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Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations In Brief

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Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations In Brief

U.S. relations with Turkey (Türkiye) take place within a complicated geopolitical environment and with Turkey in economic distress. U.S.-Turkey tensions that worsened after a failed 2016 coup in Turkey—including ongoing disagreements over Syrian Kurds and Turkey’s 2019 procurement of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system—highlight uncertainties about the future of bilateral relations. Congressional actions have included sanctions legislation and holds on U.S. arms sales. Nevertheless, U.S. and Turkish officials emphasize the importance of continued cooperation and Turkey’s membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Observers voice concerns about the largely authoritarian rule of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Major inflation and a sharp decline in Turkey’s currency have led to speculation that Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (Turkish acronym AKP) might be vulnerable to a coalition of opposition parties in presidential and parliamentary elections required by June 2023, if competitive elections occur. The aftermath of the disastrous February 6, 2023 earthquakes in southern Turkey is affecting Turkey’s politics, society, and economy, and could influence the timing and nature of elections. If a different Turkish president were to win 2023 elections and take power, or if the president’s party coalition does not control parliament, some domestic and foreign policy changes could be possible.

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U.S. relations and F-16s. Under President Joe Biden, existing U.S.-Turkey tensions have continued alongside cooperation on other foreign policy matters. While deepening ties with Russia remain a cause for U.S. concern, Turkey’s emergence as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine after Russia’s 2022 invasion has arguably increased Turkey’s importance for U.S. policy. U.S.-Turkey relations have improved somewhat due to Turkey’s cautious support for Ukraine’s defense; growing relationships with other countries that seek to counter Russian regional power (including via the export of drone aircraft); and openness to rapprochement with Israel, some Arab states, and Armenia. President Biden has voiced support for sales that would upgrade Turkey’s aging F-16 fleet, but some Members of Congress have expressed opposition. According to media accounts, the Administration reportedly provided informal notification to Congress in January 2023 of possible sales of F-16s to Turkey, plus associated equipment and munitions. Factors potentially influencing congressional deliberations include Turkey’s stance on Sweden’s and Finland’s NATO accession and Turkey’s tense relations with Greece. Congressional and executive branch action regarding Turkey and its rivals could have implications for bilateral ties and U.S. political-military options in the region, as well as Turkey’s strategic orientation. The following are key factors in the U.S.-Turkey relationship.

Turkey’s foreign policy approach. For decades, Turkey has relied closely on the United States and NATO for defense cooperation. Turkish leaders have indicated an interest in reducing their dependence on the West, and that may partly explain their willingness to coordinate some actions with Russia. Nevertheless, Turkey retains significant differences with Russia in Syria, Ukraine, Libya, and Armenia-Azerbaijan. Turkey’s future foreign policy course could depend partly on how willing Turkey is to risk tensions or breaks in traditional relationships with Western powers while building other global relationships.

Major issues: Russia, Sweden-Finland-NATO, and Greece. In the wake of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Turkey faces challenges in balancing its relations with the two countries and managing Black Sea access, with implications for U.S.-Turkey ties. To some extent, Erdogan has sought to reinforce Turkey’s embattled economy by deepening economic and energy ties with Russia. Erdogan might assess that Western sanctions against Russia give Turkey increased leverage in these dealings. At the same time, Turkey has expanded defense cooperation with Ukraine. Turkey has become an important mediator between Russia and Ukraine on brokering a grain export corridor and other issues. In June, Turkey agreed on a framework deal for Sweden and Finland to join NATO, but Turkey has delayed final approval while demanding that the two countries help Turkey act against people it considers to be terrorists. Long-standing disputes between Greece and Turkey over territorial rights in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean seas spiked in 2022 amid greater U.S. strategic cooperation with Greece.

Syria: ongoing conflict near borders. Turkish concerns regarding its southern border with Syria has deepened further during Syria’s civil war, due largely to (1) the flow of nearly four million refugees into Turkey, (2) U.S. efforts to counter the Islamic State by working with Syrian Kurds linked to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Kurdish acronym PKK, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization), and (3) the presence of Russian, American, and Iranian forces in Syria that complicate and somewhat constrain Turkish action. Turkey and allied Syrian armed opposition groups have occupied various areas of northern Syria since 2016, and Turkey’s military continues to target Kurdish fighters in Syria and Iraq.

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Introduction and Key U.S.-Turkey Considerations

This report provides background information and analysis on key issues affecting U.S.-Turkey (Türkiye)¹ relations, including domestic Turkish developments and various foreign policy and defense matters. U.S. and Turkish officials maintain that bilateral cooperation on regional security matters remains mutually important,² despite Turkey's purchase of an S-400 surface-to-air defense system from Russia and a number of other U.S.-Turkey differences (such as in Syria and with Greece and Cyprus).

Under President Joe Biden, some existing U.S.-Turkey tensions have continued alongside cooperation on other matters and opportunities to improve bilateral ties. While continued or deepening ties with Russia in certain areas remain a cause for concern for the Biden Administration and some Members of Congress, Turkey's cautious support for Ukraine's defense and openness to rapprochement with Israel, some Arab states, and Armenia have somewhat improved U.S.-Turkey relations.³ President Biden has expressed support for selling F-16s to Turkey, and in January 2023 the Administration reportedly informally notified Congress of a potential F-16 sale, plus associated equipment and munitions (see "Possible F-16 Sales and Congressional Views" below). Turkey has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1952.

Members of Congress may consider legislative and oversight options regarding Turkey. Congressional and executive branch action regarding Turkey and its rivals could have implications for bilateral ties, U.S. political-military options in the region, and Turkey's foreign policy orientation and financial well-being.

For additional information, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas. See **Figure A-1** for a map and key facts and figures about Turkey.

Domestic Issues

Political Developments Under Erdogan's Rule

President Erdogan has ruled Turkey since becoming prime minister in 2003, and has steadily deepened his control over the country's populace and institutions. After Erdogan became president in August 2014 via Turkey's first-ever popular presidential election, he claimed a

¹ In late 2021, President Erdogan directed the use of "Türkiye" (the country's name in Turkish) in place of "Turkey" or other equivalents (e.g., the German "Türkei," the French "Turquie") in Turkish government documents and communications. In June 2022, the United Nations accepted the Turkish request to change the country's name at the body to "Türkiye." In January 2023, the State Department spokesperson said that the department would use the revised spelling "in most formal diplomatic and bilateral contexts" where appropriate. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names retained both "Turkey" and "Republic of Turkey" as conventional names, and the spokesperson said that the State Department could use those names if it is in furtherance of broader public understanding. State Department Press Briefing, January 5, 2023.

² State Department, "Joint Statement on the U.S.-Türkiye Strategic Mechanism" and "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu Before Their Meeting," January 18, 2023; State Department Press Briefing, January 18, 2023.

³ Alper Coskun, "Making the New U.S.-Turkey Strategic Mechanism Meaningful," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 12, 2022; Kali Robinson, "Turkey's Growing Foreign Policy Ambitions," Council on Foreign Relations, August 24, 2022.

mandate for increasing his power and pursuing a presidential system of governance, which he cemented in a 2017 referendum and 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections. Some allegations of voter fraud and manipulation surfaced after the referendum and the elections.⁴ Since a failed July 2016 coup attempt by elements within the military, Erdogan and his Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (Turkish acronym AKP) have adopted more nationalistic domestic and foreign policy approaches, perhaps partly because of their reliance on parliamentary support from the Nationalist Action Party (Turkish acronym MHP).

Many observers describe Erdogan as a polarizing figure, and elections have reflected roughly equal portions of the country supporting and opposing his rule.⁵ The AKP won the largest share of votes in 2019 local elections, but lost some key municipalities, including Istanbul, to candidates from the secular-leaning Republican People's Party (Turkish acronym CHP).

U.S. and European Union (EU) officials have expressed a number of concerns about authoritarian governance and erosion of rule of law and civil liberties in Turkey.⁶ Some leading opposition figures in Turkey have accused Erdogan of planning, controlling, and/or using the failed coup to suppress dissent and consolidate power.⁷

Meanwhile, Turkish authorities have continued their on-and-off efforts to counter militants from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Kurdish acronym PKK, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization). These efforts include Turkish military operations targeting PKK and PKK-aligned personnel in Iraq and Syria.⁸

February Earthquakes and Their Implications

Two major earthquakes (magnitude 7.8 and 7.5) hit southern Turkey on February 6, 2023. Quake damage in areas of Turkey and Syria, and the after-effects in cold winter weather, have reportedly killed more than 35,000 people in Turkey and 5,000 in Syria, injured over 100,000 more, and have directly affected the living situations and daily lives of millions. As Turkish authorities coordinate a humanitarian response involving significant international assistance, and facilitate access to Syrian border crossings,⁹ observers have sought to assess (1) factors contributing to the damage and its scope, (2) efforts to help victims and their families, and (3) present and future needs.¹⁰ U.S. officials have provided or announced various means of assistance to Turkey,

⁴ Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Limited Referendum Observation Mission Final Report, Turkey, April 16, 2017 (published June 22, 2017); OSCE, International Election Observation Mission, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Turkey, Early Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, June 24, 2018 (published June 25, 2018).

⁵ Kemal Kirisci and Berk Esen, "Might the Turkish Electorate Be Ready to Say Goodbye to Erdoğan After Two Decades in Power?" *Just Security*, November 22, 2021.

⁶ State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021*, Turkey; Turkey; European Commission, *Türkiye 2022 Report*, October 6, 2022.

⁷ Gareth Jenkins, "Five Years After July 15: Erdogan's New Turkey and the Myth of Its Immaculate Conception," *Turkey Analyst*, July 15, 2021; "Turkey coup: Top officers given life terms in mass trial," *BBC News*, April 7, 2021.

⁸ Berkay Mandiraci, "Turkey's PKK Conflict: A Regional Battleground in Flux," International Crisis Group, February 18, 2022.

⁹ Fulya Ozerkan and Omar Haj Kadour, "Miracle rescues as Turkey-Syria quake toll passes 25,000," *Agence France Presse*, February 10, 2023.

