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Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations

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Summary

Turkey, a NATO ally since 1952, significantly affects a number of key U.S. national security issues in the Middle East and Europe. U.S.-Turkey relations have worsened throughout this decade over several matters, including Syria's civil war, Turkey-Israel tensions, Turkey-Russia cooperation, and various Turkish domestic developments. The United States and NATO have military personnel and key equipment deployed to various sites in Turkey, including at Incirlik air base in the southern part of the country.

Bilateral ties have reached historic lows in the summer of 2018. The major flashpoint has been a Turkish criminal case against American pastor Andrew Brunson. U.S. sanctions on Turkey related to the Brunson case and responses by Turkey and international markets appear to have seriously aggravated an already precipitous drop in the value of Turkey's currency.

Amid this backdrop, Congress has actively engaged on several issues involving Turkey, including the following:

- Turkey's possible **S-400 air defense system acquisition from Russia**.
- Turkey's efforts to acquire **U.S.-origin F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft** and its companies' role in the international F-35 consortium's supply chain.
- Complex **U.S.-Turkey interactions in Syria** involving several state and non-state actors, including Russia and Iran. Over strong Turkish objections, the United States continues to partner with Syrian Kurds linked with Kurdish militants in Turkey, and Turkey's military has occupied large portions of northern Syria to minimize Kurdish control and leverage.
- **Turkey's domestic situation and its effect on bilateral relations**. In addition to Pastor Brunson, Turkey has detained a number of other U.S. citizens (most of them dual U.S.-Turkish citizens) and Turkish employees of the U.S. government. Turkish officials and media have connected these cases to the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, and to Fethullah Gulen, the U.S.-based former cleric whom Turkey's government has accused of involvement in the plot.

In the FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, P.L. 115-232) enacted in August 2018, Congress has required a comprehensive report from the Trump Administration on (1) U.S.-Turkey relations, (2) the potential S-400 deal and its implications for U.S./NATO activity in Turkey, (3) possible alternatives to the S-400, and (4) various scenarios for the F-35 program with or without Turkey's participation. Other proposed legislation would condition Turkey's acquisition of the F-35 on a cancellation of the S-400 deal (FY2019 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, S. 3180), place sanctions on Turkish officials for their role in detaining U.S. citizens or employees (also S. 3180), and direct U.S. action at selected international financial institutions to oppose providing assistance to Turkey (Turkey International Financial Institutions Act, S. 3248). The S-400 deal might also trigger sanctions under existing law (CAATSA).

The next steps in the fraught relations between the United States and Turkey will take place in the context of a Turkey in political transition and growing economic turmoil. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has dominated politics in the country since 2002, won reelection to an empowered presidency in June 2018. Given Erdogan's consolidation of power, observers now question how he will govern a polarized electorate and deal with the foreign actors who can affect Turkey's financial solvency, regional security, and political influence. U.S. officials and lawmakers can refer to Turkey's complex history, geography, domestic dynamics, and

international relationships in evaluating how to encourage Turkey to align its policies with U.S. interests.

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Introduction and Issues for Congress

U.S.-Turkey ties, always complicated, appear to have reached crisis levels in the summer of 2018. Although the United States and Turkey, NATO allies since 1952, share some vital interests, harmonizing priorities can be difficult. These priorities sometimes diverge irrespective of who leads the two countries, based on contrasting geography, threat perceptions, and regional roles. Current points of tension in the relationship include the following:

- **Sanctions and worsening U.S.-Turkey relations.** Policy differences and public acrimony between the two countries have fueled concern about their relationship and about Turkey's status as a U.S. ally. In August 2018, the Trump Administration levied sanctions against Turkey in connection with the continued detention of Andrew Brunson, an American pastor charged with terrorism. The sanctions appear to have quickened the decline in value of Turkey's already depreciating currency, which has lost considerable value against the dollar (see "Currency Decline: U.S.-Turkey Crisis and Sanctions" below). The crisis in bilateral relations has appeared to deepen as Turkey has retaliated with its own sanctions, and as each country has raised tariffs on imports from the other.
- **Congressional initiatives.**[1] Within the tense bilateral context, Congress has required the Trump Administration—in the FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, P.L. 115-232)—to report on the status of U.S.-Turkey relations. Also, some Members of Congress have proposed legislation to limit arms sales and strategic cooperation—particularly regarding the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter—or to place additional sanctions on Turkish officials. While Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish leaders have sharply criticized U.S. policies on many issues, questions in U.S. public debate about Turkey's status as an ally and its relationship with Russia have intensified.
- **Possible S-400 acquisition from Russia.** Turkey's planned purchase of an S-400 air defense system from Russia could trigger U.S. sanctions under existing law. The possible transaction has sparked broader concern over Turkey's relationship with Russia and implications for NATO. U.S. officials seek to prevent the deal, and reports suggest that they may be offering alternatives to Turkey such as Patriot air defense systems.
- **Syria and the Kurds.** Turkey's political stances and military operations in Syria have fed U.S.-Turkey tensions, particularly regarding Kurdish-led militias supported by the United States against the Islamic State (IS, also known as ISIS/ISIL) over Turkey's strong objections.
- **Turkey's domestic trajectory and financial distress.** President Erdogan rules in an increasingly authoritarian manner. Presidential and parliamentary elections held in June 2018 consolidated Erdogan's power pursuant to constitutional changes approved in a controversial 2017 referendum. Meanwhile, even before the U.S. sanctions in August, Turkey's currency had fallen considerably in value amid concerns about rule of law, regional and domestic political uncertainty, significant corporate debt, and a stronger dollar.

[1] According to the Turkish Coalition of America, a non-governmental organization that promotes positive Turkish-American relations, as of June 2018, there are at least 132 Members of the House of Representatives (127 of whom are voting Members) and four Senators in the Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans. See http://www.tc-america.org/in-congress/caucus.htm.

Figure 1. Turkey at a Glance

Geography	*Area:* 783,562 sq km (302,535 sq. mile), slightly larger than Texas
People	*Population:* 80,845,215 (2017) Most populous cities: Istanbul 14.2 mil, Ankara 4.8 mil, Izmir 3 mil, Bursa 1.9 mil, Adana 1.8 mil, Gaziantep 1.5 mil (2015) *% of Population 14 or Younger:* 24.7% (2017) *Ethnic Groups:* Turks 70%-75%; Kurds 19%; Other minorities 7%-12% (2016) *Religion:* Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), Others (mainly Christian and Jewish) 0.2% (2017) *Literacy:* 95.6% (male 98.6%, female 92.6%) (2015)
Economy	*GDP Per Capita (at purchasing power parity):* $28,350 *Real GDP Growth:* 4.4% *Inflation:* 15.4% *Unemployment:* 10.7% *Budget Deficit as % of GDP:* 2.9% *Public Debt as % of GDP:* 27.8% *Current Account Deficit as % of GDP:* 5.4% *International reserves:* $74 billion

Source: Graphic created by CRS. Map boundaries and information generated by Hannah Fischer using Department of State Boundaries (2011); Esri (2014); ArcWorld (2014); DeLorme (2014). Fact information (2018 estimates unless otherwise specified) from International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database; Turkish Statistical Institute; World Bank; Economist Intelligence Unit; and Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*.

Country Overview and the Erdogan Era

Turkey's large, diversified economy, Muslim majority population, and geographic position straddling Europe and the Middle East make it a significant regional power. Important political developments in Turkey since 2002 have occurred within the context of significant

socioeconomic changes that began in the 1980s. The military-guided governments that came to power after Turkey's 1980 coup helped establish Turkey's export-driven economy. This led to the gradual empowerment of a largely Sunni Muslim middle class from Turkey's Anatolian heartland.

These socioeconomic changes helped fuel political transformation led by the Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*, or AKP) and President (formerly Prime Minister) Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The AKP won governing majorities four times—2002, 2007, 2011, and 2015—during a period in which Turkey's economy generally enjoyed growth and stability. For decades since its founding in the 1920s, the Turkish republic had relied upon its military, judiciary, and other bastions of its Kemalist (a term inspired by Turkey's republican founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk) "secular elite" to protect it from political and ideological extremes—sacrificing at least some of its democratic vitality in the process.

Erdogan has worked to reduce the political power of the "secular elite" and has clashed with other possible rival power centers, including previous allies in the Fethullah Gulen movement.[2] Domestic polarization has intensified since 2013: nationwide antigovernment protests that began in Istanbul's Gezi Park took place that year, and corruption allegations later surfaced against a number of Erdogan's colleagues in and out of government.[3]

After Erdogan became president in August 2014 via Turkey's first-ever popular presidential election, he claimed a mandate for increasing his power and pursuing a "presidential system" of governance. Analyses of Erdogan sometimes characterize him as one or more of the following: a pragmatic populist, a protector of the vulnerable, a budding authoritarian, an indispensable figure, an Islamic ideologue.[4]

July 2016 Failed Coup

On July 15-16, 2016, elements within the Turkish military operating outside the chain of command mobilized air and ground forces in a failed attempt to seize political power from President Erdogan and Prime Minister Binali Yildirim.[5] Resistance by security forces loyal to the government and civilians in key areas of Istanbul and Ankara succeeded in foiling the coup,[6] with around 270 killed on both sides.[7]

Turkish officials publicly blame the plot on military officers with alleged links to Fethullah Gulen—formerly a state-employed imam in Turkey and now a permanent U.S. resident. Allies at one point, the AKP and Gulen's movement had a falling out in 2013 that complicated existing struggles in Turkey regarding power and political freedom. Gulen denied taking part in the July 2016 coup plot, but acknowledged that he "could not rule out" involvement by some of his followers.[8] Gulen's U.S. residency and Turkish dissatisfaction with the U.S. response to the coup plot probably intensified anti-American sentiment, which Erdogan has actively used to bolster his domestic appeal.

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[2] For more on Gulen and the Gulen movement, see CRS In Focus IF10444, *Fethullah Gulen, Turkey, and the United States: A Reference*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

[3] Freedom House, *Democracy in Crisis: Corruption, Media, and Power in Turkey*, February 3, 2014.

[4] See, e.g., Soner Cagaptay, *The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey*, New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017; Burak Kadercan, "Erdogan's Last Off-Ramp: Authoritarianism, Democracy, and the Future of Turkey," War on the Rocks, July 28, 2016.

[5] Metin Gurcan, "Why Turkey's coup didn't stand a chance," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, July 17, 2016.

[6] Nathan Gardels, "A Former Top Turkish Advisor Explains Why Erdogan Is the Coup's Biggest Winner," *Huffington Post*, July 19, 2016.

[7] Ray Sanchez, "Fethullah Gulen on 'GPS': Failed Turkey coup looked 'like a Hollywood movie,'" CNN, July 31, 2016.

[8] Stephanie Saul, "An Exiled Cleric Denies Playing a Leading Role in Coup Attempt," *New York Times*, July 16, 2016.

Shortly after the failed coup, Erdogan placed Turkey's military and intelligence institutions more firmly under the civilian government's control.[9] In the two years since, Turkey's government has dismissed around 130,000 Turks from government posts, detained more than 60,000,[10] and taken over or closed various businesses, schools, and media outlets.[11] The government largely justified its actions by claiming that those affected are associated with the Gulen movement, even though the measures may be broader in terms of whom they directly impact.[12] The UN and others have expressed concern over reports alleging that some detainees have been subjected to beatings, torture, and other human rights violations.[13]

Erdogan's consolidation of power has continued. He outlasted the July 2016 coup attempt, and then scored victories in the April 2017 constitutional referendum and the June 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections. U.S. and European Union officials have expressed a number of concerns about rule of law and civil liberties in Turkey,[14] including the government's influence on media[15] and Turkey's reported status as the country with the most journalists in prison.[16]

While there may be some similarities between Turkey under Erdogan and countries like Russia, Iran, or China, some factors distinguish Turkey from them. For example, unlike Russia or Iran, Turkey's economy cannot rely on significant rents from natural resources if foreign sources of revenue or investment dry up. Unlike Russia and China, Turkey does not have nuclear weapons under its command and control. Additionally, unlike all three others, Turkey's economic, political, and national security institutions and traditions have been closely connected with those of the West for decades.

Erdogan and various other key Turkish figures (including political party leaders) are profiled in **Appendix A**.

Erdogan's Expanded Powers and June 2018 Victory

In an election that President Erdogan moved up to June 2018 from November 2019, he was reelected to a five-year presidential term with about 53% of the vote. The election reinforced his dominant role in Turkish politics because a controversial April 2017 popular referendum had determined that the presidential victor would govern with expanded powers. To obtain a parliamentary majority in the June elections, Erdogan's AKP relied on the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyet Halk Partisi*, or MHP) (see **Figure 2** below). The MHP is the country's traditional Turkish nationalist party, and is known for opposing political accommodation with the Kurds. The MHP also had provided key support for the constitutional amendments approved in 2017. If

[9] Cinar Kiper and Elena Becatoros, "Turkey's Erdogan brings military more under gov't," Associated Press, August 1, 2016; Yesim Dikmen and David Dolan, "Turkey culls nearly 1,400 from army, overhauls top military council," Reuters, July 31, 2016.

[10] Carlotta Gall, "Turkish Leader's Next Target in Crackdown on Dissent: The Internet," *New York Times*, March 4, 2018.

[11] Kareem Fahim, "As Erdogan prepares for new term, Turkey dismisses more than 18,000 civil servants," *Washington Post*, July 8, 2018.

[12] Chris Morris, "Reality Check: The numbers behind the crackdown in Turkey," BBC, June 18, 2018.

[13] "Turkey: UN expert says deeply concerned by rise in torture allegations," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 27, 2018.

