



Mathurin Hybrid Initiative

Global Advisory Report

Türkiye's Space Race

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Introduction:

In a historic moment for Türkiye, a crew of four space cadets, including Türkiye's first astronaut, Alper Gezeravci, embarked on the Axiom-3 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) on a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule and Falcon 9 rocket. This monumental journey not only showcased Türkiye's technological prowess but also marked a significant step into the second century of the Republic.

The Axiom-3 Mission:

The Axiom-3 mission, [launched](#) from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre, saw the crew of experienced military pilots, including Gezeravci, journeying to the ISS for a planned 36-hour stay. The live-streamed video of the launch depicted the awe-inspiring moment as the Falcon 9 rocket propelled the crew capsule into space, leaving a fiery trail against the Atlantic coast's cloudy skies. Footage from inside the crew compartment showed the four men strapped into their cabin, seated with serenity in white and black space suits while several metric tonnes of explosives controlled their ascent into the blistering desolation of silent space. Nine minutes after launch, the Falcon 9's upper stage delivered the crew capsule to its preliminary orbit. The successful delivery of the crew capsule to its preliminary orbit marked a historic achievement for Türkiye's space program.

Scientific Objectives and Educational Outreach:

During their stay on the ISS, the crew is set to conduct experiments on the effects of space flight on humans and disease. Additionally, they will engage in educational activities, talking with school kids and enjoying panoramic views of Earth from space. This dual focus on scientific research and educational outreach reflects Türkiye's commitment to advancing space exploration capabilities and inspiring future generations.

Quoting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Türkiye Republic, Gezeravci emphasized that "the future is in the skies." For a nation that celebrated its 100th anniversary recently, this mission represents a pivotal moment, opening Türkiye's view of a sky beyond that which can be seen with the naked eye. Gezeravcı, a former fighter pilot, noted that the mission signifies the beginning of Türkiye's next centennial.

Presidential Support and National Space Program:

Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed pride in the mission, stating, "We are taking a step into the second century of our republic, the Century of Türkiye, with the manned space mission we have undertaken for the first time." The mission aligns with Türkiye's National Space Program, announced in 2021, marking a significant milestone in the nation's space exploration endeavours. Türkiye's Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun said the mission marked "a milestone for the work we are doing in the Space Homeland and will carry out in the future". The President has said as heir of a civilisation that has made significant contributions to the history of science, they are marking the start of a valuable new chapter, aiming to re-enact the mission Türkiye has carried throughout history.

Symbolic Meaning and Political Undertones:

Beyond its scientific objectives, the Axiom-3 mission carries symbolic weight, reflecting the global trend of nations venturing into Earth's orbit for enhanced prestige, military capabilities, and satellite-based communications. Türkiye's entry into the ISS-guest countries club underscores the nation's growing interest in space exploration, positioning itself on the international stage.

Axiom cleverly marketed the mission as the "first all-European commercial astronaut mission," highlighting the collaborative effort of European nations in space exploration. However, this moment was met with mixed reactions in Türkiye, with some viewing it as a source of national pride and others questioning its necessity amid economic challenges. Yusuf Kirac, the president of the Turkish Space Agency, said Türkiye had been waiting for this for many years: "Today is a milestone for us, but it will continue. Our moon program, sending out people with our launch systems, is our main goal."

It is clear Türkiye means to expand and solidify itself as a player in the new space race. Space is quickly becoming ever more important. It is central to communication, economics, and military strategy. Inevitably, it is becoming important to international relations. Spheres of influence, claims on territory, rivalries and alliances are spilling out into space.

Space travel costs have been coming down with private companies venturing beyond the atmosphere. In the last decade, rare metals and water have been found within reach on the moon. Furthermore, the big powers have all fired missiles from earth, blowing up their own satellites to test new weapons. All of this suggests space is going to become a big part of the geopolitical narrative of the 21st century. Türkiye is merely making moves to ensure it is in a favourable position for this century's space exodus.

Conclusion:

The Axiom-3 mission not only represents Türkiye's successful entry into space exploration but also serves as a symbol of national pride, technological achievement, and educational inspiration. As Türkiye looks to the skies, this mission paves the way for future endeavors, aligning with the nation's aspirations for a prominent role in space exploration and marking the beginning of a new chapter in Türkiye's second century.



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