¹⁰ See, for example, Ben Hubbard, "Quake Response Testing Erdogan as Survivors Express Frustration," *New York Times*, February 12, 2023.

including \$85 million in urgent humanitarian assistance and the deployment of transport helicopters to Turkey's Incirlik Air Base.¹¹

The crisis is affecting Turkey's politics, society, and economy, particularly as the country prepares for presidential and parliamentary elections (discussed below). Parliament has approved a three-month state of emergency in the ten southern Turkish provinces most directly affected. These provinces account for about 10% of Turkey's gross domestic product and 15% of its population, and host thousands of refugees from Syria's ongoing civil war.¹²

Analysts speculate about how the crisis will affect support for President Erdogan and his government.¹³ A major 1999 earthquake in northwestern Turkey killed approximately 18,000, prompting legal and regulatory efforts to improve building safety.¹⁴ However, some media accounts and opposition politicians allege that in the years before the 2023 earthquakes, government officials and contractors prioritized economic benefits over adherence to construction codes, at least partly contributing to the scope of damage and fatalities.¹⁵ Erdogan has denounced criticism aimed at him or the government as fomenting disunity,¹⁶ and Turkey's justice ministry has ordered prosecutors to create "earthquake crimes investigation units" to consider criminal violations for substandard work.¹⁷ Erdogan has acknowledged some problems with the government's initial response,¹⁸ while mainly attributing the disaster to the quakes' size.¹⁹ He has announced that the government will prepare a recovery program and complete housing reconstruction within a year.²⁰

Major Economic Challenges

Ongoing economic problems in Turkey considerably worsened in 2022 as its currency, the *lira*, depreciated in value around 28% against the U.S. dollar, after declining by nearly 45% in 2021. Annual inflation was at 58% in January 2023,²¹ with an unofficial estimate suggesting that actual inflation may be well over 100%.²² Many analysts link the spike in inflation to the Turkish central bank's repeated reductions of its key interest rate since September 2021, with additional inflationary pressure possibly coming from external events such as Russia's war on Ukraine and interest rate hikes in the United States and other major economies.²³ The lira has been trending

¹¹ White House, "FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration's Response to the Earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria," February 10, 2023; U.S. Navy, "Unified DoD Efforts Supporting Türkiye," February 11, 2023.

¹² Nevzat Devranoglu, "Earthquake could cost Turkey up to \$84 billion - business group," *Reuters*, February 13, 2023; Raja Abdulrahim and Emily Garthwaite, "For Syrian Refugees in Turkey, Quake Is a Disaster Within a Disaster," *New York Times*, February 13, 2023.

¹³ Adam Samson and Ayla Jean Yackley, "Earthquake tests Erdoğan's leadership as Turkish elections loom," *Financial Times*, February 9, 2023; "Earthquake could shake up Turkish election," *Al-Monitor*, February 10, 2023.

¹⁴ Zeynep Bilginsoy and Suzan Fraser, "Turkey's lax policing of building codes known before quake," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2023.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; Samson and Yackley, "Earthquake tests Erdoğan's leadership as Turkish elections loom."

¹⁶ Samson and Yackley, "Earthquake tests Erdoğan's leadership as Turkish elections loom."

¹⁷ Hubbard, "Quake Response Testing Erdogan as Survivors Express Frustration."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ben Hubbard et al., "As Public Anger Mounts, Turkey Detains Builders," *New York Times*, February 12, 2023.

²⁰ Devranoglu, "Earthquake could cost Turkey up to \$84 billion - business group."

²¹ "Turkey inflation higher than expected at nearly 58%," *Reuters*, February 3, 2023.

²² "Turkey's independent academics announce annual inflation rate as 121 percent," *Duvar English*, February 3, 2023.

²³ Baris Balci and Inci Ozbek, "Turkey Rewrites All Inflation Forecasts but Won't Budge on Rates," *Bloomberg*, April

downward for more than a decade, with its decline probably driven in part by broader concerns about Turkey's rule of law and economy.²⁴

Throughout this time, President Erdogan has assertively challenged the conventional economic theory that higher interest rates stem inflation, attract foreign capital, and support the value of the currency. In replacing Turkey's central bank governor and finance minister in 2021, Erdogan established greater control over Turkish fiscal and monetary policy. In public statements, Erdogan has argued that lower interest rates boost production, employment, and exports.²⁵ Erdogan also has criticized high interest rates as contrary to Islamic teachings and as exacerbating the gap between rich and poor.²⁶

The currency and inflation crisis in Turkey has dramatically affected consumers' cost of living and the cost of international borrowing (mostly conducted in U.S. dollars) for banks and private sector companies. The government has sought to stop or reverse inflation by providing tax cuts, minimum wage increases, greater access to early retirement benefits, and subsidies for basic expenses, along with borrowing incentives for banks that hold liras.²⁷ Turkey also has sought currency swaps from some Arab Gulf states, and has benefitted from Russian-origin inflows that contribute to U.S. warnings about potential sanctions evasion (see "Turkey-Russia Economic and Energy Cooperation" below).²⁸ To date, Erdogan has publicly rejected calls to turn to the International Monetary Fund for a financial assistance package.

Costs of ongoing humanitarian assistance and reconstruction from the earthquake crisis, along with disruptions to agricultural, industrial, and commercial activity (estimated to reduce Turkey's 2023 economic growth forecasts by up to 2%), will likely strain Turkey's economy further.²⁹ An early estimate of rebuilding costs and damage is around \$84 billion.³⁰ With a modest debt-to-GDP ratio of around 37.5% (see **Figure A-1**), Turkey may have some space to boost fiscal spending in response to the crisis. One analyst has said that financial assistance from international development banks will be necessary but limited because of the Turkish government's poor relations with the West.³¹ The World Bank has said it will provide \$1.78 billion in relief and recovery assistance, and assess priority areas for support.³²

28, 2022.

²⁴ Mikolaj Rogalewicz, "Economic crisis in Turkey," *Warsaw Institute Review*, April 25, 2022.

²⁵ "EXPLAINER: Turkey's Currency Is Crashing. What's the Impact?" *Associated Press*, December 3, 2021; Carlotta Gall, "Keeping His Own Counsel on Turkey's Economy," *New York Times*, December 11, 2021.

²⁶ "Turkey will keep lowering interest rates: Erdogan," *Daily Sabah*, June 6, 2022; Mustafa Akyol, "How Erdogan's Pseudoscience Is Ruining the Turkish Economy," *Cato Institute*, December 3, 2021.

²⁷ M. Murat Kubilay, "Already vulnerable, Turkey's economy now faces massive earthquake recovery costs," *Middle East Institute*, February 13, 2023.

²⁸ Laura Pitel "Turkey finance minister defends economic links with Russia," *Financial Times*, October 25, 2022; Murat Kubilay, "As liquidity problems worsen, Turkey turns to capital controls and informal FX flows," *Middle East Institute*, November 7, 2022.

²⁹ Mustafa Sonmez, "Massive earthquake cost to deepen Turkey's economic woes," *Al-Monitor*, February 11, 2023; Devranoglu, "Earthquake could cost Turkey up to \$84 billion."

³⁰ Devranoglu, "Earthquake could cost Turkey up to \$84 billion."

³¹ Kubilay, "Already vulnerable, Turkey's economy now faces massive earthquake recovery costs."

³² World Bank, "World Bank Announces Initial \$1.78 Billion for Türkiye's Recovery & Reconstruction Efforts After Earthquake Disaster," February 9, 2023.

2023 Elections

Turkey's next presidential and parliamentary elections are required under Turkey's constitution to take place by June 18, 2023. In January, President Erdogan signaled that elections would likely occur on May 14, 2023,³³ but the February 6 earthquakes have led some Erdogan allies to publicly consider a delay.³⁴ A delay beyond June 18 could prompt debate over its legal basis.³⁵ Measures taken under the state of emergency—especially if Erdogan moves to extend or geographically expand it—could influence the campaign's trajectory.³⁶

Largely in the context of Turkey's economic problems discussed above, public opinion polls have fueled speculation that Erdogan and the AKP-MHP parliamentary coalition might be vulnerable to a coalition of six opposition parties including the CHP, the İyi (Good) Party, and the Democracy and Progress Party (Turkish acronym DEVA) (see **Figure A-2**).³⁷ Some observers have debated whether (1) free and fair elections could take place under Erdogan,³⁸ (2) opposition parties can convince potential swing voters to side with them despite their personal or ideological affinity for Erdogan,³⁹ or (3) Erdogan would cede power after an electoral defeat.⁴⁰ If no presidential candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, a presidential run-off election between the top two vote-getting candidates would take place two weeks later.

If the president's party coalition does not control parliament after the elections, parliament could check the president in various ways if a majority of members seeks to do so. The president has broad powers to act in the absence of parliamentary initiative, but relies on parliament's approval in certain matters such as budgeting, international treaty ratification, and foreign military deployments.⁴¹

The opposition coalition has agreed on a joint platform focused on returning Turkey to the parliamentary system that existed before the 2018 election, largely as a means of limiting

³³ "President Erdoğan hints at May 14 for general elections," *Hurriyet Daily News*, January 18, 2023. Turkey's constitution requires that a president can only seek a third term if parliament (rather than the president) moves up the election date, which it can do via a three-fifths vote. Some Erdogan supporters argue that Erdogan's next term would be his second under Turkey's constitution because his first term (which was not a full five years) came before the current constitutional amendments regarding the presidency became effective in 2018. "Can Recep Tayyip Erdoğan run for a third term as president?" *James in Turkey*, last updated December 19, 2022.

³⁴ "Explainer: How the earthquake threw Turkey's election plan into turmoil," *Reuters*, February 14, 2023.

³⁵ Ibid.; Soner Cagaptay, "How Will Turkey's Earthquake Affect the Current Election Cycle?" Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 14, 2023.

³⁶ Cagaptay, "How Will Turkey's Earthquake Affect the Current Election Cycle?"