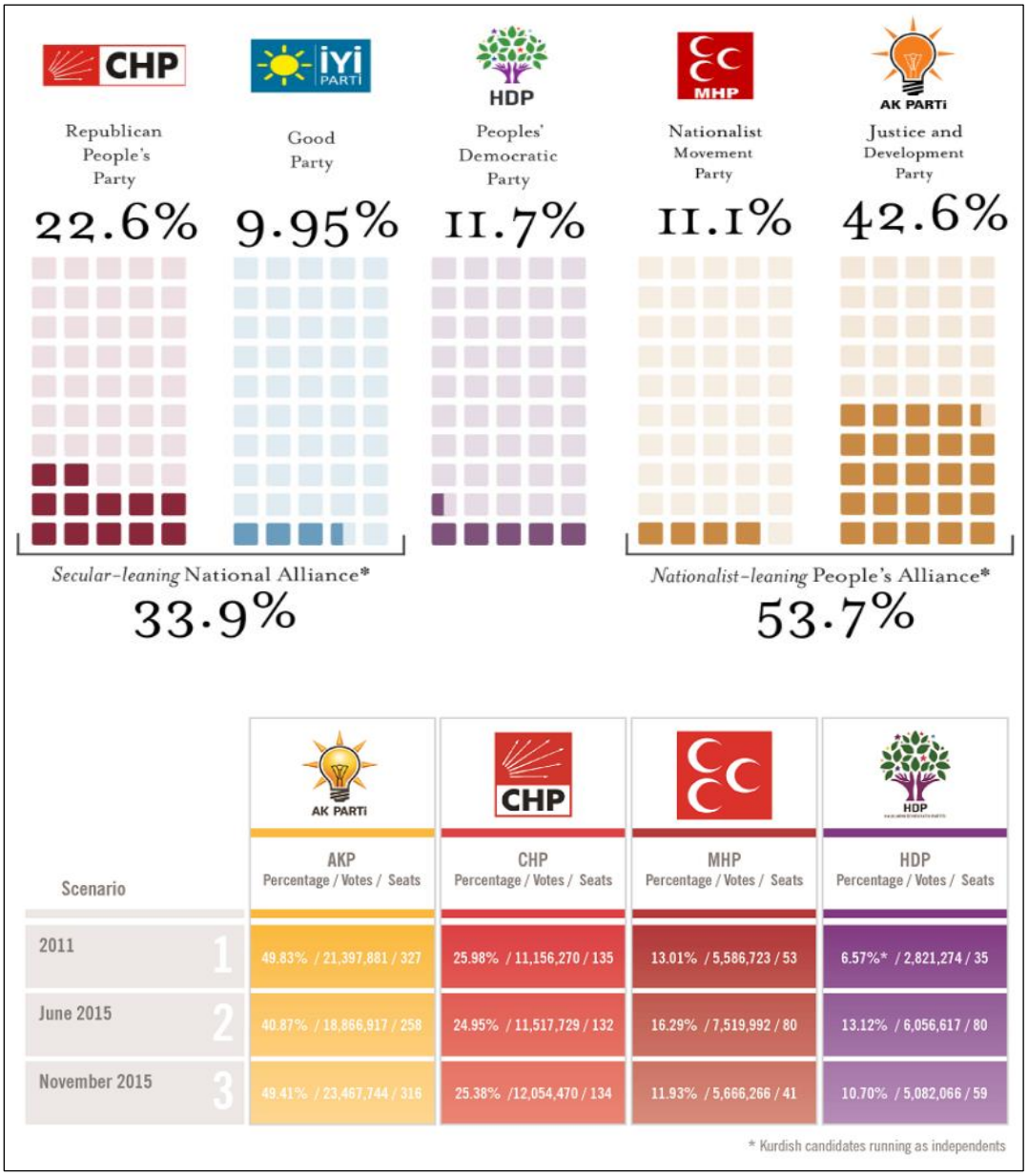
[14] See, e.g., State Department, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, Turkey; European Commission, Turkey 2018 Report, April 17, 2018.

[15] See, e.g., "Turkish Media Group Bought by Pro-Government Conglomerate," *New York Times*, March 22, 2018.

[16] State Department Press Briefing, May 3, 2018; Elana Beiser, "Record number of journalists jailed as Turkey, China, Egypt pay scant price for repression," Committee to Protect Journalists, December 13, 2017.

the MHP's role in parliament influences policy, the government may be less inclined to make conciliatory overtures to the Kurdish militant group PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, or Kurdistan Workers Party).[17] However, given his expanded powers, Erdogan might be less sensitive to parliamentary developments.

Figure 2. Turkey: 2018 Parliamentary Election Results in Context



Sources: Institute for the Study of War; Bipartisan Policy Center.

Note: Each square represents 12 parliamentary seats.

[17] Semih Idiz, "Erdogan still faces uphill battle despite electoral victory," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, June 25, 2018.

Most of the constitutional changes, which significantly affect Turkey's democracy and will probably have ripple effects for Turkey's foreign relations, went into effect after the June 2018 elections. Among other things, the changes

- eliminate the position of prime minister, with the president serving as both chief executive and head of state;
- allow the president to appoint ministers and other senior officials without parliamentary approval;
- prohibit ministers from serving as members of parliament;
- transfer responsibility for preparing the national budget from parliament to the president; and
- increase the proportion of senior judges chosen by the president from about half to over two-thirds.

The New Presidential System

As the presidential system in Turkey gets underway, observers debate how the formalities of government and the surrounding politics will affect checks and balances.[18] As part of the debate, commentators routinely compare Turkey's system with other presidential systems, particularly those in the United States and France.[19] Under Turkey's constitutional changes, a president may serve for up to two five-year terms, and presidential and parliamentary elections occur at the same time. The parliament (expanded from 550 seats to 600) has some ability to counter presidential actions. It retains power to legislate, appoint some judges and bureaucrats, and approve the president's budget proposals. It also may impeach the president with a two-thirds majority. The president can declare a state of emergency, but parliament can reverse this action, and decrees made during a state of emergency lapse if parliament does not approve them within three months.

In July 2018, President Erdogan appointed Fuat Oktay as vice president. Oktay had previously served as undersecretary in the prime ministry. In making his other appointments, Erdogan reduced the number of government ministries from 25 to 16, and established eight presidential directorates that overlap with various ministry portfolios.[20]

As with the 2017 constitutional referendum,[21] some allegations of voter fraud and manipulation surfaced in connection with the 2018 elections.[22] Muharrem Ince of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, or CHP), Erdogan's main challenger in the presidential race, noted these allegations in his concession message. He claimed that the campaign, which was conducted under a state of emergency and featured media coverage disproportionately favoring Erdogan and the AKP, was "unfair." However, Ince also said that the alleged manipulation did not affect the outcome.[23]

[18] See, e.g., "Turkey's powerful new executive presidency," Reuters, June 22, 2018.

[19] See, e.g., Chris Morris, "Turkey elections: How powerful will the next Turkish president be?" BBC News, June 25, 2018.

[20] Murat Yetkin, "Erdoğan wants to start the new system by September," *Hurriyet Daily News*, July 26, 2018; "Turkey's powerful new executive presidency," op. cit.; "Turkish President Erdogan unveils 16-minister cabinet," Anadolu Agency, July 9, 2018.

[21] Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Limited Referendum Observation Mission Final Report, Turkey, April 16, 2017 (published June 22, 2017).

[22] OSCE, International Election Observation Mission, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Turkey, Early Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, June 24, 2018 (published June 25, 2018).

[23] Erin Cunningham and Louisa Loveluck, "Erdogan opponent concedes election defeat, warns against Turkey's 'one-man regime,'" *Washington Post*, June 25, 2018.

Economy

Overview

The AKP's political successes have been aided considerably by robust Turkish economic growth since the early 2000s. Growth rates have been comparable at times to other major emerging markets, such as the BRIC economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Key Turkish businesses include diversified conglomerates (such as Koc and Sabanci) from traditional urban centers as well as "Anatolian tigers" (small- to medium-sized export-oriented companies) scattered throughout the country. According to the World Bank, Turkey's economy ranked 17th worldwide in annual GDP in 2017; when Erdogan came to power in 2003, Turkey was ranked 21st.

However, despite a real GDP growth rate of over 7% in 2017, a number of indicators suggest that the Turkish economy may be entering a period of volatility and perhaps crisis, with potentially significant implications for the global economy.[24] Some observers assert that the "low-hanging fruit"—numerous large infrastructure projects and the scaling up of low-technology manufacturing—that largely drove the previous decade's economic success is unlikely to produce similar results going forward.[25] Turkey's relatively large current account deficit increases its vulnerability to higher borrowing costs.

Prospects are uncertain for how the economy and foreign investors will respond under Erdogan's new government. In July 2018, Erdogan gave himself the power to appoint central bank rate-setters and appointed his son-in-law Berat Albayrak (the former energy minister) to serve as treasury and finance minister, exacerbating concerns about greater politicization of Turkey's monetary policy.[26] Some observers have speculated that if investment dries up, Turkey may need to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a financial assistance package.[27] This would be a sensitive challenge for Erdogan because his political success story is closely connected with helping Turkey become independent from its most recent IMF intervention in the early 2000s.[28]

Currency Decline: U.S.-Turkey Crisis and Sanctions[29]

The Turkish lira has depreciated significantly as of August 2018. Even before U.S. sanctions were enacted in August, Turkey's lira had faced a downward trend in value, with that trend becoming more pronounced around 2015. The lira's decline and accompanying inflation appear to have been driven in part by a strengthening of the U.S. dollar and in part by concerns about Turkey's central bank independence and rule of law.[30] These factors compounded the problem of the country's corporate debt, which stands at nearly 80% of GDP.[31] The U.S. sanctions related to

[24] Peter Goodman, "In an Uncertain Global Economy, Turkey May Be the Most at Risk," *New York Times*, July 10, 2018; David J. Lynch and Kareem Fahim, "Turkey's currency plunge fans fears of new global financial crisis," *Washington Post*, August 13, 2018.

[25] See, e.g., Stephen Starr, "Turkey's economy on the up, but deep-rooted problems remain," *Irish Times*, January 6, 2018.

[26] Marcus Ashworth, "Erdogan's New Dynasty Makes Turkey Uninvestable," Bloomberg, July 10, 2018.

[27] Mustafa Sonmez, "Is Turkey headed for IMF bailout?" *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, May 31, 2018.

[28] Onur Ant, et al., "Erdogan's Road Map out of Market Meltdown Is Full of U-Turns," Bloomberg, August 8, 2018.

[29] For more information, see CRS In Focus IF10957, *Turkey's Currency Crisis*, by Rebecca M. Nelson.

[30] Onur Ant, "Investors Ask 'Does Turkey Even Have a Central Bank Anymore?'" Bloomberg, May 23, 2018; "Turkey's president hopes to turn huge building projects into votes," *Economist*, April 26, 2018.

[31] Matthew C. Klein, "Turkey's Crisis Was Years in the Making," *Barron's*, August 15, 2018.

Pastor Andrew Brunson's case (see "Sanctions, Pastor Brunson, and Other Criminal Cases" below) and the historic crisis they may augur for U.S.-Turkey relations could be speeding the lira's decline. The lira has depreciated against the dollar by around 40% from January through August of 2018. In August, President Erdogan called on Turks to help with a "national struggle" by converting their savings from dollars and gold to lira.[32]

Energy

Turkey's importance as a regional energy transport hub makes it relevant for world energy markets while also providing Turkey with opportunities to satisfy its own domestic energy needs. Turkey's location has made it a key country in the U.S. and European effort to establish a southern corridor for natural gas transit from diverse sources.[33] However, Turkey's dependence on other countries for energy—particularly Russia and Iran—may somewhat constrain Turkey from pursuing foreign policies in opposition to those countries.[34] Construction on the Turkish Stream pipeline, which would carry Russian natural gas through Turkey into Europe, has proceeded apace since 2017; the first gas deliveries are projected for the end of 2019.[35]

As part of a broad Turkish strategy to reduce the country's dependence on foreign actors, Turkey appears to be trying to diversify its energy imports. In late 2011, Turkey and Azerbaijan reached deals for the transit of natural gas to and through Turkey via the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP);[36] the project was inaugurated in June 2018.[37] The deals have attracted attention as a potentially significant precedent for transporting non-Russian, non-Iranian energy to Europe. In June 2013, the consortium that controls the Azerbaijani gas fields elected to have TANAP connect with a proposed Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) to Italy, though political developments in Italy and elsewhere could complicate these arrangements.[38] Turkey also has shown interest in importing natural gas from new fields in the Eastern Mediterranean, and possibly even developing its own gas fields, but difficult relations with Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt could hamper these efforts.[39]

Another part of Turkey's strategy to become more energy independent is to increase domestic energy production. Turkey has entered into an agreement with a subsidiary of Rosatom (Russia's state-run nuclear company) to have it build and operate what would be Turkey's first nuclear power plant in Akkuyu near the Mediterranean port of Mersin. Construction, which had been

[32] David Levy, "Lira collapses as Erdogan tells Turks: They have 'their dollars,' we have 'our god,'" CNBC, August 10, 2018.

[33] The focus of U.S. efforts has been on establishing a southern corridor route for Caspian and Middle Eastern natural gas supplies to be shipped to Europe, generally through pipelines traversing Turkey. State Department press statement, The Importance of Diversity in European Energy Security, June 29, 2018.

[34] According to one report, Turkey received almost 55% percent of its oil used for the first four months of 2018 from Iran. "Turkey says will not cut off trade ties to Iran at behest of others," Reuters, June 29, 2018. Another report indicates that Russia and Iran remain the top two importers of natural gas to Turkey. "Iran reduces gas exports to Turkey," Iran Daily, April 30, 2018. For U.S. government information on the main sources of Turkish energy imports, see http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=TUR.

[35] "Gazprom resumes construction of second line of Turkish Stream pipeline," TASS, June 26, 2018.

[36] The terms of Turkish-Azerbaijani agreement specified that 565 billion-700 billion cubic feet (bcf) of natural gas would transit Turkey, of which 210 bcf would be available for Turkey's domestic use.

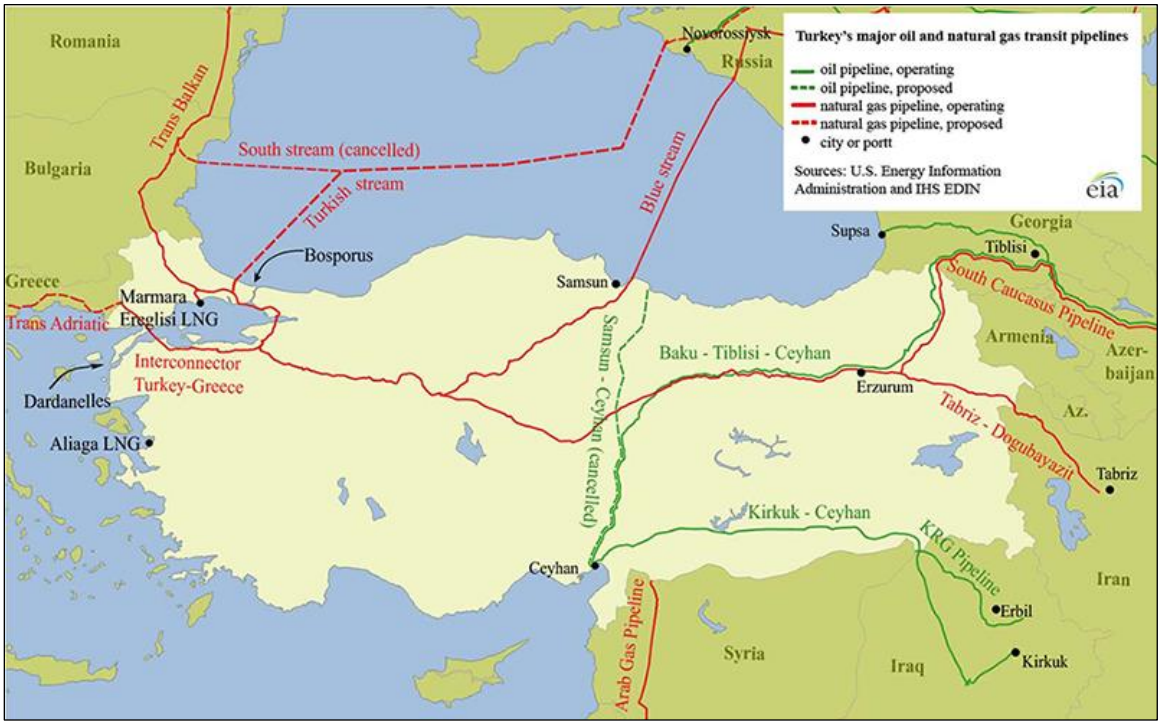
[37] "Leaders open TANAP pipeline carrying gas from Azerbaijan to Europe," *Hurriyet Daily News*, June 12, 2018.

[38] Vanand Meliksetian, "A Storm Is Brewing in the Southern Gas Corridor," *Oil Price*, June 23, 2018. For more information, see CRS Report R42405, *Europe's Energy Security: Options and Challenges to Natural Gas Supply Diversification*, coordinated by Michael Ratner.

