCH OF EARTH — NOTHING MORE. FROM THE DAY I MET HIM TO THE DAY WE LOST HIM, HIS CHARACTER NEVER CHANGED.

Turgut Şenol

TURGUT ŞENOL BUSINESSMAN (CLOSE FRIEND)

EVERY MORTAL LIVES ON AS
LONG AS THEIR NAME, MEMORY,
AND LEGACY ARE REMEMBERED.
ÖZDEMİR BAYRAKTAR WILL HAVE
A VERY LONG LIFE.

Ekber Onuk

EKBER ONUK BUSINESSMAN (UNIVERSITY FRIEND)

He is also a precious asset who, with the vision that years ago declared, "These things can be done in Türkiye," inspires all young people and engineers. He is also an elegant mirror that reminds many a child, young person, and engineer of the jewel within them. His spirit will live on forever — alongside those who love him, in the good deeds he accomplished, in the acts of kindness, and in every struggle he waged.

Özdemir Bayraktar will not neglect to deliver a surprise even after his passing. Three months before his death, he had a bollard brought and placed in storage. Naturally, no one knows what is inside. After Özdemir Bayraktar's passing in October 2021, the workers discover that there is a chest in storage; that it is a chest Özdemir Bayraktar had commissioned, and that he had instructed, "Do not inform anyone of this chest's existence." When his sons Haluk and Selçuk Bayraktar open the chest, they find themselves face to face with a bollard from their father. They place this beautiful bollard — wrapped in a white, elegant rope — at the entrance of Baykar, to keep their father's memory alive. Knowing that the spirit of their father, Özdemir Bayraktar, will live on in the spirit of Türkiye...

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The bollard that Özdemir Bayraktar had brought and placed in storage three months before his passing.



MY FATHER DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THE FULLY INDEPENDENT AND STRONG FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY. SO THAT WE COULD REALIZE THE NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE, SO THAT WE COULD BE FREE AND INDEPENDENT IN OUR SKIES... AS FAR AS I HAVE WITNESSED, HE MOBILIZED — IN THE FULLEST SENSE OF THE WORD — ALL THE MEANS AT HIS DISPOSAL, EVERYTHING GOD HAD GRANTED HIM, IN SERVICE OF THIS CAUSE.

Selçuk Bayraktar

SELÇUK BAYRAKTAR CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF BAYKAR (HIS SON)

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Özdemir Bayraktar's grave in Garipçe.





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Bayraktar Akıncı.

Özdemir Bayraktar