³⁷ Hubbard, "Skyrocketing Prices in Turkey Hurt Families and Tarnish Erdogan"; "Polls indicate close race between rival blocs, yet people increasingly think Erdoğan will win," *BIA News*, October 12, 2022; Berk Esen, "The opposition alliance in Turkey: A viable alternative to Erdogan?" *SWP Comment*, August 2022.

³⁸ Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, "It Is Not Too Early to Think About Political Change in Turkey," German Marshall Fund of the United States, January 10, 2022; Kirisci and Esen, "Might the Turkish Electorate Be Ready to Say Goodbye to Erdoğan After Two Decades in Power?"

³⁹ Ozer Sencar of Metropoll, in Laura Pitel, "Will the ailing Turkish economy bring Erdogan down?" *Financial Times*, November 1, 2021.

⁴⁰ Unnamed Western diplomat quoted in Laura Pitel, "Defeating Erdogan: Turkey's opposition searches for a champion," *Financial Times*, May 5, 2022.

⁴¹ Unofficial English translation of Turkish constitution available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Turkey_2017.pdf?lang=en. See also Alan Makovsky, *Erdoğan's Proposal for an Empowered Presidency*, Center for American Progress, March 22, 2017.

executive power.⁴² However, it remains unclear which opposition candidate will challenge Erdogan for president: CHP party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu (from the Alevi religious minority), or either of the two mayors who won control of Istanbul and Ankara for the party in 2019 (Ekrem Imamoglu and Mansur Yavas, respectively) and generally poll higher than Kilicdaroglu.⁴³ Opposition figures have criticized the Erdogan government's approach to a range of foreign and domestic policy issues and promised to make changes (see also "Foreign Policy Changes Under a Different President?").⁴⁴ Imamoglu's candidacy may be jeopardized by a criminal conviction that he and other opposition figures charge is politically motivated.⁴⁵ As he awaits a final decision on appeal, Imamoglu continues to serve as mayor and engage politically.⁴⁶ Despite Erdogan's potential vulnerability, some observers have questioned the opposition coalition's prospects, citing obstacles posed by disunity, Erdogan's political resilience, and the government's influence over the media, economic developments, and judicial rulings.⁴⁷ It is unclear how voters will respond to the earthquake crisis.

How Kurdish citizens of Turkey (numbering nearly 20% of the population) vote could impact the outcome.⁴⁸ The Kurdish-led Peoples' Democratic Party (Turkish acronym HDP), which could face a legal ban,⁴⁹ announced in January 2023 that it would run its own presidential candidate in the elections.⁵⁰ Pending resolution of the potential legal ban, Turkey's Constitutional Court has frozen the HDP bank accounts that hold the party's state-provided funds.⁵¹

Turkish Foreign Policy

General Assessment

Turkey's strategic orientation, or how it relates to and balances between the West and other global and regional powers, is a major consideration for the United States. Trends in Turkey's relations with the United States and other countries reflect changes to this orientation, as Turkey has sought greater independence of action as a regional power within a more multipolar global system. Turkish leaders' interest in reducing their dependence on the West for defense and discouraging

⁴² CHP, "Memorandum of Understanding on Common Policies (January 30, 2023)."

⁴³ Ibid.; Pitel, "Defeating Erdogan."

⁴⁴ "Türkiye's CHP forms technocratic committee to advise the govt.," *Yetkin Report*, December 4, 2022; Berk Esen, "Post-2023 election scenarios in Turkey," *SWP Comment*, September 2022; Alper Coskun and Sinan Ulgen, "Political Change and Turkey's Foreign Policy," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2022.

⁴⁵ Ben Hubbard and Safak Timur, "Conviction May Sideline Rival of Turkish Leader," *New York Times*, December 15, 2022. In a separate case, Turkish prosecutors charged Imamoglu (and six co-workers) in January 2023 with improperly awarding a public tender to a company during his time as mayor of an Istanbul district (before he was elected mayor of the entire city). Amberin Zaman, "Istanbul mayor charged with corruption as Turkish opposition weighs Erdogan challenger," *Al-Monitor*, January 11, 2023. Imamoglu has called the charges "an attempt to fabricate a bogus criminal offence," saying that authorities had not detected anything problematic at the time of the tender. "Istanbul mayor, Erdogan critic faces fraud case – Haberturk," *Reuters*, January 11, 2023.

⁴⁶ Hubbard and Safak Timur, "Conviction May Sideline Rival of Turkish Leader."

⁴⁷ "The opposition should win, but it has obstacles in its way," *Economist*, January 16, 2023; James Ryan, "The path ahead in Turkey's upcoming electoral campaign," *War on the Rocks*, November 10, 2022.

⁴⁸ Mesut Yegen, "Erdogan and the Turkish Opposition Revisit the Kurdish Question," *SWP Comment*, April 2022.

⁴⁹ Diego Cupolo, "Top Turkish court accepts revised indictment to ban pro-Kurdish party," *Al-Monitor*, June 21, 2021.

⁵⁰ Amberin Zaman, "Will Kurds' choice to field own candidate benefit Erdogan or Turkey's opposition?" *Al-Monitor*, January 9, 2023.

⁵¹ Andrew Wilks, "Turkey's historic election could move up as Erdogan calculates," *Al-Monitor*, January 5, 2023.

Western influence over their domestic politics may partly explain their willingness to coordinate some actions with Russia, such as in Syria and with Turkey's purchase of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system. Nevertheless, Turkey retains significant differences with Russia—with which it has a long history of discord—including in political and military crises involving Syria, Ukraine, Libya, and Armenia-Azerbaijan. U.S. and Turkish officials maintain that bilateral cooperation on regional security matters remains mutually important.⁵²

Turkish leaders appear to compartmentalize their partnerships and rivalries with other influential countries as each situation dictates, partly in an attempt to reduce Turkey's dependence on these actors and maintain its leverage with them.⁵³ Turkey's future foreign policy course could depend partly on the degree to which Turkish leaders feel constrained by their traditional security and economic relationships with Western powers, and how willing they are to risk tensions or breaks in those relationships while building other global relationships.

Foreign Policy Changes Under a Different President?

In anticipation of 2023 elections, observers have speculated about how a new president's foreign policy (including domestic policy with clear foreign policy ramifications) might differ from Erdogan's if an opposition candidate wins.⁵⁴ Because of widespread nationalistic sentiment among Turkey's population and most of its political parties, a different president may have difficulty changing Turkish policies on some of the following matters of core security concern: Syria and Iraq (Kurdish militancy, refugee issues, and other countries' influence), Greece and Cyprus (Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean disputes), and Russia and Ukraine (conflict and its regional and global consequences).

However, a different president may be more likely to alter certain ongoing policies that may be more reflective of Erdogan's or the AKP's preferences than of broad national consensus. Such changes may include (1) providing more flexibility to central bankers and other officials on monetary policy decisions and other measures to address Turkey's economic problems, (2) giving greater consideration to European Court of Human Rights rulings, and (3) reducing Turkish support for Sunni Islamist groups like Hamas (a U.S.-designated terrorist organization), the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and Syrian armed opposition factions.

Some Turkish opposition parties' foreign policy statements suggest that a different president might be less willing than Erdogan to say and do things that risk harming relationships with the United States and European countries.⁵⁵ Thus, despite the difficulties that may surround changing some policies (as mentioned above), a different Turkish president could conceivably be less inclined toward implementing those policies in a way that might worsen relations with Western states, such as by pursuing additional arms purchases from Russia or new military operations in northern Syria or the Aegean/Eastern Mediterranean area. However, if a new, untested Turkish government feels pressure to signal its strength to various international actors or to placate multiple domestic constituencies within a coalition, that president may strive to match Erdogan's

⁵² State Department, "Joint Statement on the U.S.-Türkiye Strategic Mechanism," January 18, 2023.

⁵³ Nur Ozcan Erbay, "Ankara to use compartmentalization in managing relations," *Daily Sabah*, June 24, 2021; Stephen J. Flanagan et al., *Turkey's Nationalist Course: Implications for the U.S.-Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S. Army*, RAND Corporation, 2020.

⁵⁴ Alan Makovsky, "Turkey's Hinge Election," *Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, November 2022; Coskun and Ulgen, "Political Change and Turkey's Foreign Policy."

⁵⁵ Coskun and Ulgen, "Political Change and Turkey's Foreign Policy."

reputation for assertiveness. Conversely, a president facing lack of consensus within a coalition might become more passive on foreign policy.

U.S./NATO Strategic Relationship and Military Presence

The United States has valued Turkey's geopolitical importance to and military strength within the NATO alliance, while viewing Turkey's NATO membership as helping anchor Turkey to the West. For Turkey, NATO's traditional importance has been to mitigate Turkish concerns about encroachment by neighbors, such as the Soviet Union's aggressive post-World War II posturing leading up to the Cold War. In more recent or ongoing arenas of conflict like Ukraine and Syria, Turkey's possible interest in countering Russian objectives may be partly motivating its military operations and arms exports.⁵⁶

Turkey's location near several conflict areas has made the continuing availability of its territory for the stationing and transport of arms, cargo, and personnel valuable for the United States and NATO. In addition to Incirlik Air Base near the southern Turkish city of Adana, 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 A-3**). Turkey also controls access to and from the Black Sea through the Bosphorus (alt. Bosporus) and Dardanelles Straits (the Straits—see **Figure A-4**).

Tensions between Turkey and other NATO members have fueled internal U.S./NATO discussions about the continued use of Turkish bases. Some reports suggest that expanded or potentially expanded U.S. military presences in places such as Greece, Cyprus, and Jordan might be connected with concerns about Turkey.⁵⁷ In March 2022 congressional hearing testimony, Turkey expert and former congressional committee staff member Alan Makovsky said that while the United States should make efforts to keep Turkey in the “Western camp,” Turkish “equivocation in recent years” justifies the United States building and expanding military facilities in Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece to “hedge its bets.”⁵⁸

Russia

Turkey's relations with Russia feature elements of cooperation and competition. Turkey has made a number of foreign policy moves since 2016 toward closer ties with Russia. These moves could be motivated by a combination of factors, including Turkey's effort to reduce dependence on the West, economic opportunism, and chances to increase its regional influence at Russia's expense. Turkey also has moved closer to a number of countries surrounding Russia—including Ukraine and Poland—likely in part as a counterweight to Russian regional power.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Dimitar Bechev, “Russia, Turkey and the Spectre of Regional Instability,” Al Sharq Strategic Research, April 13, 2022; Mitch Prothero, “Turkey's Erdogan has been humiliating Putin all year,” *Business Insider*, October 22, 2020.