[39] Yigal Chazon, "Race to exploit Mediterranean gas raises regional hackles," *Financial Times*, March 9, 2018.

delayed for several years, began in April 2018, with operations expected to begin in 2023.[40] Some observers have expressed both skepticism about the construction timeline and concerns that the plant could provide Russia with additional leverage over Turkey.[41] Japan has agreed to assist with the construction of a second nuclear power plant for Turkey in Sinop on the Black Sea coast, and Turkey is reportedly discussing cooperation with China to build a third plant in Thrace (northwest Turkey).[42]

Figure 3. Major Pipelines Traversing Turkey



The Kurdish Issue

Background

Ethnic Kurds reportedly constitute approximately 19% of Turkey's population.[43] Kurds are largely concentrated in the relatively impoverished southeast, though populations are found in urban centers across the country. Some Kurds have been reluctant to recognize Turkish state authority in various parts of the southeast—a dynamic that also exists between Kurds and national governments in Iraq, Iran, and Syria. This reluctance and harsh Turkish government measures to quell Kurdish demands for rights have fed tensions that have occasionally escalated since the foundation of the republic in 1923. Since 1984, the Turkish military has periodically countered an

[40] See, e.g., Aram Ekin Duran, "Akkuyu nuclear plant: Turkey and Russia's atomic connection," Deutsche Welle, April 3, 2018.

[41] See, e.g., Ibid.

[42] "Turkey's third nuclear power plant likely to be built in Thrace," *Daily Sabah*, June 14, 2018.

[43] CIA World Factbook, Turkey (accessed August 31, 2018).

on-and-off separatist insurgency and urban terrorism campaign by the PKK.[44] The initially secessionist demands of the PKK have since ostensibly evolved toward the less ambitious goal of greater cultural and political autonomy.[45] According to the U.S. government and European Union, the PKK partially finances its activities through criminal activities, including its operation of a Europe-wide drug trafficking network.[46]

The struggle between Turkish authorities and the PKK was most intense during the 1990s, but has flared periodically since then. The PKK uses safe havens in areas of northern Iraq under the nominal authority of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The Turkish military's approach to neutralizing the PKK has been routinely criticized by Western governments and human rights organizations for being overly hard on ethnic Kurds. Thousands have been imprisoned and hundreds of thousands have been displaced or had their livelihoods disrupted for suspected PKK involvement or sympathies.

PKK Designations by U.S. Government

Designation	Year
Foreign Terrorist Organization	1997
Specially Designated Global Terrorist	2001
Significant Foreign Narcotics Trafficker	2008

Government Approaches to the Kurds

Until the spring of 2015, Erdogan appeared to prefer negotiating a political compromise with PKK leaders over the prospect of armed conflict.[47] However, against the backdrop of PKK-affiliated Kurdish groups' success in Syria and domestic political considerations, Erdogan then adopted a more confrontational political stance with the PKK. Within that context, a complicated set of circumstances involving terrorist attacks and mutual suspicion led to a resumption of violence between government forces and the PKK in the summer of 2015. As a result of the violence, which has been concentrated in southeastern Turkey and has tapered off somewhat since late 2016, hundreds of fighters and civilians have died.[48] In addition to mass population displacement, infrastructure in the southeast has suffered significant damage. U.S. officials, while supportive of Turkey's prerogative to defend itself from attacks, have advised Turkey to show restraint and proportionality in its actions.[49]

[44] According to the International Crisis Group, around 14,000 Turks have been killed since fighting began in the early 1980s. This figure includes Turkish security personnel of various types and Turkish civilians (including Turkish Kurds who are judged not to have been PKK combatants). Estimates of PKK dead run from 33,000 to 43,000. International Crisis Group, "Turkey's PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll" (interactive blog updated into 2018); *Turkey: Ending the PKK Insurgency*, Europe Report No. 213, September 20, 2011.

[45] Kurdish nationalist leaders demand that any future changes to Turkey's constitution (in its current form following the 2017 amendments) not suppress Kurdish ethnic and linguistic identity. The first clause of Article 3 of the constitution reads, "The Turkish state, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish." Because the constitution states that its first three articles are unamendable, even proposing a change could face judicial obstacles.

[46] European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2018; U.S. Department of the Treasury Press Release, "Five PKK Leaders Designated Narcotics Traffickers," April 20, 2011.

[47] As prime minister, Erdogan had led past efforts to resolve the Kurdish question by using political, cultural, and economic development approaches, in addition to the traditional security-based approach, in line with the AKP's ideological starting point that common Islamic ties among Turks and Kurds could transcend ethnic differences.

[48] International Crisis Group, "Turkey's PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll," op. cit.

[49] Mark Landler and Carlotta Gall, "As Turkey Attacks Kurds in Syria, U.S. Is on the Sideline," *New York Times*, January 22, 2018.

Under the state of emergency enacted after the failed July 2016 coup attempt, Turkey's government cracked down on Turkey's Kurdish minority. Dozens of elected Kurdish mayors were removed from office and replaced with government-appointed "custodians." In November 2016, the two co-leaders of the pro-Kurdish HDP were arrested along with nine other parliamentarians under various charges of crimes against the state. Turkish officials routinely accuse Kurdish politicians of support for the PKK, but these politicians generally deny close ties.

The future trajectory of Turkey-PKK dealings may depend on a number of factors, including

- which Kurdish figures and groups (imprisoned PKK founder Abdullah Ocalan [profiled in **Appendix A**], various PKK militant leaders, the professedly nonviolent HDP) are most influential in driving events;
- Erdogan's approach to the issue, which has alternated between conciliation and confrontation; and
- possible incentives to Turkey's government and the Kurds from the United States or other actors for mitigating violence and promoting political resolution.

Religious Minorities

Many Members of Congress follow the status of religious minorities in Turkey. Adherents of non-Muslim religions and minority Muslim sects (most prominently, the Alevis) rely to some extent on legal appeals, political advocacy, and support from Western countries to protect their rights in Turkey.

The Turkish government controls or closely oversees religious activities in the country. The Turkish arrangement (often referred to as "laicism") was originally used to enforce secularism, partly to prevent religion from influencing state actors and institutions as it did under Ottoman rule. However, since at least 2015, observers have detected some movement by state religious authorities in the direction of the AKP's Islamic-friendly worldview.[50]

Christians and Jews

U.S. concerns focus largely on the rights of Turkey's Christian and Jewish communities, which have sought greater freedom to choose leaders, train clergy, own property, and otherwise function independently of the Turkish government.[51] According to the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2017, "Members of the Jewish community continued to express concern about anti-Semitism and increased threats of violence throughout the country."[52]

Some Members of Congress routinely express grievances through proposed congressional resolutions and letters on behalf of the Ecumenical (Greek Orthodox) Patriarchate of Constantinople, the spiritual center of Orthodox Christianity based in Istanbul.[53] The Patriarchate,

[50] See, e.g., Ahmet Erdi Ozturk, "Diyanet as a Turkish Foreign Policy Tool: Evidence from the Netherlands and Bulgaria," *Politics and Religion*, March 2018; Svante Cornell, "The Rise of Diyanet: the Politicization of Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs," *Turkey Analyst,* October 9, 2015.

[51] Since 2009, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has given Turkey designations ranging from "country of particular concern" (highest concern) to "monitored." From 2014 through 2017, Turkey has been included in Tier 2, the intermediate level of concern. For additional information on Turkey's religious minorities, see the State Department's International Religious Freedom Report for 2017.

[52] See "Israel" within this report for context.

[53] On December 13, 2011, for example, the House passed H.Res. 306—"Urging the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties"—by voice vote. In June 2014, the House Foreign Affairs

along with various U.S. and European officials, continues to press for the reopening of its Halki Theological School,[54] which was closed after a 1971 Constitutional Court ruling prohibiting the operation of private institutions of higher education. After an April 2018 meeting with President Erdogan, Patriarch Bartholomew said that he was "optimistic" that the seminary would be opened in the fall.[55]

Turkey has converted some historic Christian churches into mosques, and may be considering additional conversions. A popular movement to convert Istanbul's landmark Hagia Sophia (which became a museum in the early years of the Turkish republic) into a mosque has gained strength in recent years. Bills to effect that conversion have been introduced in the Turkish parliament, but none have been enacted.[56] In June 2016, the government permitted daily televised Quran readings from Hagia Sophia during Ramadan, prompting criticism from the Greek government,[57] and calls from the State Department for Turkey to respect the site's "traditions and complex history."[58] As part of a cultural event in March 2018, President Erdogan recited a prayer from the Quran at the Hagia Sophia.[59]

Alevis

About 10 to 20 million Turkish Muslims are Alevis (of whom about 20% are ethnic Kurds). The Alevi community has some relation to Shiism[60] and may contain strands from pre-Islamic Anatolian and Christian traditions.[61] Alevism has been traditionally influenced by Sufi mysticism that emphasizes believers' individual spiritual paths, but it defies precise description owing to its lack of centralized leadership and reliance on secret oral traditions. Despite a decision by Turkey's top appeals court in August 2015 that the state financially support cemevis (Alevi houses of worship), the government still does not do so.[62]

Committee favorably reported the Turkey Christian Churches Accountability Act (H.R. 4347). The Turkish government does not acknowledge the "ecumenical" nature of the Patriarchate, but does not object to others' reference to the Patriarchate's ecumenicity.

[54] The Patriarchate also presses for the Turkish government to lift the requirement that the Patriarch be a Turkish citizen, and for it to return previously confiscated properties.

[55] Stelyo Berberakis, "Patriarch hopes to reopen seminary after talks with president," *Daily Sabah*, May 11, 2018. In the past, Erdogan has reportedly conditioned Halki's reopening on measures by Greece to accommodate its Muslim community. "Turkey ready to open Halki Seminary in return for a mosque in Greece: report," *Hurriyet Daily News*, May 8, 2015.

[56] Nikolia Apostolou, "Turks push to turn iconic Hagia Sophia back into a mosque," *USA Today*, February 25, 2017; Stephen Starr, "Istanbul's Hagia Sophia is at the centre of a battle for Turkey's soul," *Irish Times*, January 2, 2018.

[57] Pinar Tremblay, "The battle for Haghia Sophia in Istanbul escalates," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, June 15, 2016.

[58] Philip Chrysopoulos, "Turkey Should Respect Hagia Sophia Tradition, Says State Dept. Spokesperson," usa.greekreporter.com, June 10, 2016.

[59] Zeynep Bilginsoy, "Turkish President Recites Muslim Prayer at the Hagia Sophia," Associated Press, March 31, 2018.

[60] For information comparing and contrasting Sunnism and Shiism, see CRS Report RS21745, *Islam: Sunnis and Shiites*, by Christopher M. Blanchard

[61] For additional historical background, see Elise Massicard, *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe: Identity and managing territorial diversity*, New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 11-18.

[62] Patrick Kingsley, "Turkey's Alevis, a Muslim Minority, Fear a Policy of Denying Their Existence," *New York Times*, July 22, 2017.

Alevis have long been among the strongest supporters of secularism in Turkey, which they reportedly see as a form of protection from the Sunni majority.[63] Arab Alawites in Syria and southern Turkey are a distinct Shia-related religious community.

U.S.-Turkey Relations: Questions about Ally Status

Numerous points of bilateral tension have raised questions within the United States and Turkey about the two countries' alliance. In the context of concerns about Turkey's strategic orientation (see "Turkey's Strategic Orientation and Foreign Policy"), many Members of Congress are increasingly active in proposing legislation and exercising oversight on U.S.-Turkey matters that include arms sales and strategic cooperation, various criminal cases, and economic sanctions. For its part, Turkey may bristle because it feels like it is treated as a junior partner, and may seek greater foreign policy diversification through stronger relationships with more countries.[64]

U.S./NATO Cooperation with Turkey

Overview

Turkey's location near several global hotspots makes the continuing availability of its territory for the stationing and transport of arms, cargo, and personnel valuable for the United States and NATO. From Turkey's perspective, NATO's traditional value has been to mitigate its concerns about encroachment by neighbors. Turkey initially turned to the West largely as a reaction to aggressive post-World War II posturing by the Soviet Union. In addition to Incirlik air base (see textbox below), other key U.S./NATO sites include an early warning missile defense radar in eastern Turkey and a NATO ground forces command in Izmir (see **Figure 4** below). Turkey also controls access to and from the Black Sea through its straits pursuant to the Montreux Convention of 1936.

Current tensions have fueled discussion from the U.S. perspective about the advisability of continued U.S./NATO use of Turkish bases. Reports in 2018 suggest that some Trump Administration officials have contemplated permanent reductions in the U.S. presence in Turkey.[65] There are historical precedents for such changes. On a number of occasions, the United States has withdrawn military assets from Turkey or Turkey has restricted U.S. use of its territory or airspace. These include the following:

- **1962 - Cuban Missile Crisis**. The United States withdrew its nuclear-tipped Jupiter missiles following this crisis.

[63] According to a scholar on Turkey, "Alevis suffered centuries of oppression under the Ottomans, who accused them of not being truly Muslim and suspected them of colluding with the Shi'i Persians against the empire. Alevi Kurds were victims of the early republic's Turkification policies and were massacred by the thousands in Dersim [now called Tunceli] in 1937-39. In the 1970s, Alevis became associated with socialist and other leftist movements, while the political right was dominated by Sunni Muslims. An explosive mix of sectarian cleavages, class polarization, and political violence led to communal massacres of Alevis in five major cities in 1977 and 1978, setting the stage for the 1980 coup." Jenny White, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 14.

[64] Recep Tayyip Erdogan, "Erdogan: How Turkey Sees the Crisis With the U.S.," *New York Times*, August 10, 2018; Umut Uzer, "The Revival of Ottomanism in Turkish Foreign Policy: 'The World Is Greater Than Five,'" *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, March 21, 2018.

[65] Gordon Lubold, Felicia Schwartz, and Nancy A. Youssef, "U.S. Pares Back Use of Turkish Base Amid Strains with Ankara," *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2018.

- **1975 - Cyprus.** Turkey closed most U.S. defense and intelligence installations in Turkey during the U.S. arms embargo that Congress imposed in response to Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus.
- **2003 - Iraq.** A Turkish parliamentary vote did not allow the United States to open a second front from Turkey in the Iraq war.

The July 2016 coup plotters apparently used Incirlik air base, causing temporary disruptions of some U.S. military operations. This raised questions about Turkey's stability and the safety and utility of Turkish territory for U.S. and NATO assets. As a result of these questions and U.S.-Turkey tensions, some observers have advocated exploring alternative basing arrangements in the region.[66]

The cost to the United States of finding a temporary or permanent replacement for Incirlik and other sites in Turkey would likely depend on a number of variables including the functionality and location of alternatives, the location of future U.S. military engagements, and the political and economic difficulty involved in moving or expanding U.S. military operations elsewhere. An August 2018 media report claimed that U.S. officials have been "quietly looking for alternatives to Incirlik, including in Romania and Jordan."[67] Another August report cited a Department of Defense spokesperson as saying that the United States is not leaving Incirlik.[68]

Calculating the costs and benefits to the United States of a U.S./NATO presence in Turkey, and of potential changes in U.S./NATO posture, revolves to a significant extent around three questions:

- To what extent does strengthening Turkey relative to other regional actors serve U.S. interests?
- To what extent does the United States rely on the use of Turkish territory or airspace to secure and protect U.S. interests?
- To what extent does Turkey rely on U.S./NATO support, both in principle and in functional terms, for its security and regional influence?