⁵⁷ “Pentagon pushes back on claim that US to leave Turkey's Incirlik base,” *Al-Monitor*, September 16, 2020; Joseph Trevithick, “Docs Show US to Massively Expand Footprint at Jordanian Air Base amid Spats with Turkey, Iraq,” *The Drive*, January 14, 2019.

⁵⁸ Prepared testimony of Alan Makovsky, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, “Opportunities and Challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean: Examining U.S. Interests and Regional Cooperation,” House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East, North Africa and Global Counterterrorism; and Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber, March 31, 2022, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/opportunities-and-challenges-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-examining-u-s-interests-and-regional-cooperation/>.

⁵⁹ Can Kasapoglu, “Turkish Drone Strategy in the Black Sea Region and Beyond,” Jamestown Foundation, October 12, 2022; Jeffrey Mankoff, “As Russia Reels, Eurasia Roils,” *War on the Rocks*, October 11, 2022.

Russia's 2022 Invasion of Ukraine and Turkish Mediation Efforts

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has heightened challenges Turkey faces in balancing its relations with the two countries, with implications for U.S.-Turkey ties. Turkey's links with Russia—especially its 2019 acquisition of a Russian S-400 system—have fueled major U.S.-Turkey tensions, triggering sanctions and reported congressional holds on arms sales (discussed below). However, following the renewed Russian invasion of Ukraine, U.S. and Turkish interests in countering Russian revisionist aims—including along the Black Sea coast—may have converged in some ways as Turkey has helped strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities in parallel with other NATO countries.⁶⁰ In addition to denouncing Russia's invasion, closing the Straits to belligerent warships, and opposing Russian claims to Ukrainian territory (including Crimea),⁶¹ Turkey has supplied Ukraine with various types of military equipment—including armed drone aircraft and mine-resistant ambush-resistant (MRAP) vehicles⁶²—as well as humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, Turkey's leaders likely hope to minimize spillover effects to Turkey's national security and economy, and this might partly explain Turkey's continued engagement with Russia and desires to help mediate the conflict (discussed below).

In January 2023, a media outlet reported that Turkey began transferring some dual-purpose improved conventional munitions (or DPICMs, which are artillery-fired cluster munitions) to Ukraine in November 2022. The report cited various observers debating the potential battlefield impact and humanitarian implications of the weapon's use.⁶³ Turkish and Ukrainian officials have denied that any such transfers have occurred.⁶⁴

Turkey-Ukraine Defense Cooperation

Turkey and Ukraine have strengthened their relations since Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014.⁶⁵ In 2017, a Turkish security analyst attributed these closer ties to growing mutual interests in countering Russian influence in the Black Sea region and in sharing military technology to expand and increase the self-sufficiency of their respective defense industries.⁶⁶ Since 2020, the two countries have signed multiple agreements signifying closer cooperation, and also signed a broader free trade agreement (pending ratification) in February 2022.⁶⁷

In line with these agreements, Turkish and Ukrainian companies have engaged in or planned a significant expansion of defense transactions, including a number of joint development or co-production initiatives.⁶⁸ Turkish expertise with drone and other aircraft and naval platforms complements Ukrainian skills in designing and constructing

⁶⁰ Saban Kardas, "The War in Ukraine and Turkey's Cautious Counter-Balancing Against Russia," German Marshall Fund of the United States, March 3, 2022.

⁶¹ "Turkey President Erdoğan on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the future of NATO," *PBS Newshour*, September 19, 2022; "Turkey recognises Russia-Ukraine 'war', may block warships," *Agence France Presse*, February 27, 2022.

⁶² Burak Ege Bekdil, "Turkey sends 50 mine-resistant vehicles to Ukraine, with more expected," *Defense News*, August 22, 2022; Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, "The Stalwart Ally: Türkiye's Arms Deliveries to Ukraine," *Oryx*, November 21, 2022.

⁶³ Jack Detsch and Robbie Gramer, "Turkey Is Sending Cold War-Era Cluster Bombs to Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, January 10, 2023.

⁶⁴ Ragip Soylu, "Russia-Ukraine war: Turkey denies supplying Kyiv with cluster munitions," *Middle East Eye*, January 14, 2023.

⁶⁵ For information on the Crimea invasion, see CRS Report R45008, *Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and U.S. Policy*, by Cory Welt.

⁶⁶ Metin Gurcan, "Turkey-Ukraine defense industry ties are booming," *Al-Monitor*, May 1, 2017.

⁶⁷ "Turkey, Ukraine Sign Military Cooperation Agreements," *Associated Press*, October 16, 2020; Christopher Isajiw, "Free trade and drones: Turkey and Ukraine strengthen strategic ties," Atlantic Council, February 11, 2022.

⁶⁸ Kasapoglu, "Turkish Drone Strategy in the Black Sea Region and Beyond."

aerospace engines and missiles.⁶⁹ As part of the deepening bilateral defense cooperation, Turkey has sold several Turkish-origin Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine since 2019,⁷⁰ and some reports have suggested that the manufacturer has delivered additional TB2s to Ukraine at various times since Russia's 2022 invasion.⁷¹ Additionally, Turkey is helping establish Ukraine's naval capabilities by producing corvettes (small warships) for export.⁷²

Turkey's maintenance of close relations with both Russia and Ukraine, and its ability to regulate access to the Straits has put it in a position to mediate between the parties on various issues of contention. In July 2022, Turkey and the United Nations entered into parallel agreements with Russia and Ukraine to provide a Black Sea corridor for Ukrainian grain exports that could partly alleviate global supply concerns.⁷³ Under the deal, which currently runs until March 2023, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, and the U.N. have representatives at a joint coordination center in Istanbul to oversee implementation and inspect ships to prevent weapons smuggling.⁷⁴ President Biden has expressed appreciation for Turkey's efforts.⁷⁵

Turkey-Russia Economic and Energy Cooperation

Turkish officials have sought to minimize any negative economic impact Turkey might face from the Russia-Ukraine war, partly through boosting various forms of economic and energy cooperation with Russia. These efforts may stem from Turkish leaders' concerns about improving the country's economic profile in advance of 2023 elections.⁷⁶ The Turkish government has not joined economic sanctions against Russia or closed its airspace to Russian civilian flights.

In August 2022, Presidents Erdogan and Putin publicly agreed to bolster Turkey-Russia cooperation across economic sectors.⁷⁷ Turkey's Russia-related dealings could potentially lead to Western secondary sanctions against Turkey for facilitating Russian sanctions evasion. During a February 2023 trip to Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to emphasize U.S. concerns about the dangers of "dark money flowing through their financial systems," Brian Nelson, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, delivered the following remarks to leaders of Turkish financial institutions:

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Dorian Jones, "Turkey Strengthens Defense Industry with Its Ukraine Partnership," *Voice of America*, February 4, 2022.

⁷¹ David Hambling, "New Bayraktar Drones Still Seem to Be Reaching Ukraine," *Forbes*, May 10, 2022. The TB2's main producer, Baykar Technology, is planning to build a \$100 million factory in Ukraine that could be in position within about three years to manufacture the full range of the company's drones—doubling Baykar's overall production capacity. Jared Malsin, "Erdogan Seizes Chance to Give Turkey a Global Role," *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 2022.

⁷² Kate Tringham, "Update: Turkey launches first Ada-class corvette for Ukraine and cuts steel for second," *Janes Navy International*, October 3, 2022.

⁷³ "Ukraine, Russia agree to export grain, ending a standoff that threatened food supply" *Associated Press*, July 22, 2022.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/background>.

⁷⁵ White House, "Readout of President Biden's Meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Türkiye," November 15, 2022.

⁷⁶ Patricia Cohen, "Turkey Tightens Energy Ties with Russia as Other Nations Step Back," *New York Times*, December 10, 2022.

⁷⁷ "Russia's Putin, Turkey's Erdogan agree to boost economic, energy cooperation," *Agence France Presse*, August 5, 2022.

We of course recognize Türkiye's reliance on Russian energy imports and trade in agricultural goods, and continue to work to mitigate adverse impacts to these economic activities.

However, the marked rise over the past year in non-essential Turkish exports or re-exports to Russia makes the Turkish private sector particularly vulnerable to reputational and sanctions risks. This is being driven by Moscow....

In engaging with sanctioned Russian entities, Turkish businesses and banks could put themselves at risk of sanctions and a potential loss of access to G7 markets and correspondent relationships.

Turkish businesses and banks should also take extra precaution to avoid transactions related to potential dual-use technology transfers that could be used by the Russian military-industrial complex.⁷⁸

Some Turkish banks and companies appear to be limiting or considering limits on certain types of transactions and services with Russian businesses.⁷⁹

NATO Accession Process for Sweden and Finland

Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO in May 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Turkey objected to the formal start of the two countries' accession process, delaying it for more than a month. Under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the admission of new allies requires the unanimous agreement of existing members (**Figure A-5**).