[66] Testimony of Steven Cook of the Council on Foreign Relations, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing, September 6, 2017; John Cappello, et al., "Covering the Bases: Reassessing U.S. Military Deployments in Turkey After the July 2016 Attempted Coup d'Etat," Foundation for Defense of Democracies, August 2016.

[67] Adam Goldman and Gardiner Harris, "U.S. Imposes Sanctions on Turkish Officials Over Detained American Pastor," *New York Times*, August 2, 2018.

[68] Nimet Kirac, "US-Turkey cooperation against Islamic State ongoing, Pentagon says," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, August 27, 2018.

Incirlik Air Base

Turkey's Incirlik (pronounced *een-jeer-leek*) air base in the southern part of the country has long been the symbolic and logistical center of the U.S. military presence in Turkey. Since 1991, the base has been critical in supplying U.S. military missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United States's 39th Air Base Wing is based at Incirlik. Turkey opened its territory for anti-IS coalition surveillance flights in Syria and Iraq in 2014 and permitted airstrikes starting in 2015. U.S. drones (both unarmed and armed) have reportedly flown anti-IS missions. At one point, the number of U.S. forces at the base was reportedly around 2,500 (previously, the normal force deployment had been closer to 1,500), but a March 2018 article, citing U.S. officials, indicated that the U.S. military has sharply reduced combat operations at Incirlik owing to U.S.-Turkey tensions.[69]

Figure 4. Map of U.S. and NATO Military Presence in Turkey

Sources: Department of Defense, NATO, and various media outlets; adapted by CRS.

Notes: All locations are approximate. All bases are under Turkish sovereignty, with portions of them used for limited purposes by the U.S. military and NATO.

[69] Gordon Lubold, et al., "U.S. Pares Operations at Base in Turkey," *Wall Street Journal*, March 12, 2018.

U.S. Arms Sales and Aid to Turkey

Turkey has historically been one of the largest recipients of U.S. arms (see more information in **Appendix B**), owing to its status as a NATO ally, its large military, and its strategic position. Presently, however, Turkey seeks to build up its domestic defense industry (including through technology-sharing and co-production arrangements with other countries) as much as possible, while minimizing "off-the-shelf" arms purchases from the United States and other countries.

State Department FY2019 Aid Request for Turkey

IMET: $3.1 million

NADR: $600,000

Total: $3.7 million

Since 1948, the United States has provided Turkey with approximately $13.8 billion in overall military assistance (nearly $8.2 billion in grants and $5.6 billion in loans). Current annual military and security grant assistance, however, is limited to approximately $3-5 million annually in International Military Education and Training (IMET); and Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining and Related Programs (NADR) funds.

Possible S-400 Acquisition from Russia

In December 2017, Turkey and Russia reportedly signed a finance agreement for Turkey's purchase of the Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air defense system. Media reports indicate that the deal, if finalized, would be worth approximately $2.5 billion.[70] Turkey's procurement agency anticipates initial delivery in July 2019, which is sooner than the first reports of the deal had indicated.[71] (An expedited delivery could increase the purchase price.[72]) Alongside Turkey's pursuit of the S-400 deal to address short-term needs, Turkey also is exploring an arrangement to co-develop a long-range air defense system with the Franco-Italian Eurosam consortium by the mid-2020s.[73]

Turkey's planned acquisition of the S-400 has raised a number of U.S. and NATO concerns, ranging from technical aspects of military cooperation within NATO to broader political considerations. For some observers, the S-400 issue raises the possibility that Russia could take advantage of U.S.-Turkey friction to undermine the NATO alliance.[74] In a May 3, 2018, press briefing, a State Department spokesperson said, "Under NATO and under the NATO agreement ... you're only supposed to buy ... weapons and other materiel that are interoperable with other NATO partners. We don't see [an S-400 system from Russia] as being interoperable."[75] In March

[70] Tuvan Gumrukcu and Ece Toksabay, "Turkey, Russia sign deal on supply of S-400 missiles," Reuters, December 29, 2017. According to this article, the portion of the purchase price not paid for up front (55%) would be financed by a Russian loan.

[71] Charles Forrester, "Turkey, Russia accelerate S-400 sale," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, April 4, 2018.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Turkey's procurement agency and two Turkish defense companies signed a contract in January 2018 with Eurosam to do an 18-month definition study to prepare a production and development contract to address Turkish demands. According to one source, a co-developed long-range system with Eurosam would comprise part of an air defense umbrella that would include the S-400 as a high-altitude system and domestic systems as low- and medium-altitude options. Lale Sariibrahimoglu, "Turkey awards Eurosam and Turkish companies contract to define air and missile defence system," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, January 8, 2018.

[74] See, e.g., Yaroslav Trofimov, "Russia, Turkey Forge a Tactical Bond," *Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 2018.

[75] Various NATO assets are deployed to Turkey, as depicted in **Figure 4**, including a U.S. forward-deployed early warning radar at the Kurecik base near the eastern Turkish city of Malatya as part of NATO's Active Layered Theater

2018, Czech General Petr Pavel, who chairs the NATO Military Committee, voiced concerns about the possibility that Russian personnel helping operate an S-400 system in Turkey could gain significant intelligence on NATO assets stationed in the country.[76] Additionally, in November 2017, an Air Force official raised specific concerns related to Turkey's operation of the S-400 system alongside F-35 aircraft, citing the potential for Russia to obtain sensitive data related to F-35 capabilities.[77] A Turkish columnist noted in July 2018 that a number of other countries planning to acquire the F-35 share U.S. worries about S-400 information-gathering on F-35s in Turkish airspace.[78]

Turkey has justified its preliminary decision to acquire S-400s instead of U.S. or European alternatives by claiming that it turned to Russia because its attempts to purchase an air defense system from NATO allies were rebuffed.[79] Turkey has also cited various practical reasons, including cost, technology sharing, and territorial defense coverage.[80] However, one analysis from December 2017 asserted that the S-400 deal would not involve technology transfer, would not defend Turkey from ballistic missiles (because the system would not have access to NATO early-warning systems), and could weaken rather than strengthen Turkey's geopolitical position by increasing Turkish dependence on Russia.[81] According to one Turkish press report, Turkey may be taking various steps intended to assuage U.S. concerns, such as insisting on systems and training that allow Turkish technicians to operate the S-400 without Russian involvement, and allowing U.S. officials to examine the S-400.[82] Nevertheless, a Turkish columnist has predicted that "either these S-400s are going to be stored somewhere without being installed, or Turkey will purchase something else from Russia…to appease Moscow."[83]

In March 2018, Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu said that Turkey would also be willing to purchase U.S.-origin Patriot systems if the Administration "guarantees that the US Congress [would] approve the sale."[84] In April, following a meeting in Brussels in which Secretary of State Pompeo reportedly asked Cavusoglu to "closely consider NATO interoperable systems," Cavusoglu said that the S-400 process was a "done deal," and that further purchases would be in addition to, not in place of, S-400s.[85] At a public event in May, Air Force Secretary Heather

Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) system.

[76] Paul McLeary, "Top NATO General (A Czech) To Europe: 'Grow Up,'" Breaking Defense, March 7, 2018.

[77] Valerie Insinna, "US official: If Turkey buys Russian systems, they can't plug into NATO tech," *Defense News*, November 16, 2017. Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson reiterated these concerns in May 2018. Pat Host, "Turkey purchase of Russian S-400 air defence system draws US Air Force concern," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, May 30, 2018.

[78] Barcin Yinanc, "With or without S-400, in both cases the loser is the Turkish taxpayer," *Hurriyet Daily News*, July 24, 2018.

[79] Sebastian Sprenger, "Turkey defiant on purchase of Russian S-400 anti-missile system," *Defense News*, July 11, 2018.

[80] Burak Ege Bekdil, "Turkey makes deal to buy Russian-made S-400 air defense system," *Defense News*, December 27, 2017; Umut Uras, "Turkey's S-400 purchase not a message to NATO: official," Al Jazeera, November 12, 2017. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu insisted in February that Turkey needs additional air defense coverage "as soon as possible," and referenced previous withdrawals of Patriot systems by NATO allies. State Department website, Remarks by Cavusoglu, Press Availability with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Ankara, Turkey, February 16, 2018.

[81] Gonul Tol and Nilsu Goren, "Turkey's Quest for Air Defense: Is the S-400 Deal a Pivot to Russia?" Middle East Institute, December 2017.

[82] Ragip Soylu, "Turkey extends S-400 offer to Washington," *Daily Sabah*, June 27, 2018.

[83] Yinanc, op. cit.

[84] Kerry Herschelman, "US discourages Turkey from buying S-400s," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, March 19, 2018.

[85] "Pompeo presses Turkey on S-400 missiles purchase from Russia," Reuters, April 27, 2018.

Wilson referred to U.S.-Turkey discussions aimed at preventing the F-35 from being close to the S-400. In expressing an opinion about room for improvement with U.S. export controls, she added that the United States sometimes should design defense systems "to be exportable from the very beginning so that we can all operate off the same equipment [with allies]."[86] In July, a State Department official confirmed ongoing talks with Turkey about the Patriot system.[87]

As mentioned above, the planned S-400 acquisition could trigger sanctions under existing U.S. law. In a September 2017 letter to President Trump, Senators John McCain and Ben Cardin cited the deal as a possible violation of section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, P.L. 115-44)—relating to transactions with Russian defense and intelligence sectors—that was enacted on August 2, 2017.[88] In April 18, 2018, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell said that a Turkish S-400 purchase from Russia could "potentially lead to sanctions under section 231 of CAATSA and adversely impact Turkey's participation in an F-35 program."[89]

Previously, in 2013, Turkey reached a preliminary agreement to purchase a Chinese air and missile defense system, but later (in 2015) withdrew from the deal, perhaps partly due to concerns voiced within NATO, as well as China's reported reluctance to share technology.[90]

Selected Points of Bilateral Tension

The U.S.-Turkey relationship has always been complicated. Since the 2016 coup attempt, several differences and increased public acrimony have developed between the two countries. Turkey's possible S-400 acquisition from Russia has been discussed above, and U.S.-Turkey disputes over Syria are discussed in a later section of this report. This section discusses other points of bilateral tension.

Turkey's Strategic Orientation and Foreign Policy

Turkish actions and statements on a number of foreign policy issues have contributed to problems with the United States and other NATO allies. For example, Turkey's dealings with Russia on

[86] Ellen Mitchell, "Air Force secretary advocates for export control fixes amid concerns over Turkey," thehill.com, May 29, 2018.

[87] "U.S. in Talks with Turkey to Sell Patriot Missile System to Block Russian Purchase," Reuters, July 16, 2018.

[88] Richard Lardner, "Senators Urge Trump to Robustly Enforce Russia Sanctions Law," Associated Press, September 29, 2017. CAATSA requires the President to impose at least five of the 12 sanctions described in section 235 "with respect to a person the President determines knowingly, on or after such date of enactment, engages in a significant transaction with a person that is part of, or operates for or on behalf of, the defense or intelligence sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation." CAATSA permits the President to waive sanctions only if he submits "(1) a written determination that the waiver—(A) is in the vital national security interests of the United States; or (B) will further the enforcement of this title; and (2) a certification that the Government of the Russian Federation has made significant efforts to reduce the number and intensity of cyber intrusions conducted by that Government." See also State Department, Public Guidance on Sanctions with Respect to Russia's Defense and Intelligence Sectors Under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017, October 27, 2017.

[89] Transcript of the testimony is available at http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5301736?0.

[90] "Turkey confirms cancellation of $3.4 billion missile defence project awarded to China," Reuters, November 18, 2015.

Syria, arms sales, and energy;[91] its openness to better relations with China;[92] and its periodic public spats with U.S. and European officials[93] have fueled questions about its commitment to NATO and its Western orientation. Additionally, President Erdogan has taken a leading role in rallying regional and international opposition to President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy to Israel there, and in condemning U.S. support of Israel during rounds of Israeli-Palestinian violence. Erdogan also has vocally opposed the May 2018 U.S. withdrawal from the international agreement on Iran's nuclear program, amid questions about Turkey's willingness to comply with sanctions that the United States is re-imposing on Iran's oil exports. Also during 2018, Turkey's interactions have become increasingly contentious with Greece and Cyprus over airspace and maritime access issues that have implications for NATO and the European Union.[94] For more information, see "Turkish Foreign Policy" below.

Sanctions, Pastor Brunson, and Other Criminal Cases[95]

On August 1, 2018, the Treasury Department levied sanctions against Turkey's justice and interior ministers, blocking any property interests they might have within U.S. jurisdiction due to their "leading roles in the organizations responsible for the arrest and detention of Pastor Andrew Brunson."[96] Turkey reacted with reciprocal sanctions against the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and Attorney General. Reciprocal sanctions of this type between the United States and an ally are unusual and suggest a crisis in bilateral relations.[97] With the impasse on Brunson's situation ongoing, on August 10 President Trump announced a doubling of tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum imports.[98] This prompted retaliatory action from Turkey.[99]

Pastor Brunson's case and a number of other cases that have stoked U.S.-Turkey tensions have some connection with the 2016 coup attempt. Shortly after the attempt, Turkey's government called for the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, and the matter remains pending before U.S.

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[91] See, e.g., Trofimov, op. cit.; Pepe Escobar, "From Ankara to Moscow, Eurasia integration is on the move," *Asia Times*, April 5, 2018.

[92] See, e.g., Selcuk Colakoglu, "Turkey-China Relations: From 'Strategic Cooperation' to 'Strategic Partnership'?" Middle East Institute, March 20, 2018; Elif Binici, "Close cooperation on Belt and Road to fuel Chinese investments in Turkey," *Daily Sabah*, October 27, 2017.

[93] See, e.g., Semih Idiz, "Erdogan's not doing Turks in Europe any favors," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, June 12, 2018.

[94] "Rough seas," *Economist*, April 12, 2018; Yiannis Baboulias, "Greece and Turkey Are Inching Toward War," foreignpolicy.com, April 18, 2018.

[95] For more information on U.S.-Turkey trade relations, see CRS In Focus IF10961, *U.S.-Turkey Trade Relations*, by Shayerah Ilias Akhtar.

[96] Treasury Department press release, Treasury Sanctions Turkish Officials with Leading Roles in Unjust Detention of U.S. Pastor Andrew Brunson, August 1, 2018. The sanctions were authorized pursuant to Executive Order 13818, "Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption," which builds upon authorities from the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (section 1261, et seq. of P.L. 114-328). For more information, see CRS In Focus IF10576, *The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act*, by Dianne E. Rennack.

[97] See, e.g., Therese Raphael, "U.S.-Turkey Relations Will Never Be the Same," Bloomberg, August 10, 2018.

[98] https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1027899286586109955. The formal presidential proclamation only explicitly referred to action on steel tariffs. White House, Presidential Proclamation Adjusting Imports of Steel into the United States, August 10, 2018. Earlier in the year, President Trump had applied new tariffs on steel and aluminum globally, with exceptions for some countries, but not Turkey. Ceyda Caglayan, "U.S. steel tariffs slash Turkey's exports; future orders recovering—association," Reuters, June 27, 2018.