The Turkish objections centered around claims that Sweden and Finland have supported or harbored sympathies for groups that Turkey's government deems to be terrorist organizations, namely the Fethullah Gulen movement⁸⁰ (which the government has blamed for involvement in the 2016 failed coup) and the PKK.⁸¹ (The United States and EU also classify the PKK as a terrorist group, but not the Gulen movement.) Turkey demanded that Sweden and Finland lift the suspension of arms sales they had maintained against Turkey since its 2019 incursion into Syria against the PKK-linked Kurdish group (the People's Protection Units—Kurdish acronym YPG) that has partnered with the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition.⁸² Turkey removed its objections to starting the accession process after NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg mediated a June 2022 memorandum between Turkey, Sweden, and Finland. In the trilateral memorandum, the three countries confirmed that no arms embargoes remain in place between them. Further, Sweden and Finland agreed not to support the YPG or Gulen movement, and pledged to work against the PKK.⁸³

⁷⁸ Treasury Department, "Remarks by U.S. Department of the Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian Nelson in Türkiye," February 3, 2023. See also Jared Malsin, "Turkish Exports Aid Moscow's War Effort," *Wall Street Journal*, February 4, 2023; Ben Hubbard, "U.S. Presses Its Partners to Weed Out Illicit Trade With Moscow," *New York Times*, February 5, 2023.

⁷⁹ Jonathan Spicer, "U.S. warns Turkey on exports seen to boost Russia's war effort," *Reuters*, February 4, 2023.

⁸⁰ For more information on Gulen and the movement, see archived CRS In Focus IF10444, *Fethullah Gulen, Turkey, and the United States: A Reference*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

⁸¹ Semih Idiz, "How long can Erdogan sustain threat to veto Finnish, Swedish NATO bids?" *Al-Monitor*, May 17, 2022.

⁸² Sources citing links between the PKK and YPG (or PKK affiliates in Syria) include State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2020*, Syria; Mandiraci, "Turkey's PKK Conflict: A Regional Battleground in Flux"; Barak Barfi, *Ascent of the PYD and the SDF*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2016.

⁸³ Memorandum text available at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220628-trilat-

Since then, President Erdogan has sought to have Sweden and Finland take additional steps before Turkey's parliament considers approving the two countries' accession.⁸⁴ With Hungary's parliament likely to agree to accession by early 2023, Turkey could remain the only country delaying the process.⁸⁵

For example, Turkey continues to press Sweden and Finland to extradite people that Turkey considers to be terrorists. Under the June 2022 trilateral memorandum, Sweden and Finland agreed to address Turkey's pending deportation or extradition requests in various ways, but did not commit to specific outcomes in those cases.⁸⁶ In December, Sweden reportedly deported a man who had been convicted in Turkey in 2015 of being a PKK member,⁸⁷ but Sweden's supreme court blocked the extradition of a journalist with alleged links to the Gulen movement.⁸⁸ Sweden's prime minister and other sources have indicated that neither Sweden nor Finland are inclined to make political decisions on extradition that contravene domestic judicial findings conducted under due process and the rule of law.⁸⁹ In January 2023, Turkish presidential adviser Ibrahim Kalin said that Turkey would only be in a position to agree to Sweden's accession after it passed new anti-terror laws, a process he estimated would take about six months.⁹⁰ Erdogan then said publicly that he expects the extradition of "around 130" people before approving Turkish ratification.⁹¹

In January 2023, the *Wall Street Journal* cited unnamed U.S. officials predicting that congressional approval of a possible F-16 sale to Turkey (see "Congressional Notification Process" below) would be tied to Turkish approval of Sweden's and Finland's NATO accession.⁹² Several Senators from both parties, including Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Jim Risch and 29 others who wrote a February 2023 letter to President Biden, have indicated that they may only consider supporting an F-16 sale to Turkey if Swedish and Finnish accession moves forward.⁹³ A media source has suggested that Turkey's parliament could agree to Finland's accession as soon as March.⁹⁴ Finland reportedly prefers to join NATO together with

memo.pdf.

⁸⁴ Amberin Zaman, "Erdogan says Sweden's, Finland's NATO memberships not done deal," *Al-Monitor*, June 30, 2022.

⁸⁵ William Mauldin and Michael R. Gordon, "Sweden and Finland on Track for NATO Membership," *Wall Street Journal*, December 9, 2022.

⁸⁶ See footnote 83.

⁸⁷ "Sweden deports man with alleged ties to Kurdish militant group," *Reuters*, December 3, 2022.

⁸⁸ "Swedish court blocks extradition of journalist sought by Turkey in Nato deal," *Agence France Presse*, December 19, 2022.

⁸⁹ Steven Erlanger, "Sweden Says Turkey Terms on NATO Bid Go Too Far," *New York Times*, January 10, 2023; Ben Keith, "Turkey's Erdoğan Deploys Sweden and Finland's NATO Membership Bids to Further His Repression," *Just Security*, October 28, 2022.

⁹⁰ "Turkey 'Not in a Position' to Ratify Swedish NATO Bid," *Agence France Presse*, January 14, 2023.

⁹¹ "Sweden, Finland must send up to 130 'terrorists' to Turkey for NATO bid, Erdogan says," *Reuters*, January 16, 2023.

⁹² Jared Malsin and Vivian Salama, "Biden Administration to Ask Congress to Approve F-16 Sale to Turkey," *Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 2023.

⁹³ Marc Rod, "Turkey risks 'serious consequences' if it blocks Sweden, Finland NATO accession, Risch warns," *Jewish Insider*, February 6, 2023; Text of February 2, 2023 letter from 29 Senators to President Biden available at https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/turkiye_f16s3.pdf. In August 2022, Senate Treaty Document 117-3 approved ratification by a 95-1 vote.

⁹⁴ Selcan Hacaoglu and Firat Kozok, "Turkey Could Approve Finland's NATO Bid Before May Elections," *Bloomberg*, February 3, 2023.

Sweden,⁹⁵ but if Sweden's status remains unresolved over the coming months, popular support in Finland for NATO membership could lead to pressure on Finnish officials to join before Sweden.⁹⁶

Syria⁹⁷

Turkey's involvement in Syria's conflict since it started in 2011 has been complicated and costly and has severely strained U.S.-Turkey ties.⁹⁸ Turkey's priorities in Syria's civil war have evolved during the course of the conflict. While Turkey still opposes Syrian President Bashar al Asad, it has engaged in a mix of coordination and competition with Russia and Iran (which support Asad) since intervening militarily in Syria starting in August 2016. Turkey and the United States have engaged in similarly inconsistent interactions in northern Syria east of the Euphrates River, where U.S. forces have been based.

Since at least 2014, Turkey has actively sought to thwart the Syrian Kurdish YPG from establishing an autonomous area along Syria's northern border with Turkey. Turkey's government considers the YPG and its political counterpart, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), to be a major threat to Turkish security, based on Turkish concerns that YPG/PYD gains have emboldened the PKK (which has links to the YPG/PYD) in its domestic conflict with Turkish authorities.⁹⁹ The YPG/PYD has a leading role within the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an umbrella group including Arabs and other non-Kurdish elements that became the main U.S. ground force partner against the Islamic State in 2015. Turkish-led military operations in October 2019 to seize areas of northeastern Syria from the SDF—after U.S. Special Forces pulled back from the border area—led to major criticism of and proposed action against Turkey in Congress.¹⁰⁰ Turkey has set up local councils in areas of northern Syria that Turkey and Turkish-supported Syrian armed opposition groups—generally referred to under the moniker of the Syrian National Army (SNA)—have occupied since 2016 (see **Figure A-6**).

Erdogan has hinted at the possibility of repairing relations with Asad, after more than a decade in which Turkey has sought an end to Asad's rule. As of early 2023, Russia is reportedly trying to broker better ties.¹⁰¹ Turkey is seeking Syria's help to push YPG fighters farther from the border and facilitate the return of Syrian refugees living in Turkey. Asad reportedly wants full Turkish withdrawal in return.¹⁰² It is unclear whether the two leaders can compromise and how that would affect Turkey's relationship with the SNA and the overall dynamic with other stakeholders in northern Syria. In response to a question about potential Turkey-Syria rapprochement, the State Department spokesperson has said that U.S. officials have told allies that now is not the time to normalize or upgrade relations with the Asad regime.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Essi Lehto, "Finland to stick with Sweden in NATO bid, hopes for green light by July," *Reuters*, January 30, 2023.

⁹⁶ "Finland Debates NATO Ratification That May Leave Sweden Behind," *Reuters*, February 9, 2023.

⁹⁷ See CRS Report RL33487, *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response*, coordinated by Carla E. Humud.

⁹⁸ 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.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Soner Cagaptay, "U.S. Safe Zone Deal Can Help Turkey Come to Terms with the PKK and YPG," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 7, 2019. For sources linking the PKK to the YPG (or PKK affiliates in Syria), see footnote 82.

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Oswald, "Sanctions on Turkey go front and center as Congress returns," *Roll Call*, October 15, 2019.

¹⁰¹ Fehim Tastekin, "Fledgling Turkish-Syrian dialogue faces bumpy road ahead," *Al-Monitor*, January 14, 2023.

¹⁰² "Syria resisting Russia's efforts to broker Turkey summit, sources say," *Reuters*, December 5, 2022.

¹⁰³ State Department Press Briefing, January 3, 2023.

U.S.-Turkey Arms Sales Issues

How Turkey procures key weapons systems is relevant to U.S. policy in part because it affects Turkey's partnerships with major powers and the country's role within NATO. For decades, Turkey has relied on certain U.S.-origin equipment such as aircraft, helicopters, missiles, and other munitions to maintain military strength.¹⁰⁴

Russian S-400 Acquisition: Removal from F-35 Program, U.S. Sanctions, and Congressional Holds

Turkey's acquisition of the Russian S-400 system, which Turkey ordered in 2017 and Russia delivered in 2019,¹⁰⁵ has significant implications for Turkey's relations with Russia, the United States, and other NATO countries. As a direct result of the transaction, the Trump Administration removed Turkey from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program in July 2019, and imposed sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, P.L. 115-44) on Turkey's defense procurement agency in December 2020.¹⁰⁶ In explaining the U.S. decision to remove Turkey from the F-35 program in 2019, the Defense Department rejected the idea of Turkey fielding a Russian intelligence collection platform (housed within the S-400) that could detect the stealth capabilities of F-35s in Turkey.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, Section 1245 of the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, P.L. 116-92) prohibits the use of U.S. funds to transfer F-35s to Turkey unless the Secretaries of Defense and State certify that Turkey no longer possesses the S-400. Turkey has conducted some testing of the S-400 but does not appear to have made the system generally operational. Turkey may need to forgo possession or use of the S-400 in order to have CAATSA sanctions removed.

An August 2020 article reported that some congressional committee leaders placed holds on major new U.S.-origin arms sales to Turkey in connection with the S-400 transaction. The executive branch customarily defers to such holds, though they are not legally binding.¹⁰⁸ Such a disruption to U.S. defense transactions with Turkey had not occurred since the 1975-1978 embargo over Cyprus.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Turkey also has procurement and co-development relationships with other NATO allies, including Germany (submarines), Italy (helicopters and reconnaissance satellites), and the United Kingdom (a fighter aircraft prototype).

¹⁰⁵ "Turkey, Russia sign deal on supply of S-400 missiles," *Reuters*, December 29, 2017. According to this source, Turkey and Russia reached agreement on the sale of at least one S-400 system for \$2.5 billion, with the possibility of a second system to come later.

¹⁰⁶ Archived CRS Insight IN11557, *Turkey: U.S. Sanctions Under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

¹⁰⁷ Defense Department, "Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen M. Lord and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy David J. Trachtenberg Press Briefing on DOD's Response to Turkey Accepting Delivery of the Russian S-400 Air and Missile Defense System," July 17, 2019.

¹⁰⁸ CRS Report RL31675, *Arms Sales: Congressional Review Process*, by Paul K. Kerr.

¹⁰⁹ Valerie Insinna et al., "Congress has secretly blocked US arms sales to Turkey for nearly two years," *Defense News*, August 12, 2020.

Possible F-16 Sales and Congressional Views

Background (Including Turkey-Greece Issues)

In the fall of 2021, Turkish officials stated that they had requested to purchase 40 new F-16 fighter aircraft from the United States and to upgrade 80 F-16s from Turkey's aging fleet.¹¹⁰ President Biden reportedly discussed the F-16 request with Erdogan during an October 2021 G20 meeting in Rome, indicating that the request would go through the regular arms sales consultation and notification process with Congress.¹¹¹ Upgrades of Turkey's F-16 aircraft to the Block 70/72 Viper configuration would include a new radar, other software and hardware enhancements, and structural improvements that significantly extend each aircraft's service life.¹¹² Other countries receiving or possibly receiving new or upgraded F-16 Block 70/72 Vipers include Greece, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Morocco, Bahrain, Bulgaria, the Philippines, and Slovakia.¹¹³

After Russia's early 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Turkey's value as a NATO ally amid a crisis implicating European security may have subsequently boosted the Administration's interest in moving forward with an F-16 transaction with Turkey in early 2022. While Turkey has acted more independently of the West under Erdogan, it has NATO's second-largest military, hosts allied military assets and personnel (see **Figure A-3**), and partners in other ways with the United States and NATO¹¹⁴—including using F-16s in occasional policing missions in the Baltics, Poland, and elsewhere.¹¹⁵

Responding to criticism of a possible F-16 sale from 53 Members of Congress in a February 2022 letter,¹¹⁶ a State Department official wrote in March that Turkey's support for Ukraine was “an important deterrent to malign influence in the region.”¹¹⁷ While acknowledging that any sale would require congressional notification, the official added, “The Administration believes that there are nonetheless compelling long-term NATO alliance unity and capability interests, as well as U.S. national security, economic and commercial interests that are supported by appropriate U.S. defense trade ties with Turkey.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ For information on Turkey's F-16s, see https://www.f-16.net/f-16_users_article21.html.

¹¹¹ “Biden talks F-16s, raises human rights in meeting with Turkey's Erdogan,” *Reuters*, October 31, 2021; Diego Cupolo, “In troubled US-Turkey relations, F-16 deal seen as path for dialogue,” *Al-Monitor*, November 1, 2021. For background information, see CRS Report RL31675, *Arms Sales: Congressional Review Process*, by Paul K. Kerr.

¹¹² See description at https://www.lockheedmartin.com/content/dam/lockheed-martin/aero/documents/F-16/22-06570_F-16-Viper-6Panel_Digital.pdf.

¹¹³ Arda Mevlutoglu, “F-16Vs Instead of F-35s: What's behind Turkey's Request?” *Politics Today*, November 22, 2021.

¹¹⁴ State Department, “U.S. Relations With Turkey (Türkiye),” Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet, January 9, 2023; Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Türkiye's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations.”

¹¹⁵ NATO, “Turkey, United States take up NATO air patrols,” July 7, 2021.

¹¹⁶ Text of letter available at <https://pallone.house.gov/sites/pallone.house.gov/files/20220123%20Letter%20on%20Turkey%20F-16%20Request.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Naz Durakoglu, quoted in Humeyra Pamuk, “U.S. says potential F-16 sale to Turkey would serve U.S. interests, NATO – letter,” *Reuters*, April 6, 2022.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The modernization of much of Turkey's F-16 fleet could give Turkey time to acquire or design a more advanced fighter,¹¹⁹ though delivery of new F-16s could face a production backlog.¹²⁰ If unable to upgrade their F-16 fleet, Turkish officials have hinted that they might consider purchasing Western European alternatives. Turkey is reportedly exploring Eurofighter Typhoons as a potential alternative to F-16s,¹²¹ but it is unclear if consortium partner Germany would approve such a sale.¹²² Additionally, Turkey's air force could face difficulties adjusting to a non-F-16 platform.¹²³

At the end of the June 2022 NATO summit in Spain, where Turkey agreed to allow the Sweden-Finland accession process to move forward (pending final Turkish ratification) and President Biden met with President Erdogan, Biden expressed support for selling new F-16s to Turkey as well as for upgrades. He also voiced confidence in obtaining congressional support.¹²⁴ However, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez has consistently expressed disapproval due to what he has termed Erdogan's "abuses across the region."¹²⁵

In addition to ongoing U.S.-Turkey tensions regarding Syrian Kurdish groups in northern Syria, Turkey-Greece disputes regarding overflights of contested areas and other long-standing Aegean Sea issues (referenced in the text box below) spiked in 2022 and attracted close congressional attention.¹²⁶ Erdogan suspended dialogue with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis after Mitsotakis appeared to raise concern about U.S.-Turkey arms transactions while addressing a May 2022 joint session of Congress.¹²⁷ In December, the final version of the FY2023 NDAA (P.L. 117-263) excluded a House-passed condition on F-16 sales to Turkey (Section 1271 of H.R. 7900) related to potential overflights of Greek territory. However, the joint explanatory statement accompanying the NDAA included a provision stating, "We believe that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies should not conduct unauthorized territorial overflights of another NATO ally's airspace."¹²⁸

¹¹⁹ Burak Ege Bekdil, "Russian invasion of Ukraine is reviving Euro-Turkish fighter efforts," *Defense News*, March 9, 2022. Turkey also plans to work with domestic contractors to upgrade the country's 36 F-16 Block 30 aircraft. It cannot domestically upgrade its other F-16s because it only has source codes for Block 30 versions. Burak Ege Bekdil, "Locally made AESA radar to extend life of Turkish F-16 jets," *Defense News*, November 17, 2022.

¹²⁰ Bryant Harris and Stephen Losey, "Turkey F-16 sale in congressional limbo amid Lockheed backlog," *Defense News*, January 18, 2023.

¹²¹ Ragıp Soylu, "Turkey exploring massive UK arms deal involving planes, ships and tank engines," *Middle East Eye*, January 20, 2023.

¹²² Tanmay Kadam, "Can Russian Su-35 Fighters Triumph Eurofighter Typhoons as Turkey Explores Alternative to 'Backlog-Ridden' F-16 Jets?" *EurAsian Times*, January 29, 2023.

¹²³ Soylu, "Turkey exploring massive UK arms deal involving planes, ships and tank engines."

¹²⁴ "Biden supports F-16 sale to Turkey, is confident about congressional approval," *Reuters*, June 30, 2022.

¹²⁵ Twitter, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 7, 2022 – 10:57 AM, at <https://twitter.com/SFRCdems/status/1600519759493304321>.

¹²⁶ Alexis Heraclides, "The unresolved Aegean dispute: Problems and prospects," *Greece and Turkey in Conflict and Cooperation*, New York: Routledge, 2019, pp. 89-108; Ryan Gingeras, "Dogfight over the Aegean: Turkish-Greek Relations in Light of Ukraine," *War on the Rocks*, June 8, 2022.

¹²⁷ Greek Prime Minister's website, "Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' address to the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress," May 17, 2022. Erdogan and Mitsotakis have spoken in the wake of the February 2023 earthquakes, in the context of Greek assistance in relief and recovery efforts.

¹²⁸ Joint explanatory statement available at <https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20221205/BILLS-117HR7776EAS-RCP117-70-JES.pdf>.

With U.S. officials already having notified a possible upgrade of F-16s for Greece to Congress in 2017,¹²⁹ U.S. decisions on bolstering Turkey’s F-16 fleet could have significant implications for the security balance between Turkey and Greece, and for relations involving the three countries.¹³⁰ In the past three years, Greece has strengthened its defense cooperation and relations with the United States and a number of regional countries such as France, Israel, and Egypt.¹³¹ Enhanced U.S.-Greece defense cooperation has included an expanded U.S. military presence and increased U.S.-Greece and NATO military activities at Greek installations (see also text box below).¹³²

Turkey-Greece-Cyprus Tensions: Background and Some Ongoing Issues¹³³

Since the 1970s, disputes between Greece and Turkey over territorial rights in the Aegean Sea and broader Eastern Mediterranean have been a major point of contention, bringing the sides close to military conflict on several occasions. The disputes, which have their roots in territorial changes after World War I, revolve around contested borders involving the two countries’ territorial waters, national airspace, exclusive economic zones (including energy claims), islands (and their use for military purposes), and continental shelves (see **Figure A-7** and **Figure A-8** for maps of some of the areas in dispute).