[99] Jethro Mullen, "Turkey ramps up US spat with huge tariffs on cars and other goods," CNN, August 15, 2018.

officials.[100] Sharp criticism of U.S. actions related to Gulen's case has significantly increased in Turkish media since the coup attempt. Parallel with nationwide efforts to imprison and marginalize those with connections to Gulen, Turkish authorities have detained Brunson (see textbox below) and a number of other U.S. citizens (most of them dual U.S.-Turkish citizens), along with Turkish employees of the U.S. government.[101]

On August 15, 2018, White House press secretary Sarah Sanders drew a distinction between the Treasury Department sanctions and the new tariff levels on steel. She said that the sanctions were "specific to Pastor Brunson and others that we feel are being held unfairly," but that the tariffs that are in place on steel are specific to national security and "would not be removed with the release of Pastor Brunson."[102]

Detention of Pastor Brunson in Turkey

The most high-profile case of an American detained in Turkey after the July 2016 coup attempt is that of Andrew Brunson, a Presbyterian pastor who had been living with his family and working with a small congregation in Izmir since 1993. Brunson and his wife were arrested in October 2016; she was released 13 days later but he remained in custody. In September 2017, President Erdogan appeared to suggest an exchange of Brunson for Fethullah Gulen, but a State Department spokesperson said in response to a question on the issue, "I can't imagine that we would go down that road."[103] In March 2018, after nearly 18 months of detention without indictment, Brunson was charged with espionage and with working on behalf of terrorist groups (the Gulen movement and Kurdish militants). If convicted, he could face up to 35 years in prison. Also in March, Senator Thom Tillis visited Brunson in prison and reported a number of concerns about Brunson's well-being, including that Brunson's physical health had deteriorated and that he had lost 50 pounds.[104]

U.S. officials have been openly critical of Turkish authorities in the case. On April 17, 2018, President Trump tweeted, "Pastor Andrew Brunson, a fine gentleman and Christian leader in the United States, is on trial and being persecuted in Turkey for no reason."[105] In testimony the following day (April 18) before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Wess Mitchell said that "the Turks claim to have a very high standard of justice. The indictment suggests otherwise, the claims in the indictment were laughable. This [Brunson] is clearly an innocent man."[106]

On April 20, 66 Senators sent a letter to President Erdogan on Brunson's behalf,[107] and 154 Representatives followed with a similar letter on May 4. In addition to denouncing the charges against Brunson, both letters said that the indictment's suggestion that Brunson's religious teachings undermined the Turkish state "brings a new and deeply disturbing dimension to the case."[108] Both letters also stated that "other measures will be necessary to

[100] CRS In Focus IF10444, *Fethullah Gulen, Turkey, and the United States: A Reference*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas. For information on Turkish allegations about Gulen's link to the coup plot, see Carlotta Gall, "104 Turks Get Life Terms for Failed Coup," *New York Times*, May 23, 2018.

[101] Henri J. Barkey and Eric Edelman, "Fight for these State Department workers detained in Turkey," *Washington Post*, July 29, 2018.

[102] White House, Press Briefing by Press Secretary Sarah Sanders, August 15, 2018.

[103] State Department Press Briefing, September 28, 2017.

[104] Senator Tillis press release, Senator Tillis Visits Pastor Andrew Brunson at Turkish Prison, March 28, 2018. In November 15, 2017, testimony before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission), Brunson's daughter Jacqueline Furnari stated that Brunson was battling anxiety and depression. https://www.csce.gov/sites/helsinkicommission.house.gov/files/PrisonersofPurge.pdf.

[105] Brett Samuels, "Trump calls for release of jailed pastor in Turkey," *The Hill*, April 17, 2018. In May, while welcoming the return of a U.S. citizen previously imprisoned in Venezuela, the President spoke about working for Brunson's release. White House, Remarks by President Trump in Meeting with U.S. Citizen Freed From Venezuela, May 26, 2018.

[106] Transcript of the testimony is available at http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5301736?0.

[107] The text of the letter is available at https://www.tillis.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/e10f1ffc-be39-4330-8157-c5aa4fcc69be/andrew-brunson-senators-letter.pdf.

[108] The text of the letter is available at https://mchenry.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398915.

ensure that the Government of Turkey respects the right of law-abiding citizens and employees of the United States to travel to, reside in, and work in Turkey without fear of persecution." Brunson is the only U.S. citizen on the "prisoners of conscience" list issued by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom,[109] and his case has influenced some of the legislation on Turkey pending before Congress.

In July 2018, Brunson's case was scheduled for further action in October, and he was transferred from prison to house arrest, ostensibly for medical reasons. In response, President Trump and Vice President Pence demanded that Turkey release Brunson or face sanctions, amid conflicting reports about whether the United States and Turkey had reached an understanding for Brunson to go free.[110] The U.S. sanctions mentioned above came days later, with Brunson still under house arrest.

Separately, two prominent Turkish citizens with government ties were arrested by U.S. authorities in 2016 and 2017 for conspiring to evade sanctions on Iran. One, Reza Zarrab, received immunity for cooperating with prosecutors, while the other, Mehmet Hakan Atilla, was convicted and sentenced in May 2018 to 32 months in prison. The case was repeatedly denounced by Turkish leaders, who were reportedly concerned about the potential implications for Turkey's economy if the case led U.S. officials to impose penalties on Turkish banks.[111] This has not happened to date.

May 2017 Security Detail Incident in Washington, DC

On some occasions during Erdogan's trips outside Turkey, members of his security detail have gotten into physical confrontations with those they perceive as Erdogan's critics or political opponents.[112] Several Members of Congress became particularly concerned about an incident in May 2017 in Washington, DC, outside the Turkish ambassador's residence. The incident featured confrontation between the security guards and largely Kurdish protestors, and 19 people who acted to quell the protest were indicted by a DC grand jury on charges of conspiracy to commit violent crime.[113] The House unanimously passed a resolution (H.Res. 354) in June 2017 that condemned the violence against "peaceful protesters," and Congress included a provision in FY2018 appropriations legislation (section 7046(d) of P.L. 115-141) that prohibited the use of U.S. funds to facilitate arms sales to Erdogan's security detail. Section 7046(d)(2) of the Senate FY2019 State Department, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill (S. 3108) would maintain that prohibition.

Legislation and Congressional Proposals

Bilateral tensions have contributed to various legislative proposals by Members of Congress, alongside a public debate about the potential costs and benefits of sanctions against Turkey.[114] The most significant congressional action against Turkey to date has been an arms embargo that

[109] http://www.uscirf.gov/pastor-andrew-brunson.

[110] Raphael, op. cit.; Goldman and Harris, op. cit.; Michael C. Bender and Dion Nissenbaum, "U.S. Slaps Sanctions on Turkish Officials," *Wall Street Journal*, August 2, 2018; Murat Yetkin, "Here is the Brunson row in Erdogan's words," *Hurriyet Daily News*, July 30, 2018.

[111] Adam Klasfeld, "Turkish Markets Brace for Banker's Sentencing in NY," Courthouse News Service, May 11, 2018.

[112] Haykaram Nahapetyan, "Erdogan's bodyguards have been beating up people around the world. Here's how to stop them," washingtonpost.com, June 8, 2017.

[113] For more detailed information about the status of the charges, see Masood Farivar, "2 Turkish-Americans Sentenced for Brawl During Erdogan's US Visit," Voice of America, April 5, 2018.

[114] See, e.g., Soner Cagaptay, "Sanctions on Turkey: Reconciling Washington's Diverging Views," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 1, 2018; Amberin Zaman, "Congress, State Department divided on sanctions against Turkey," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, February 28, 2018; Nicholas Danforth, "Things to Think about When Thinking about Sanctioning Turkey," Bipartisan Policy Center, February 27, 2018.

Congress enacted in response to Turkish military intervention in Cyprus. That embargo lasted from 1975 to 1978.

Report: U.S.-Turkey Relations and F-35 Program (FY2019 NDAA)

The FY2019 NDAA (P.L. 115-232) enacted in August 2018 includes a provision (section 1282) that requires a report to congressional armed services and foreign affairs committees within 90 days from the Secretary of Defense (in consultation with the Secretary of State) on the status of U.S.-Turkey relations. The provision prohibits the delivery of F-35 aircraft to Turkey until the report is submitted. The report will include

- an assessment of the U.S. military and diplomatic presence in Turkey, including military activities conducted from Incirlik air base;
- an assessment of Turkey's potential S-400 purchase from Russia and the effects it might have on the U.S.-Turkey relationship, including on other U.S. weapon systems and platforms operated with Turkey (aircraft, helicopters, surface-to-air missiles);
- an assessment of Turkey's participation in the F-35 program, including how changing Turkey's participation could impact the program and what steps might mitigate negative impacts for the United States and other program partners; and
- an identification of potential alternative air and missile defense systems for Turkey, including military air defense artillery systems from the United States or other NATO member states.

Turkey is a cooperative partner in developing the F-35,[115] and as part of its involvement, several Turkish companies are assisting with development and manufacture of various F-35 components.[116] Media reports indicate that Turkey plans to purchase 100 F-35s; the first was handed over in Texas at a June 21, 2018 ceremony, and training on the aircraft for Turkish pilots is now underway on U.S. soil.[117] This first aircraft is reportedly scheduled to leave the United States for Turkey sometime in 2020.[118] Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in May 23, 2018, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that the State Department had not yet decided whether to permit Turkey's purchase of F-35s, and in the same sentence mentioned continuing efforts to persuade Turkey not to acquire the S-400 from Russia.[119]

Some Members of Congress have sought to prevent or place conditions on Turkey's acquisition of F-35s because of the S-400 deal, Pastor Brunson's imprisonment, or other U.S.-Turkey tensions described above.[120] In a June 2018 Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) report

[115] A 2007 memorandum of understanding among the participants is available at https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/102378.pdf, and an earlier 2002 U.S.-Turkey agreement is available at https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/196467.pdf. For information on the consortium and its members, see CRS Report RL30563, *F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program*, by Jeremiah Gertler.

[116] For details on Turkish companies' participation in the F-35 program, see https://www.f35.com/global/participation/turkey-industrial-participation.

[117] Dylan Malyasov, "Source: Turkey to receive first F-35 Lightning II fighter jet on June 21," Defence Blog, June 5, 2018; Sarp Ozer and Ahmet Sultan Usul, "First F-35 jet delivery to Turkey slated for June 21," Anadolu Agency, May 11, 2018.

[118] Aaron Stein, "The Clock is Ticking: S-400 and the Future of F-35 in Turkey," Atlantic Council, July 24, 2018.

[119] Transcript of testimony available at http://www.cq.com/doc/congressionaltranscripts-5323484?0.

[120] Some Members of Congress are preparing a letter to urge Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to prevent the sale of F-35s to Turkey. The text of the letter is available at http://dearcolleague.us/2018/05/deadline-extended-prevent-sale-of-f-

(S.Rept. 115-262) accompanying an early version of the FY2019 NDAA (S. 2987), SASC described Turkey as a NATO ally and critical strategic partner of the United States, but also said that a Turkish purchase of the S-400 from Russia would be incompatible with Turkey's NATO commitments. Additionally, the report expressed concerns about U.S. citizens detained in Turkey (including Pastor Brunson) and called upon Turkey to uphold its obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty to "safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law." In May, Senator Jeanne Shaheen had said, "There is tremendous hesitancy in transferring sensitive F35 planes and technology to a nation who has purchased a Russian air defense system designed to shoot these very planes down."[121]

Because the F-35 program is multinational, unwinding Turkey's involvement could be costly and complicated. One source has said that "the Pentagon last year awarded [Lockheed Martin, a key contractor on the F-35 program] $3.7 billion in an interim payment for the production of 50 of the aircraft earmarked for non-U.S. customers, including Ankara."[122] In May, two Members of Congress circulated a letter to other Members expressing concern about Turkey but opposing its exclusion from the F-35 program. According to these two Members

> As of January 2018, Turkey had contributed over $1 billion to the program. This investment would be required to be returned to the Turkish Government if the United States fails to deliver on the contract. Even more significantly, Turkey manufactures critical components of the F-35. Removing them from the program will lead to delays and [cost] overruns to the rest of the partners and allies.[123]

In a July letter to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said that he opposed removal of Turkey from the F-35 program "at this time." Secretary Mattis agreed with congressional concerns about "the authoritarian drift in Turkey and its impact on human rights and rule of law," but said that if "the Turkish supply chain was disrupted today, it would result in an aircraft production break, delaying delivery of 50-75 jets and would take approximately 18-24 months to re-source parts."[124]

Turkey could take a number of measures in response to U.S. actions to end Turkey's involvement with the F-35. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said that a U.S. withdrawal from the deal would not be in keeping with the U.S.-Turkey alliance, would trigger Turkish retaliation, and that Turkey could go elsewhere to meet its needs.[125]

Conditioning F-35 Transfer on S-400 Decision (Senate Appropriations)

The Senate version of the FY2019 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (S. 3108) includes a provision (section 7046(d)(3)) that would withhold

35s-to-turkey/.

[121] Senator Thom Tillis, Tillis & Shaheen Secure Bipartisan NDAA Provision Delaying Transfer of F-35s to Turkey, May 24, 2018.

[122] Tuvan Gumrukcu and Ece Toksabay, "U.S. says in talks with Turkey on YPG withdrawal from Syria's Manbij," Reuters, May 30, 2018.

[123] The text of the letter is available at http://dearcolleague.us/2018/05/support-the-f-35-joint-strike-fighter-program/.

[124] Anthony Capaccio and Roxana Tiron, "Mattis Urges Congress Not to Hit Turkey with Lockheed F-35 Ban," Bloomberg, July 19, 2018.

[125] Ibid; Tuvan Gumrukcu, "Turkey says it will retaliate if U.S. halts weapons sales," Reuters, May 6, 2018. One Turkish media source has claimed that Turkey would consider Russian Su-57s as alternatives to the F-35. Dylan Malyasov, "Turkish media: Ankara may switch to buying the Russian Su-57," Defence Blog, May 28, 2018.

funding for the transfer of F-35 aircraft to Turkey until the Secretary of State certifies that Turkey is not purchasing the S-400 from Russia and will not accept delivery of the S-400.

Possible Restrictions Against Turkish Officials Entering the United States (Senate Appropriations)

For FY2018, the Senate Appropriations Committee proposed a provision for annual appropriations legislation (section 7046(e) of S. 1780) that would have required the Secretary of State to deny entry into the United States "to any senior official of the Government of Turkey about whom the Secretary has credible information is knowingly responsible for the wrongful or unlawful prolonged detention of citizens or nationals of the United States," subject to a few exceptions or possible waivers on grounds of national interest, international obligation, or changed circumstances.

In March, Senator Jeanne Shaheen said that she and Senator James Lankford had agreed to drop the above provision (which they had originally sponsored) from FY2018 appropriations legislation (P.L. 115-141) to give time for U.S.-Turkey diplomacy to bear fruit on a number of issues, including the status of U.S. citizens and consulate staff imprisoned in Turkey.[126] However, on April 20, the two Senators released a joint statement criticizing President Erdogan for continuing to hold "Pastor Brunson and other innocent Americans behind bars on fabricated charges," and stating that they would pursue targeted sanctions against Turkish officials in FY2019 appropriations legislation.[127] On June 21, 2018, the Senate Appropriations Committee reported the FY2019 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (S. 3108) which contains a nearly identical provision (section 7046(d)(1)).

Possible U.S. Opposition to Assistance to Turkey from Selected International Financial Institutions (S. 3248)

In July 2018, six Senators introduced the Turkey International Financial Institutions Act (S. 3248), which would direct "the U.S. executive of the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to oppose future loans, except for humanitarian purposes, to Turkey by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and EBRD until the administration can certify to Congress that Turkey is 'no longer arbitrarily detaining or denying freedom of movement to United States citizens (including dual citizens) or locally employed staff members of the United States mission to Turkey.'"[128]

Syria

Background

Turkey's involvement in Syria's conflict since 2011 has been complicated and costly.[129] Turkey's chief objective has been to thwart the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG, which has

[126] Amberin Zaman, "US spending bill drops Turkey sanctions," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, March 22, 2018.

[127] Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senators Shaheen and Lankford Call for Sanctions on Turkish Officials, April 20, 2018.

[128] U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee press release, Senators Introduce Bill Demanding Turkey End Unjust Detention of US Citizens, July 19, 2018.

[129] For background, see Burak Kadercan, "Making Sense of Turkey's Syria Strategy: A 'Turkish Tragedy' in the Making," War on the Rocks, August 4, 2017.

links with the PKK) from establishing an autonomous area along the northern Syrian border with Turkey. Turkey appears to view the YPG and its political counterpart, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), as the top threat to its security, given the boost the YPG's military and political success could provide to the PKK's insurgency within Turkey.[130] The YPG plays a leading role in the umbrella group known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which also includes Arabs and other non-Kurdish elements.

Since 2014, the SDF has been the main U.S. ground force partner against the Islamic State. U.S. support for the SDF has fueled U.S.-Turkey tension because of Turkey's view of the YPG as a threat.[139] As part of SDF operations to expel the Islamic State from Raqqah in 2017, the U.S. government pursued a policy of arming the YPG directly while preventing the use of such arms against Turkey,[140] and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis announced an end to the direct arming of the YPG near the end of the year.[141] U.S. officials have contrasted their longstanding alliance with Turkey with their current but temporary cooperation with the YPG.[142]

Syrian Refugees in Turkey

In addition to its ongoing military activities in Syria, Turkey hosts about 3.4 million registered Syrian refugees—more than any other country. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu estimated in November 2017 that Turkey had spent approximately $30 billion on refugee assistance.[131] During Turkey's military operation in Afrin in early 2018, Turkish officials regularly stated their hopes that hundreds of thousands of refugees would return to Syria.[132] A June 2018 media report estimated that about 75,000 have returned.[133]

With the large-scale return of refugees to Syria uncertain, Turkey has focused on how to manage their presence in Turkish society by addressing their legal status,[134] basic needs, employment,[135] education,[136] and impact on local communities. Problems in the Turkish economy may be fueling some negative views of the refugees among Turkish citizens,[137] and some violence between the two groups has been reported.[138]

After Turkey moved against IS-held territory in northern Syria as a way to prevent the YPG from consolidating its rule across much of the border area between the two countries (Operation

[130] Anne Barnard and Ben Hubbard, "Allies or Terrorists: Who Are the Kurdish Fighters in Syria?" *New York Times*, January 25, 2018.

[131] "Turkey spends $30 billion on Syrian refugees: FM," *Hurriyet Daily News*, November 6, 2017.

[132] Dorian Jones, "Turkey Eyes Refugees Returning to Afrin, Syria," Voice of America, March 8, 2018.

[133] "Borders reopened for returning Syrian refugees," *Daily Sabah*, June 27, 2018.

[134] See, e.g., Hosam Al-Jablawi, "Return to Syria Is Less Likely as Syrian Refugees Receive Turkish Citizenship," Atlantic Council SyriaSource, October 13, 2017.

[135] Lauren Frayer, "In Turkey, Syrian Workers Struggle To Obtain Official Employment," NPR, August 14, 2017.

[136] Kinana Qaddour, "Educating Syrian Refugees in Turkey," *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, December 28, 2017.

[137] See, e.g., Zia Weise, "Syrian refugees in Turkey face calls to return as public mood changes," IRIN, March 27, 2018.

[138] International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions," January 29, 2018.

[139] U.S. military commanders have generally differentiated between the YPG and the PKK, but in February 2018, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats submitted written testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence stating that the YPG was the Syrian militia of the PKK. Daniel R. Coats, Director of National Intelligence, Statement for the Record: Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence hearing, February 13, 2018.

[140] Pentagon statement quoted in Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "Trump to Arm Syrian Kurds, Even as Turkey Strongly Objects," *New York Times*, May 9, 2017; Anne Barnard and Patrick Kingsley, "Arming Syrian Kurds Could Come at a Cost," *New York Times*, May 11, 2017.

[141] Lead Inspector General Report to the U.S. Congress, *Overseas Contingency Operations: Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines*, October 1, 2017-December 31, 2017, p. 25.

[142] Selva Unal, "US determined to keep its word about YPG in Manbij, official says," *Daily Sabah*, March 1, 2018.

Euphrates Shield, August 2016-March 2017), Turkey launched an offensive directly against the YPG in the Afrin district in January 2018. Some U.S. officials expressed concern during the operation because several YPG units went to help their fellow Kurds in Afrin, causing a manpower drain from the anti-IS mission east of the Euphrates.[143] By March, the YPG had abandoned control of the district to Turkish forces and their Syrian rebel allies.[144]

In Afrin and the other areas Turkey has occupied since 2016, Turkey has set up local councils, though questions persist about future governance and Turkey's overarching role.[145] The local councils and security forces reportedly provide public services in these areas with oversight and training from Turkish officials. Some observers, citing signs of a YPG insurgency, predict that the Turkish military may feel compelled to stay for an extended period of time.[146] The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report in June 2018 alleging possible violations by the de facto authorities of international humanitarian and human rights laws—including actions or omissions that prevent Kurds from returning to their homes.[147]

The town of Manbij, which the SDF seized from the Islamic State in 2016 with U.S. support, is a focal point of U.S.-Turkey tensions in Syria because of a continuing YPG presence there. After concerns grew in early 2018 that Turkish forces could conceivably clash with U.S. Special Operations personnel patrolling Manbij or its vicinity if Turkey advanced on the area, the two countries have sought to deconflict their forces.[148] According to a senior State Department official, on June 4 the two countries

> endorsed a roadmap which is a broad political framework designed to fulfill the commitment that the United States had made to move the YPG east of the Euphrates and to do so in a way that contributes to security and stability of Manbij and in a fashion that is mutually agreed between the United States and Turkey in every aspect.[149]According to this official, implementation of the roadmap will be based on developments on the ground,[150] with one major factor being the YPG's willingness to cooperate.[151] Syrian Kurdish leaders have expressed openness to negotiating with any party with whom their interests coincide, including the Syrian government.[152]

[143] Eric Schmitt and Rod Nordland, "Amid Turkish Assault, Kurdish Forces Are Drawn Away From U.S. Fight with ISIS," *New York Times*, February 28, 2018.

[144] U.S. officials voiced concerns about possible adverse effects on U.S.-supported anti-IS efforts in eastern Syria. State Department Press Briefing, February 22, 2018.

[145] Khaled al-Khateb, "Turkey backs new opposition governance to mend Afrin," *Al-Monitor Syria Pulse*, April 25, 2018; Haid, "Post-ISIS Governance in Jarablus: A Turkish-led Strategy," Chatham House, September 26, 2017.

[146] Borzou Daragahi, "Turkey Has Made a Quagmire for Itself in Syria," foreignpolicy.com, July 13, 2018.

[147] U.N. OHCHR, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place—Civilians in North-western Syria," Monthly Human Rights Digest, June 2018.

[148] Remarks by Secretary Tillerson, Press Availability with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Ankara, Turkey, February 16, 2018; Rebecca Kheel, "US 'deeply concerned' with situation in Syrian city taken by Turkey," thehill.com, March 19, 2018.

[149] State Department special briefing via teleconference, Senior State Department Officials on the U.S.-Turkish Working Group on Syria, June 5, 2018.

[150] Ibid.

[151] James F. Jeffrey, "Will U.S.-Turkish Progress on Manbij Lead to Wider Cooperation in Syria?" Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 5, 2018.

[152] Abdel Raheem Said, "U.S.-Kurdish Relations in Syria after the Manbij Roadmap," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 5, 2018.

Assessment

Turkey's priorities in Syria appear to have evolved during the course of Syria's civil war. While Turkey still officially calls for Syrian President Bashar al Asad to leave power, it has engaged in a mix of coordination and competition with Russia and Iran (Asad's supporters) on some matters since intervening militarily in Syria starting in August 2016. Similar interaction takes place between Turkey and the United States given the U.S. military presence in key areas of northern Syria east of the Euphrates River. Turkey may be seeking to protect its borders, project influence, promote commerce, and counter other actors' regional ambitions.

Turkey is part of the Astana process that it launched with Russia and Iran in January 2017 to seek Syria's post-civil war stability and territorial integrity.[153] In a September 2017 agreement, the three countries identified some specific "de-escalation zones," and Turkey has inserted troops directly into areas of the northern Syrian province of Idlib as part of efforts to establish these zones.

Going forward, it is unclear

- to what extent Turkish-supported forces will hold their positions or advance farther into Syrian territory, either with or without U.S. support; and
- how Turkey might administer areas occupied inside Syria and coordinate with local populations and outside actors.

Turkish Foreign Policy

A number of considerations drive the complicated dynamics behind Turkey's international relationships. Turkey's history as both a regional power and an object of great power aggression translates into wide popularity for nationalistic political actions and discourse. This nationalistic sentiment might make some Turks wary of Turkey's partial reliance on other key countries (for example, the United States for security, European Union countries for trade, and Russia and Iran for energy). Moreover, Turkey's maintenance of cooperative relationships with countries whose respective interests may conflict involves a balancing act. Turkey's vulnerability to threats from Syria and Iraq increases the pressure on it to manage this balance.[154] Involvement in Syria and Iraq by the United States, Russia, and Iran further complicates Turkey's situation. Additionally, grievances that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his supporters espouse against seemingly marginalized domestic foes (the military and secular elite who previously dominated Turkey, the Fethullah Gulen movement, Kurdish nationalists, and liberal activists) extend to the United States and Europe due to apparent suspicions of Western sympathies for these foes.

[153] Erin Cunningham, "Iran, Russia and Turkey plan Syria's future as Trump seeks an exit," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2018.

[154] See, e.g., Shehab Al-Makahleh, "Turkish foreign policy: From defensive to offensive," Al Arabiya, February 3, 2018.

Figure 5. Northern Syria: Areas of Control

Sources: CRS, based on data from IHS Conflict Monitor, UN OCHA, and Esri.

Note: All designations are approximate and subject to change.

Turkey's Middle Eastern profile expanded in the 2000s as Erdogan (while serving as prime minister) sought to build economic and political linkages—often emphasizing shared Muslim identity—with Turkey's neighbors. However, efforts to increase Turkey's influence and offer it as a "model" for other regional states appear to have been set back by a number of developments since 2011: (1) conflict and instability that engulfed the region and Turkey's own southern border, (2) Turkey's failed effort to help Muslim Brotherhood-aligned groups gain lasting power in Syria and North Africa, and (3) domestic polarization accompanied by government repression. Although Turkey shares some interests with traditional Sunni Arab powers Saudi Arabia and Egypt in countering Iran, these countries' leaders regard Turkey suspiciously because of its government's Islamist sympathies and close relationship with Qatar (see "Other International Relationships" below).[155] Turkey maintains relations with Israel, but these have become distant and—at times—contentious during Erdogan's rule.

Russia

Turkey-Russia relations appear to have improved significantly since a rapprochement in 2016. Russia had imposed economic sanctions on Turkey and closed Syrian airspace to it after the Turkish military shot down a Russian fighter aircraft near the Turkey-Syria border in November

[155] See, e.g., W. Robert Pearson, "Saudi-Turkish ties take a turn for the worse," Middle East Institute, March 8, 2018.

2015. Since the rapprochement, the two countries have cooperated in a number of areas, most notably

- the possible S-400 air defense deal (see "Possible S-400 Acquisition from Russia" above);
- some military and political coordination in northern Syria (see "Syria" above); and
- energy dealings (see "Energy" above).

Viewpoints vary on the significance of closer Turkey-Russia relations. Some analysts have posited that Erdogan may be seeking closer relations with Russia, possibly at the expense of Turkey's relations with the United States and Europe.[156] Some others view the Turkey-Russia relationship as less of a potential strategic partnership than a "marriage of convenience" as the two nations compartmentalize their relations—alternating between cooperation and competition depending on the specific issue in question.[157] Such a situation, according to one observer, could reflect an effort by Turkey to push for its national interest by "balancing between East and West" without cutting security ties to NATO or economic ties to the EU.[158]

Other observers have explained Turkish policy changes largely by reference to the leverage Russia used with sanctions and airspace closures after the November 2015 incident.[159] For example, one analyst has argued that Turkish policies favoring Russia are probably due more to Turkey feeling abandoned by the West and intimidated by Russia than to a Turkish preference for Russia over the West.[160] Turkey has a centuries-long history of geopolitical conflict with Russia, and disagreements on various issues persist.[161]

Some U.S. officials have suggested that Russia may be seeking closer ties with Turkey as part of a deliberate strategy to undermine NATO and U.S. strategic relationships more broadly. In written testimony in February 2018, General Joseph Votel, Commander of U.S. Central Command, said that Russia (along with Iran) is trying to "fracture the longstanding U.S.-Turkey strategic partnership."[162] Additionally, in July 2018 U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison said, "I do think Russia is trying to flip Turkey. They are trying to flip many of our allies."[163]

Iran

While Turkey and Iran are sometimes rivals for regional influence, they also work together on certain regional issues and to ensure Turkish access to Iranian oil and gas. Iranian ties with the

[156] See, e.g., Aaron Stein, "Ankara's Look East: How Turkey's Warming Ties with Russia Threaten Its Place in the Transatlantic Community," War on the Rocks, December 27, 2017; Suzan Fraser and Ayse Wieting, "Turkey, Russia deepen ties amid troubled relations with West," *Chicago Tribune*, April 2, 2018.

[157] See, e.g., Mehmet Ogutcu and Dimitar Bechev, "Will Turkey and Russia become 'strategic allies' or sustain a 'marriage of convenience'?" *Hurriyet Daily News*, February 16, 2018.

[158] Dimitar Bechev, "The Russia-Turkish-Iran Axis: Less Than Meets the Eye," *American Interest*, April 9, 2018.

[159] Aykan Erdemir and Merve Tahiroglu, "Handling Turkey's Erdogan: What Washington can learn from Russia," thehill.com, February 14, 2018.

[160] Soner Cagaptay, "US could stop Turkey, not yet a Moscow ally, from caving to Russia," *The Hill*, May 25, 2018.

[161] See, e.g., "Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus," International Crisis Group, June 28, 2018.

[162] Statement of General Joseph L. Votel Before the House Armed Services Committee on the Posture of U.S. Central Command, Terrorism and Iran: Challenges in the Middle East, February 27, 2018.

[163] Ragip Soylu, "Is Russia trying to flip Turkey?" *Daily Sabah*, July 12, 2018.

Syrian and Iraqi governments and with various Iraqi Kurdish groups provide it with some possible leverage over Turkey.