These tensions are related to and further complicated by one of the region’s major unresolved conflicts, the de facto political division of Cyprus along ethnic lines that dates from the 1974 military clash in which Turkish forces invaded parts of the island to prevent the ethnic Greek leadership from unifying Cyprus with Greece. The internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus (sometimes referred to as Cyprus), which has close ties to Greece, claims jurisdiction over the entire island, but its effective administrative control is limited to the southern two-thirds, where Greek Cypriots comprise a majority. Turkish Cypriots administer the northern one-third and are backed by Turkey, including a Turkish military contingent there since the 1974 clash.¹³⁴ In 1983, Turkish Cypriot leaders proclaimed this part of the island the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,” although no country other than Turkey recognizes it, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 541 (1983) considered the Turkish Cypriot claim to be legally invalid.

Turkish officials have complained about a significant new U.S. military presence at the Greek port of Alexandroupoli (alt. Alexandroupolis), located around 10-15 miles from the Turkish border.¹³⁵ U.S. officials have explained that they are using the port as a transit hub to send equipment to allies and partners in the region as part of a broader NATO response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.¹³⁶ In the March 2022 congressional hearing testimony mentioned above, Alan Makovsky said that having facilities at Alexandroupoli allows NATO to bypass logjams or closures of the Straits to transport troops and materiel overland to allies and partners.¹³⁷ After Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in October 2022 that the United States no longer maintains a balanced

¹²⁹ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, “Government of Greece – Upgrade of F-16 Aircraft to F-16 Block V Configuration,” Transmittal No. 17-54, October 17, 2017.

¹³⁰ Aaron Stein, “You Go to War with the Turkey You Have, Not the Turkey You Want,” *War on the Rocks*, May 30, 2022.

¹³¹ See CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

¹³² State Department, “U.S. Security Cooperation with Greece,” October 31, 2022.

¹³³ See CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

¹³⁴ Turkey retains between 30,000 and 40,000 troops on the island (supplemented by several thousand Turkish Cypriot soldiers). This presence is countered by a Greek Cypriot force of approximately 12,000 with reported access to between 50,000 and 75,000 reserves. “Cyprus - Army,” *Janes Sentinel Security Assessment - Eastern Mediterranean*, February 3, 2021. The United Nations maintains a peacekeeping mission (UNFICYP) of approximately 900 personnel within a buffer zone headquartered in Cyprus’s divided capital of Nicosia. The United Kingdom maintains approximately 3,000 personnel at two sovereign base areas on the southern portion of the island at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

¹³⁵ Niki Kitsantonis and Anatoly Kurmanaev, “Sleepy Greek Port Turns into Pivotal Transit Point for American Military,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2022.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*; Department of Defense News, “Strategic Port Access Aids Support to Ukraine, Austin Tells Greek Defense Minister,” July 18, 2022.

¹³⁷ Prepared testimony of Alan Makovsky, “Opportunities and Challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean: Examining U.S. Interests and Regional Cooperation.”

approach in the Aegean,¹³⁸ U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Jeff Flake released a statement saying that there has been no shift in U.S. security posture to favor Turkey or Greece, and that the NATO allies' collective efforts are focused on ending Russia's war in Ukraine.¹³⁹

Congressional Notification Process

In January 2023, media sources—citing unnamed U.S. officials—reported that the Administration has provided informal notifications to Congress about possible F-16 sales for Turkey and possible sales of up to 40 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to Greece. According to these reports, the January informal notification on Turkey is for 40 new F-16s and 79 F-16 upgrade packages, along with 900 air-to-air missiles and 800 bombs, at an estimated total value of \$20 billion.¹⁴⁰ The State Department says it does not comment on possible arms sales until the executive branch formally notifies the sale to Congress.¹⁴¹

In general, the State Department formally notifies SFRC and the House Foreign Affairs Committee of a possible arms sale 20 to 40 days after an informal notification, giving the committees the opportunity to address concerns with the Administration in a confidential process. However, formal notification usually does not proceed if a committee chair or ranking member places a hold (as mentioned earlier, not legally binding) on the proposed transaction.¹⁴² Under provisions of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA, P.L. 90-629, 82 Stat. 1320), the Administration can proceed with a sale—if not blocked by legislation—15 days (for NATO allies like Turkey and Greece) after formal notification.¹⁴³

As mentioned above, congressional consideration of the potential F-16 sale to Turkey may depend on Turkey's approval of Swedish-Finnish NATO accession.¹⁴⁴ Shortly after the reported informal notifications, the *New York Times* cited Chairman Menendez as welcoming the F-35 sale to Greece while strongly opposing the F-16 sale to Turkey, saying:

President Erdogan continues to undermine international law, disregard human rights and democratic norms, and engage in alarming and destabilizing behavior in Turkey and against neighboring NATO allies. Until Erdogan ceases his threats, improves his human rights record at home—including by releasing journalists and political opposition—and begins to act like a trusted ally should, I will not approve this sale.¹⁴⁵

The Administration's reported informal notifications of potential sales to Turkey and Greece come amid ongoing tensions between the two countries over maritime boundaries and U.S.

¹³⁸ "Cavusoglu says US siding against Turkey in the Aegean, East Med," *Kathimerini*, October 21, 2022.

¹³⁹ Twitter, U.S. Embassy Türkiye, October 18, 2022 – 3:32 AM, at <https://twitter.com/USEmbassyTurkey/status/1582273449145212928>.

¹⁴⁰ "US working with Congress towards Turkey F-16 sale," *Al-Monitor*, January 13, 2023; Malsin and Salama, "Biden Administration to Ask Congress to Approve F-16 Sale to Turkey"; Michael Crowley and Edward Wong, "U.S. Plan to Sell Fighter Jets to Turkey Is Met with Opposition," *New York Times*, January 14, 2023.

¹⁴¹ State Department Press Briefing, January 13, 2023.

¹⁴² CRS Report RL31675, *Arms Sales: Congressional Review Process*, by Paul K. Kerr.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*; CRS In Focus IF11533, *Modifying or Ending Sales of U.S.-Origin Defense Articles*, by Paul K. Kerr and Liana W. Rosen.

¹⁴⁴ See footnote 92 and footnote 93.

¹⁴⁵ Crowley and Wong, "U.S. Plan to Sell Fighter Jets to Turkey Is Met with Opposition." Alexander Ward et al., "Menendez vows to block plan to sell fighter jets to Turkey," *Politico*, January 13, 2023.

regional involvement (as mentioned above).¹⁴⁶ By harmonizing the informal notification on F-35s for Greece with the one on F-16s for Turkey, the Administration may be seeking to reassure Greek leaders and popular opinion that the United States is not favoring Turkey over Greece.¹⁴⁷ One journalist has argued:

A Greek acquisition of F-35s—coupled with the ongoing procurement of two dozen 4.5-generation Dassault Rafale F3R fighters from France and the upgrade of the bulk of its F-16 fleet to the most advanced Block 72 configuration—will give the Hellenic Air Force a technological edge over its much larger Turkish counterpart. That will remain the case even if Turkey secures this F-16 deal.¹⁴⁸

In response to the news of a possible F-35 sale to Greece, Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu called on the United States to “pay attention” to the balance of power in the region.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

¹⁴⁷ Malsin and Salama, “Biden Administration to Ask Congress to Approve F-16 Sale to Turkey”; Crowley and Wong, “U.S. Plan to Sell Fighter Jets to Turkey Is Met with Opposition.”

¹⁴⁸ Paul Iddon, “Balance of Power: Why the Biden Administration Wants to Sell Turkey F-16s and Greece F-35s,” *Forbes*, January 16, 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Andrew Wilks, “Turkish FM travels to Washington seeking to seal deal for F-16 fighter jets,” *Al-Monitor*, January 17, 2023.

Appendix. Maps, Facts, and Figures

Figure A-I. Turkey at a Glance



| | |
|------------------|---|
| Geography | Area: 783,562 sq km (302,535 sq. mile), slightly larger than Texas |
| People | <p>Population: 83,047,706. Most populous cities: Istanbul 15.6 mil, Ankara 5.3 mil, Izmir 3.1 mil, Bursa 2.1 mil, Adana 1.8 mil, Gaziantep 1.8 mil.</p> <p>% of Population 14 or Younger: 23.4% (2020)</p> <p>Ethnic Groups: Turks 70%-75%; Kurds 19%; Other minorities 6%-11% (2016)</p> <p>Religion: Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), Others (mainly Christian and Jewish) 0.2% (2017)</p> <p>Literacy: 96.7% (male 99.1%, female 94.4%) (2019)</p> |
| Economy | <p>GDP Per Capita (at purchasing power parity): \$38,759</p> <p>Real GDP Growth: 5.0%</p> <p>Inflation: 73%</p> <p>Unemployment: 10.8%</p> <p>Budget Deficit as % of GDP: 4.5%</p> <p>Public Debt as % of GDP: 37.5%</p> <p>Current Account Deficit as % of GDP: 5.7%</p> <p>International currency reserves: \$67.1 billion</p> |

Sources: 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 (2022 end-of-year estimates or projections unless otherwise specified) from International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database; Economist Intelligence Unit; and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook*.

Figure A-2. Turkish Public Opinion Polls

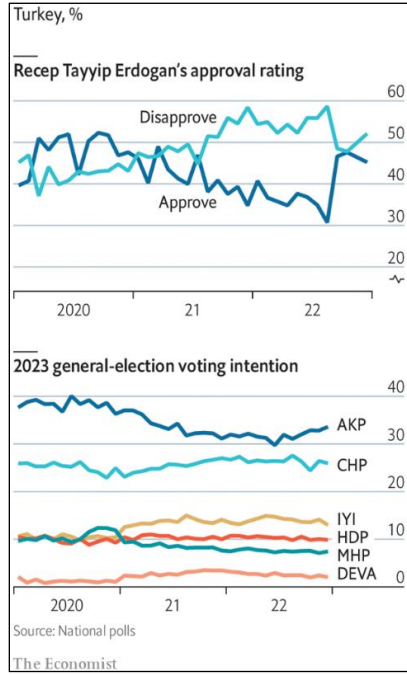


Figure A-3. Map of U.S. and NATO Military Presence in Turkey



Sources: Created by CRS using data gathered from the Department of Defense, NATO, and various media outlets since 2011.