Turkey and Iran (along with Russia) coordinate their efforts in Syria as part of the Astana process, as mentioned above.[164] However, Turkey "is traditionally wary of Tehran's ambitions in its immediate neighborhood."[165] Erdogan and other Turkish officials, who earlier sought the ouster of Iran's key Arab ally, the Asad regime of Syria, have periodically criticized Iran in stark terms, accusing it of destabilizing the region in pursuit of sectarian interests.[166] In a July 2018 column that raised concerns about Turkey's relationships with the United States and a number of regional actors, a senior advisor to Erdogan wrote that Iran is "displaying Persian expansionist policies throughout the Middle East."[167]

President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Iranian nuclear agreement in May 2018 may further complicate both Turkey-Iran and U.S.-Turkey relations. Turkish officials have said that Turkey will not comply with U.S. secondary sanctions that are scheduled to take effect in November, given its dependence on oil and gas imported from Iran.[168] These sanctions will require third-party countries to stop or significantly reduce those imports.[169] The Administration maintains that the United States is unlikely to offer waivers or exceptions from the sanctions for any country, though a State Department official said in July 2018 that "we are prepared to work with countries that are reducing their imports on a case-by-case basis."[170]

Iraq

Turkey's first priority in Iraq appears to be countering threats to Turkey from Kurds based in northern Iraq—primarily the PKK. Another concern—despite generally positive relations between Turkey and Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)—is the possibility that Iraqi Kurdish moves toward independence could spread separatist sentiment among Kurds in Turkey. Turkey also maintains an uneasy relationship with Iraq's central government over concerns that its Shia leaders are unduly influenced by Iran and that Iraq's security forces and Shia militias often mistreat Sunni Arabs and Turkmen. Relations with Baghdad are also strained by Iraqi concerns about the potential impact that Turkish dam construction and water management decisions could have on downstream Iraqi communities.[171] Turkey's military maintains various posts inside northern Iraq and a presence at a base in Bashiqa near Mosul.

Around 2008, Turkey started developing a political and economic partnership with the KRG. As part of this cooperation, in 2013 the KRG began transporting oil through pipelines to Turkish ports for international export. However, Turkey and most other countries strongly opposed the KRG's symbolic 2017 popular referendum on independence. Turkey halted oil exports connected

[164] Raziye Akkoc and Ezzedine Said, "Iran, Russia, Turkey team up to hold sway in Syria," *Times of Israel*, April 2, 2018.

[165] Galip Dalay, "Turkey in the Middle East's new battle lines," Brookings Institution, May 20, 2018.

[166] "Iran and Turkey trade barbs over Syria and Iraq," Al Jazeera, February 21, 2017.

[167] Ilnur Cevik, "Turkey is caught between the US and Iran," *Daily Sabah*, July 23, 2018.

[168] Dorian Jones, "Ankara Rules Out Compliance with US Sanctions on Iran," Voice of America, July 24, 2018; Gonul Tol and Engin Polar, "Iran sanctions may see US-Turkey ties get a lot worse," Middle East Institute, August 9, 2018.

[169] See CRS Report RS20871, *Iran Sanctions*, by Kenneth Katzman.

[170] On-The-Record-Briefing Brian Hook, Director of Policy Planning With an Iran Diplomacy Update, U.S. Department of State, July 2, 2018.

[171] Erika Solomon and Laura Pitel, "Why water is a growing faultline between Turkey and Iraq," *Financial Times*, July 4, 2018.

with the KRG pipelines after the referendum. Talks are ongoing between Turkish, Iraqi, and KRG officials over restarting the exports.[172]

Turkey has conducted airstrikes against PKK safe havens in Iraq, with reported intelligence assistance from the United States, since 2007. The KRG—given its own rivalry with the PKK—generally does not object to these strikes, though it remains sensitive to pan-Kurdish sympathies among its population. In June 2018, Turkish forces began moving into KRG territory in preparation for a possible ground operation against the main PKK redoubt in the Qandil Mountains. Partly because of the constraints a Turkish operation would face from the area's harsh terrain and weather conditions, the operation may be more focused on projecting Turkish determination and competence to other stakeholders in northern Iraq than on decisively defeating the PKK.[173]

Israel

Ties between Turkey and Israel, which were close during the 1990s and early 2000s, have deteriorated considerably during Erdogan's rule. This slide has reflected the military's declining role in Turkish society relative to Erdogan and other leaders whose criticisms of Israel resound with domestic public opinion. Despite the countries' differences, trade between the two countries has grown.[174] During Syria's civil war, Turkey has used Israel's port at Haifa as a point of transit for exports to various Arab countries after the conflict cut off overland routes.

After years of downgraded diplomatic ties following the 2010 *Mavi Marmara* (or Gaza flotilla) incident,[175] Turkey and Israel announced the full restoration of diplomatic relations in 2016, in a deal reportedly facilitated by the United States.[176] Nevertheless, the bilateral relationship remains tense. Israelis routinely decry Turkey's ties with Hamas and its refusal to characterize Hamas as a terrorist organization.[177] For their part, Turks bemoan Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and especially the Gaza Strip. Additionally, Erdogan has sought to lead regional opposition to the 2017 U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.[178] Israeli authorities have reportedly been monitoring increased Turkish financial investment and political activism in East Jerusalem, with officials from the Palestinian Authority and Arab states warning Israel of Erdogan's interest in gaining greater influence over the Jerusalem issue.[179] At various points in 2018, President Erdogan and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu have traded public

[172] Galip Dalay, "Evolution of Turkey–Iraqi Kurdistan's Relations," Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, December 20, 2017; Ahmed Rasheed, "Iraq still in talks with Turkey, KRG over resuming Kirkuk oil exports," Reuters, July 2, 2018.

[173] Metin Gurcan, "Turkey takes on Kurds in evolving Qandil operation," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, June 15, 2018; Necdet Ozcelik, "Understanding Turkey's Qandil Operation," SETA, June 14, 2018.

[174] See, e.g., Menekse Tokyay, "Trade envoy to bolster Turkey's links with Israel," *Arab News*, July 13, 2018.

[175] The incident took place in international waters under disputed circumstances and resulted in the death of nine Turks and an American of Turkish descent.

[176] According to media reports, the rapprochement included Israeli compensation to the families of those killed in the flotilla incident in exchange for an end to legal claims, as well as opportunities for Turkey to assist with humanitarian and infrastructure projects for Palestinian residents in the Gaza Strip.

[177] Seth Frantzman, "The complex, and often toxic, Israel-Turkey relationship," *Jerusalem Post*, May 16, 2018.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Amir Tibon and Yaniv Kubovich, "Jordan, Saudis and Palestinians Warn Israel: Erdogan Operating in East Jerusalem Under Your Nose," *Ha'aretz*, July 1, 2018.

accusations,[180] and in May the two countries temporarily expelled each other's top diplomats in Ankara, Istanbul, and Jerusalem.

Some observers have characterized negative statements by Erdogan and other prominent Turkish voices about Israel, Zionism, and other historical references as anti-Semitic.[181] Erdogan insists that his criticisms of the Israeli government and its policies are not directed to the Jewish people or to Jews in Turkey.

In connection with bilateral tensions, Israel has raised concerns with U.S. officials over Turkey's acquisition of the F-35 and has contemplated measures to limit Turkish influence over holy sites in Jerusalem.[182] Israel also has strengthened security and economic ties with traditional Turkish rivals Greece and Cyprus.[183]

European Union[184]

Turkey has a long history of partnership with the European Union (and its predecessor organizations) and began negotiations to join the EU in 2005. Talks stalled shortly thereafter and Turkey's membership is now seen as unlikely, at least in the near future. Many analysts argue that resistance to Turkish EU accession has been rooted in a fear that Turkey's large Muslim population would fundamentally change the cultural character of the EU and dilute the power of the EU's founding Western European states in particular. Turkey's unwillingness to normalize diplomatic and trade relations with EU member Cyprus presents a major obstacle to its accession prospects. Other EU concerns over Turkey's qualifications for membership center on the treatment of Kurds and religious minorities, media freedoms, women's rights, and the proper and transparent functioning of Turkey's democratic and legal systems.[185]

[180] "Gaza-Israel violence: Netanyahu and Erdogan in war of words," BBC News, April 1, 2018; Natasha Turak, "Netanyahu and Erdogan trade insults on Twitter over Gaza violence," CNBC, May 16, 2018.

[181] Hannah Lucinda Smith, et al., "Turkey blames 'Jewish lobby' for economic crisis," *Times* (UK), May 30, 2018; Nuray Mert, "Trump's Jerusalem decision must not be a pretext for anti-Semitism," *Hurriyet Daily News*, December 18, 2017.

[182] Amir Tibon and Yaniv Kubovich, "Israel Concerned About F-35 Sale to Turkey, Expects U.S. to Withhold 'Upgrade Capabilities,'" *Ha'aretz*, May 27, 2018; Ben Caspit, "Turkey, Israel battle over Temple Mount," *Al-Monitor Turkey Pulse*, July 11, 2018.

[183] Yaroslav Trofimov, "Turkey's Rise Sparks New Friendship Between Israel and Greece," *Wall Street Journal*, July 21, 2018.

[184] For more information on this subject, see archived CRS Report RS22517, *European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey's Accession Negotiations*, by Vincent L. Morelli; and CRS Report RS21344, *European Union Enlargement*, by Kristin Archick and Vincent L. Morelli.

[185] European Commission, Turkey 2018 Report, op. cit.

Debate regarding the extent to which Turkey meets EU standards has intensified in recent years in light of domestic controversies since 2013 and President Erdogan's consolidation of power. Erdogan has used anti-European rhetoric to gain support both at home and among the substantial Turkish diaspora communities in Europe. Turkish domestic expectations of full accession to the EU have apparently been in decline for several years, though support for joining the EU remains according to some polls.[186] In its Turkey 2018 report, the European Commission noted a number of membership criteria in which there has been "serious backsliding," including the judiciary and freedom of expression. Despite the lack of significant progress in accession negotiations, the EU provides Turkey hundreds of millions of euros in annual pre-accession financial and technical assistance (separate from the support for refugees addressed below).[187]

Turkey-EU Relations in Brief

1959: Turkey applies for associate membership in the then-European Economic Community (EEC)

1963: Turkey is made an associate member of the EEC (Ankara Agreement)

1970: Protocol signed outlining eventual establishment of Customs Union

1982: European Community (EC, successor to the EEC and forerunner of the EU) freezes relations with Turkey in response to 1980 coup; relations resume 4 years later

1987: Turkey applies to join the EC as a full member

1996: Customs Union between Turkey and the EU takes effect

1999: EU recognizes Turkey as a candidate for membership

2005: Accession negotiations begin

2016: In a symbolic vote, the European Parliament passes a resolution urging that accession talks with Turkey be halted

Since 2011, nearly four million refugees or migrants from Syria and other countries have come to Turkey, posing significant humanitarian, socioeconomic, and security challenges. Turkey and the European Union (EU) reached an arrangement in March 2016 providing for the return from Greece to Turkey of "irregular migrants or asylum seekers whose applications have been declared inadmissible."[188] In exchange, the EU agreed to resettle one Syrian refugee for every Syrian readmitted to Turkey and provide Turkey with six billion euros to be used to support refugees, among other incentives.[189] The deterrent effect of the arrangement appears to have contributed to a dramatic reduction in the number of people crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands, leading one U.N. official to characterize the deal's impact as "huge."[190] Ongoing Turkey-EU disputes and questions about the deal's compatibility with international legal and human rights standards, however, call its long-term viability into question.[191]

Armenia

From 1915 to 1923, hundreds of thousands of Armenians died as a result of actions of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey's predecessor state). U.S. and international characterizations of these events influence Turkey's domestic and foreign policy, and are in turn influenced by developments in Turkey-Armenia relations. Turkey and Armenia initially agreed in 2009 on a set

[186] "Turkish citizens' support for EU membership on the rise: Poll," *Hurriyet Daily News*, January 9, 2018.

[187] For further information, see http://publications.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/turkey-7-2018/en/.

[188] European Commission Fact Sheet, "Implementing the EU-Turkey Statement—Questions and Answers," June 15, 2016, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1664_en.htm.

[189] As part of the agreement, the EU also promised to grant visa-free travel to Turkish citizens if Turkey meets certain requirements, and "re-energize" Turkey's EU accession process. Ibid.

[190] "UN agency praises 'huge impact' of EU-Turkey refugee deal," *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 18, 2018.

[191] See, e.g., Paivi Leino and Daniel Wyatt, "No public interest in whether the EU-Turkey refugee deal respects EU treaties and international human rights?" *European Law Blog*, February 28, 2018.

of joint protocols to normalize relations, but the process stalled shortly thereafter and there has been little or no momentum toward restarting it.[192]

Congress has considered how to characterize the events of 1915-1923 on a number of occasions. In 1975 (H.J.Res. 148) and 1984 (H.J.Res. 247), the House passed proposed joint resolutions that referred to "victims of genocide" of Armenian ancestry from 1915 and 1915-1923, respectively.[193] Neither proposed joint resolution came to a vote in the Senate. A number of other proposed resolutions characterizing these World War I-era events as genocide have been reported by various congressional committees (see **Appendix C** for a list). In the 115th Congress, resolutions have been introduced in both the House (H.Res. 220) and Senate (S.Res. 136) that would characterize the events as genocide.

All U.S. Presidents since Jimmy Carter have made public statements memorializing the events, with President Ronald Reagan referring to a "genocide of the Armenians" during a Holocaust Remembrance Day speech in 1981.[194] In an April 2018 statement, the second of his presidency, President Trump (echoing statements made by President Obama) said that the events were "one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century" and that "one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred or marched to their deaths."[195] In addition to past statements or actions by U.S. policymakers, the website of the Armenian National Institute, a U.S.-based organization, asserts that at least 25 other countries (not counting the United States or Armenia) have characterized the events as genocide in some way, including 15 of the 28 EU member states.[196]

Cyprus and Greece[197]

Since Cyprus became independent of the United Kingdom in 1960, Turkey has viewed itself as the protector of the island's ethnic Turkish-Cypriot minority from potential mistreatment by the

[192] Another source of tension between Turkey and Armenia, beyond the 1915-1923 events, is the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan (which is closely linked with Turkey through ethnolinguistic ties) over the Armenian-occupied region of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders.

[193] Unlike most proposed resolutions on the matter in recent years, neither H.J.Res. 148 nor H.J.Res. 247 explicitly identified the Ottoman Empire or its authorities as perpetrators of the purported genocide. H.J.Res. 247 stated that "one and one-half million people of Armenian ancestry" were "the victims of the genocide perpetrated in Turkey."

[194] Additionally, in a May 1951 written statement to the International Court of Justice, the Truman Administration cited "Turkish massacres of Armenians" as one of three "outstanding examples of the crime of genocide" (along with Roman persecution of Christians and Nazi extermination of Jews and Poles). International Court of Justice, *Reservations on the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: Advisory Opinion of May 28, 1951: Pleadings, Arguments, Documents*, p. 25.

[195] See, e.g., White House, Statement by the President on Armenian Remembrance Day, April 24, 2018. Beginning with President Obama in 2009, annual White House statements (including those from President Trump) have continuously referenced the "Meds Yeghern," an Armenian phrase that translates roughly to "great crime." Vartan Matiossian, "The 'Exact Translation': How 'Medz Yeghern' Means Genocide," *Armenian Weekly*, May 15, 2013.

[196] The EU states listed as having recognized a genocide are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, and Sweden. The European Parliament has also referred to the deaths as genocide. The non-EU states are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Lebanon, Paraguay, Russia, Switzerland, Vatican City, Venezuela, and Uruguay. In April 2015, the Republic of Cyprus's ethnic Greek parliament passed a resolution making it a crime to deny that the events constituted genocide. In 2007, Switzerland criminally fined an ethnic Turkish politician for denying that the events constituted genocide, and in 2012 France passed a law making it a crime to deny that the events constituted genocide—though the law was subsequently invalidated by the French Constitutional Council. Long-standing Turkish law criminalizes characterization of the events as genocide.

[197] For more information on this subject, see CRS Report R41136, *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive*, by Vincent L. Morelli.

ethnic Greek-Cypriot majority.[198] Responding to Greek and Greek-Cypriot political developments that raised concerns about a possible Greek annexation of Cyprus, Turkey's military intervened in 1974 and established control over the northern third of the island. This prompted an almost total ethnic and de facto political division along geographical lines that persists today.[199] The ethnic Greek-Cypriot-ruled Republic of Cyprus is internationally recognized as having jurisdiction over the entire island, while the de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (in the northern third) has only Turkish recognition.

The Republic of Cyprus's accession to the EU in 2004 and Turkey's refusal to normalize political and commercial relations with it are seen as major obstacles to Turkey's EU membership aspirations. Moreover, EU accession may have reduced incentives for Cyprus's Greek population to make concessions toward a reunification deal.[200] Turkey and Turkish Cypriots have opposed efforts by the Republic of Cyprus to explore and develop offshore energy deposits without a solution to the question of the island's unification.[201]

Turkey's relations with Greece are also fraught. The two countries joined NATO in 1952, but intercommunal tensions, the Cyprus question, and border disputes "ensured that war between the two allies remained a real risk well into the 1990s."[202] Despite more regular diplomatic relations in the following two decades, Turkish relations with Greece have again deteriorated in recent years, with the number of Turkish violations of Greek territory and airspace spiking in early 2018.[203] While the two nations agreed in July 2018 to focus on reducing tensions in the Aegean, the area could remain a flashpoint going forward.

Other International Relationships

Turkey seeks to use political and economic influence to strengthen relationships with non-Western countries. Through political involvement, increased trade and investment, and humanitarian and development projects, Turkey has curried favor with foreign countries not only in the greater Middle East, but also in the Balkans,[204] the Caucasus and Central Asia,[205] and sub-Saharan Africa.[206] Gulen movement-affiliated organizations had spearheaded some of these ties

[198] Turkey views its protective role as justified given its status as one of the three guaranteeing powers of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee that was signed at the time Cyprus gained its independence. The United Kingdom and Greece are the other two guarantors.

[199] Turkey retains between 30,000 and 40,000 troops on the island (supplemented by several thousand Turkish Cypriot soldiers). This is countered by a Greek Cypriot force of approximately 12,000 with reported access to 50,000 reserves. "Cyprus - Army," *IHS Jane's World Armies*, June 5, 2018. The United Nations maintains a peacekeeping mission (UNFICYP) of approximately 900 personnel within a buffer zone headquartered in Cyprus's divided capital of Nicosia (known as Lefkosa in Turkish). Since the mission's inception in 1964, UNFICYP has suffered 186 fatalities. The United Kingdom maintains approximately 3,000 personnel at two sovereign military bases on the southern portion of the island at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

[200] The Greek Cypriots rejected by referendum a United Nations reunification plan (called the Annan plan after then Secretary-General Kofi Annan) in 2004 that the Turkish Cypriot population accepted.

[201] For more information, see CRS Report R44591, *Natural Gas Discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean*, by Michael Ratner.

[202] "Why Turkey and Greece cannot reconcile," *Economist*, December 14, 2017.

[203] Patrick Kingsley, "Tiny Islands Make for Big Tensions Between Greece and Turkey," *New York Times*, April 21, 2018.

[204] Zia Weise, "Turkey's Balkan Comeback," *Politico*, May 15, 2018.

[205] Sinem Cengiz, "Turkey carves out a new role for itself in Central Asia," *Arab News*, May 4, 2018.

[206] Jan Philipp Wilhelm, "Turkey's Erdogan seeks more influence in Africa," Deutsche Welle, March 2, 2018.

with other countries before Turkey's government classified the movement as a terrorist organization. Questions persist about how these ties will develop in response to changes in Turkey.

Over the past year, Turkey established a military base in Somalia and announced a number of economic initiatives with countries near the Horn of Africa.[207] Prospects of greater Turkish influence in this area, especially considering Turkey's close relationship with Qatar, have sparked concern from a number of Arab countries for whom the Horn has important strategic value.[208] Since 2015, Turkey has deployed troops to Qatar, and has supported it politically and economically during its tensions with other Gulf Arab states.[209]

[207] Mustafa Gurbuz, "Turkey's Challenge to Arab Interests in the Horn of Africa," Arab Center Washington DC, February 22, 2018.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Yunus Paksoy, "Turkish Military in Qatar: Bonds of mutual trust," *Daily Sabah*, June 12, 2018.

Appendix A. Profiles of Key Figures in Turkey

Recep Tayyip Erdogan—President
(pronounced *air-doe-wan*)

Born in 1954, Erdogan was raised in Istanbul and in his familial hometown of Rize on the Black Sea coast. He attended a religious *imam hatip* secondary school in Istanbul. In the 1970s, Erdogan studied business at what is today Marmara University, became a business consultant and executive, and became politically active with the different Turkish Islamist parties led by eventual prime minister Necmettin Erbakan.

Erdogan was elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994 but was removed from office, imprisoned for six months, and banned from parliamentary politics for religious incitement after publicly reciting a poem drawing from Islamic imagery. After Erbakan's government resigned under military pressure in 1997 and his Welfare Party was disbanded, Erdogan became the founding chairman of the AKP in 2001. The AKP won a decisive electoral victory in 2002, and has led the government ever since. After the election, a legal change allowed Erdogan to run for parliament in a 2003 special election, and after he won, Erdogan replaced Abdullah Gul as prime minister.

Erdogan and his personal popularity and charisma have been at the center of much of the domestic and foreign policy change that has occurred in Turkey since he came to power. Erdogan became Turkey's first popularly elected president in August 2014 and won reelection to a newly empowered presidency in June 2018. Many observers believe that he primarily seeks to consolidate power and to avoid the reopening of corruption cases that could implicate him and close family members or associates.

Erdogan is married and has two sons and two daughters. He is widely believed to be positioning his son-in-law Berat Albayrak (currently treasury and finance minister) as a possible successor. Erdogan does not speak English.

Kemal Kilicdaroglu—Leader of Republican People's Party (CHP)
(*kill-itch-dar-oh-loo)*

Born in 1948 in Tunceli province in eastern Turkey to an Alevi background, Kilicdaroglu is the leader of the CHP, which is the main opposition party and traditional political outlet of the Turkish nationalist secular elite. In recent years, the party has also attracted various liberal and social democratic constituencies.

After receiving an economics degree from what is now Gazi University in Ankara, Kilicdaroglu had a civil service career—first with the Finance Ministry, then as the director-general of the Social Security Organization. After retiring from the civil service, Kilicdaroglu became politically active with the CHP and was elected to parliament from Istanbul in 2002. He gained national prominence for his efforts to root out corruption among AKP officials and the AKP-affiliated mayor of Ankara. Kilicdaroglu was elected as party leader in 2010 but has since faced criticism for the CHP's failure to make electoral gains. The party's 2018 presidential nominee, Muharrem Ince, may be a potential rival to Kilicdaroglu going forward.

Kilicdaroglu is married with a son and two daughters. He speaks fluent French.

Devlet Bahceli—Leader of Nationalist Action Party (MHP)
(*bah-cheh-lee*)

Born in 1948 in Osmaniye province in southern Turkey, Bahceli is the leader of the MHP, which is the traditional Turkish nationalist party of Turkey that is known for opposing political accommodation with the Kurds.

Bahceli moved to Istanbul for his secondary education, and received his higher education, including a doctorate, from what is now Gazi University in Ankara. After a career as an economics lecturer at Gazi University, he entered a political career as a leader in what would become the MHP. He became the chairman of the MHP in 1997 and served as a deputy prime minister during a 1999-2002 coalition government. He was initially elected to parliament in 2007.

Bahceli has allied with Erdogan, providing support for the 2017 constitutional referendum and for Erdogan's 2018 presidential bid.

Bahceli speaks fluent English.

Meral Aksener—Founder and Leader of the Good (*Iyi*) Party
(*awk-sheh-nar*)

Born in 1956 in Izmit in western Turkey to Muslims who had resettled in Turkey from Greece, Aksener is the founder and leader of the Good Party. She founded the party in 2017 as an alternative for nationalists and other Turks who oppose the MHP's alliance with Erdogan.

Aksener studied at Istanbul University and received a doctorate in history from Marmara University, becoming a university lecturer before entering politics. She was first elected to parliament in 1995 with the True Path Party, and served as interior minister in the coalition government that was ultimately forced from office in 1997 by a memorandum from Turkey's military. She served in parliament with the MHP from 2007 to 2015 and served for most of that time as deputy speaker.

Aksener became a forceful opponent of Erdogan after the MHP agreed in 2016 to provide him the necessary parliamentary support for a constitutional referendum establishing a presidential system of government. She left the party and campaigned vigorously against the proposed changes, which won adoption in 2017 despite the controversy that attended the vote. After founding the Good Party, she ran as its presidential candidate in the 2018 elections.

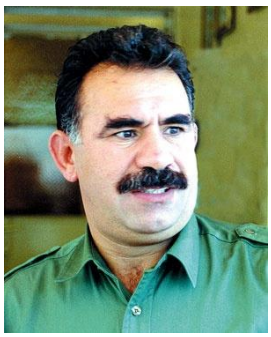
Selahattin Demirtas—Former Co-Leader and 2018 Presidential Candidate of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)
(*day-meer-tosh*)

Born in 1973 to an ethnic Kurdish family, Demirtas is the most prominent member of the HDP, which has a Kurdish nationalist base but has also reached out to a number of non-Kurdish constituencies, particularly liberals and minorities. The constituency of the party and its various predecessors overlaps with that of the PKK, but the party professes a nonviolent stance and claims an independent identity.

Demirtas was raised in Elazig in eastern Turkey. He attended universities in both Izmir and Ankara and received his law degree from Ankara University. He became a human rights activist leader in Diyarbakir and was elected to parliament for the first time in 2007, becoming co-leader of the HDP's immediate predecessor party in 2010. His national visibility increased after he ran as one of two candidates opposing Erdogan for the presidency in 2014. His personal popularity and charisma are generally seen as major reasons for the HDP becoming the first pro-Kurdish party to pass the electoral threshold of 10% in June and November 2015 parliamentary elections.

Demirtas was arrested in November 2016 on terrorism-related charges and remains in custody. He stepped down from party leadership in January 2018 but ran for president in 2018 from prison, garnering about 8.5% of the vote; the HDP won about 12% of the nationwide parliamentary vote, however, and will be the third largest party in parliament.

Demirtas is married with two daughters.



Abdullah Ocalan—Founder of the PKK
(*oh-juh-lawn)*

Born in or around 1949 in southeastern Turkey (near Sanliurfa), Ocalan is the founding leader of the PKK.

After attending vocational high school in Ankara, Ocalan served in civil service posts in Diyarbakir and Istanbul until enrolling at Ankara University in 1971. As his interest developed in socialism and Kurdish nationalism, Ocalan was jailed for seven months in 1972 for participating in an illegal student demonstration. His time in prison with other activists helped inspire his political ambitions, and he became increasingly politically active upon his release.

Ocalan founded the Marxist-Leninist-influenced PKK in 1978 and launched a separatist militant campaign against Turkish security forces—while also attacking the traditional Kurdish chieftain class—in 1984. He used Syrian territory as his safe haven, with the

group also using Lebanese territory for training and Iraqi territory for operations. Syria forced Ocalan to leave in 1998 after Turkey threatened war for harboring him.

After traveling to several different countries, Ocalan was captured in February 1999 in Kenya—possibly with U.S. help—and was turned over to Turkish authorities. The PKK declared a cease-fire shortly thereafter. Ocalan was sentenced to death, in a trial later ruled unfair by the European Court of Human Rights, but when Turkey abolished the death penalty in 2002, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He resides in a maximum-security prison on the island of Imrali in the Sea of Marmara, and was in solitary confinement until 2009.

Although other PKK leaders such as Cemil Bayik and Murat Karayilan have exercised direct control over PKK operations during Ocalan's imprisonment, some observers believe that Ocalan still ultimately controls the PKK through proxies. PKK violence resumed in 2003 and has since continued off-and-on, with the most recent cease-fire ending in July 2015.

Appendix B. Significant U.S.-Origin Arms Transfers or Possible Arms Transfers to Turkey

(Congressional notifications since 2009)

Amount/Description	FMS or DCS	Year: Cong. Notice	Year: Contract	Year: Delivery	Primary Contractor(s)	Estimated Cost
400 RIM-162 Ship-air missiles (ESSM)	DCS	2009	Signed	2011-2016 (346 estimated)	Raytheon	$300 million
72 PATRIOT Advanced Capability Missiles (PAC-3), 197 PATRIOT Guidance Enhanced Missiles, and associated equipment	FMS	2009			Raytheon and Lockheed Martin	$4 billion
14 CH-47F CHINOOK Helicopters	FMS	2009	2011 (for 6)	2016 (6)	Boeing	$1.2 billion ($400 million for 6)
3 AH-1W SUPER COBRA Attack Helicopters	FMS	2011	Signed	2012	N/A (from U.S. Marine Corps inventory)	$111 million
117 AIM-9X-2 SIDEWINDER Block II Air-air missiles (SRAAM) and associated equipment	FMS	2012	2014	2015-2016	Raytheon	$140 million
48 MK-48 Mod 6 Advanced Technology All-Up-Round (AUR) Warshot torpedoes and associated equipment	FMS	2014			Raytheon and Lockheed Martin	$170 million
145 AIM-120C-7 Air-air missiles (AMRAAM)	FMS	2014	Signed	2016-2017 (72 estimated)	Raytheon	$320 million
21 MK-15 Phalanx Block 1B Baseline 2 Close-in weapons systems (CIWS) (sale/upgrade)	FMS	2015	2015 (for 6)	2017 (4 estimated)	Raytheon	$310 million
Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) and associated equipment	FMS	2015	Signed (for 1000)	2017 (250 estimated)	Boeing	$70 million

Sources: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Arms Transfer Database, *Defense News*, *Hurriyet Daily News*, Global Security.

Notes: All figures and dates are approximate; blank entries indicate that data is unknown or not applicable. FMS refers to "Foreign Military Sales" contemplated between the U.S. government and Turkey, while DCS refers to "Direct Commercial Sales" contemplated between private U.S. companies and Turkey.

Appendix C. Congressional Committee Reports of Resolutions Using the Word "Genocide" in Relation to Events Regarding Armenians in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923

Date Reported or of Vote for Report	Proposed Resolution(s)	Committee
April 5, 1984	S.J.Res. 87	Senate Judiciary
September 28, 1984	S.Res. 241	Senate Foreign Relations
July 9, 1985	H.J.Res. 192	House Post Office and Civil Service
July 23, 1987	H.J.Res. 132	House Post Office and Civil Service
August 3, 1987	H.Res. 238	House Rules
October 18, 1989	S.J.Res. 212	Senate Judiciary
October 11, 2000	H.Res. 596 and H.Res. 625	House Rules
May 22, 2003	H.Res. 193	House Judiciary
September 15, 2005	H.Res. 316 and H.Con.Res. 195	House International Relations
March 29, 2007	S.Res. 65	Senate Foreign Relations
October 10, 2007	H.Res. 106	House Foreign Affairs
March 4, 2010	H.Res. 252	House Foreign Affairs
April 10, 2014	S.Res. 410	Senate Foreign Relations

Author Information

Jim Zanotti
Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs

Clayton Thomas
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs

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