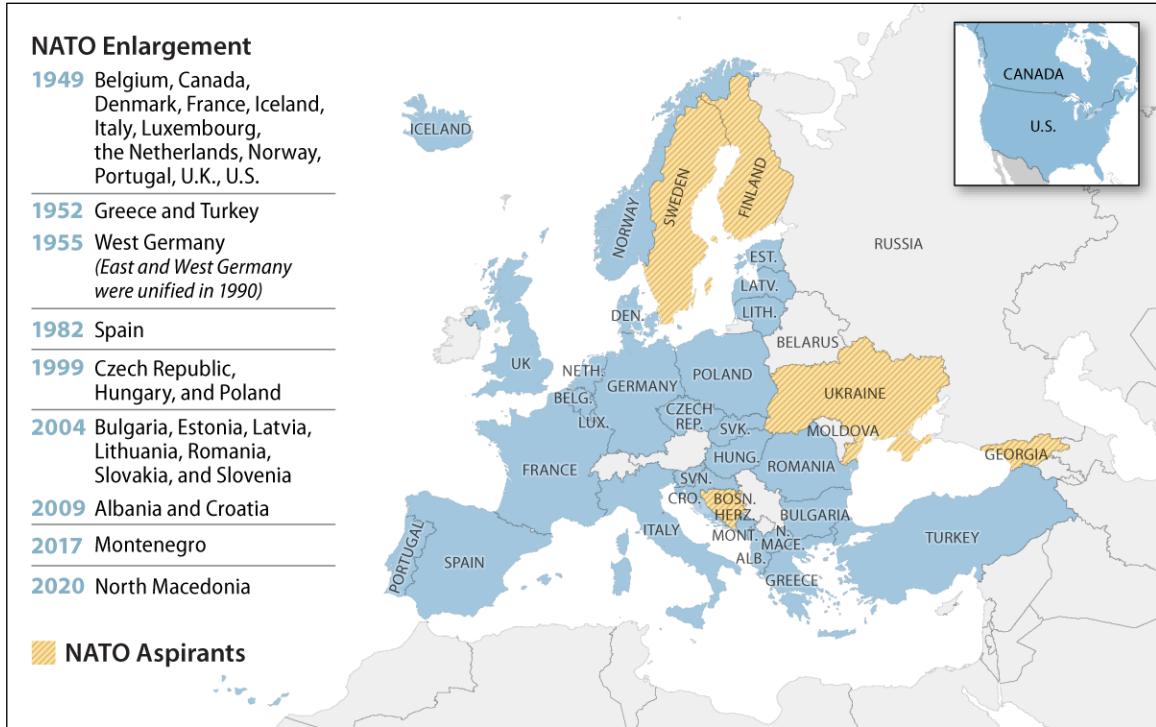
Note: All locations are approximate.

Figure A-4. Map of Black Sea Region and Turkish Straits



Source: Nikkei Asia, March 2022

Figure A-5. NATO Countries and Aspirants



Source: CRS Graphics. Map updated June 2022.

Notes: As indicated, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine are also formal aspirants for NATO membership.

Figure A-6. Syria Conflict Map

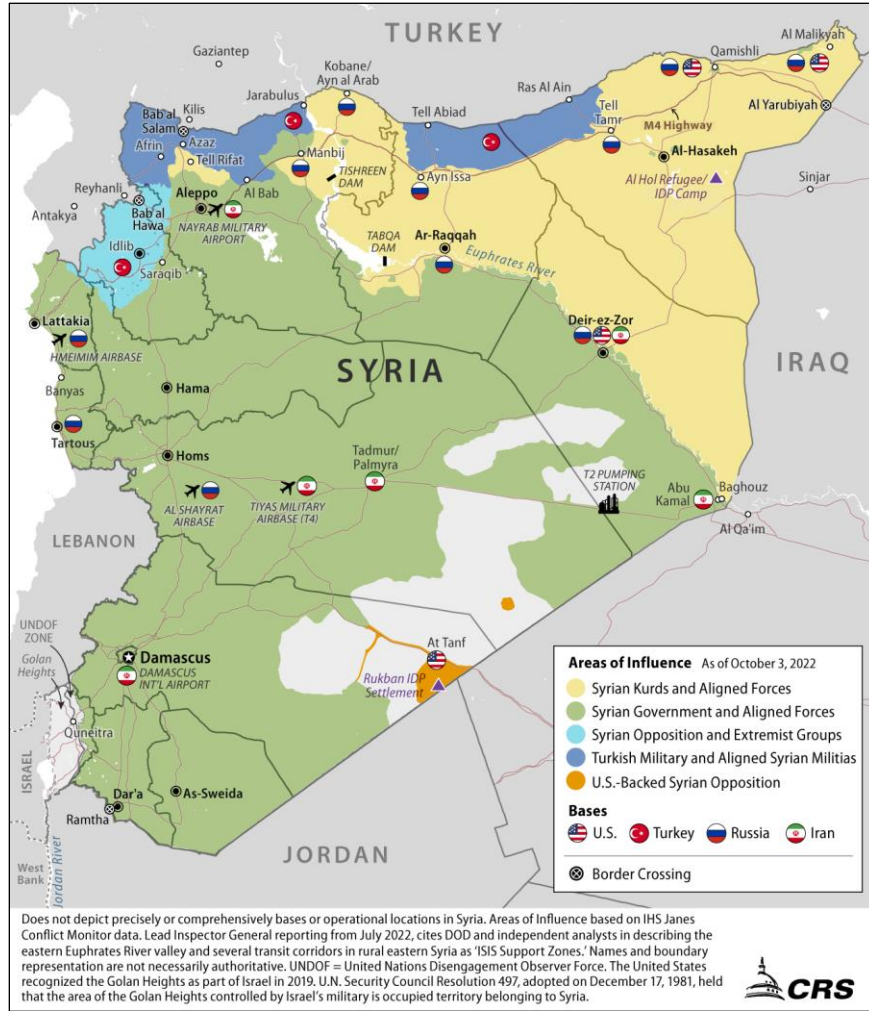
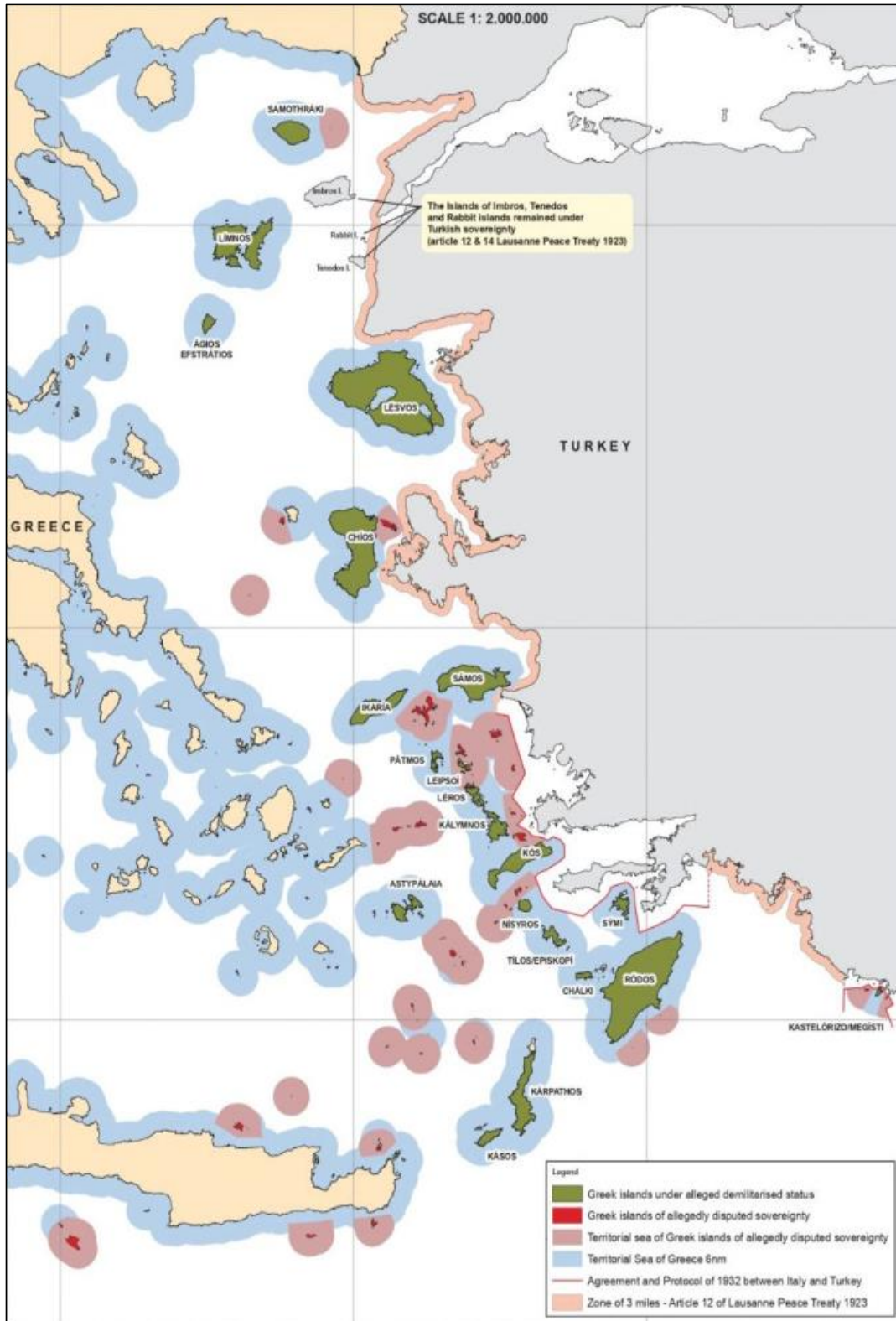
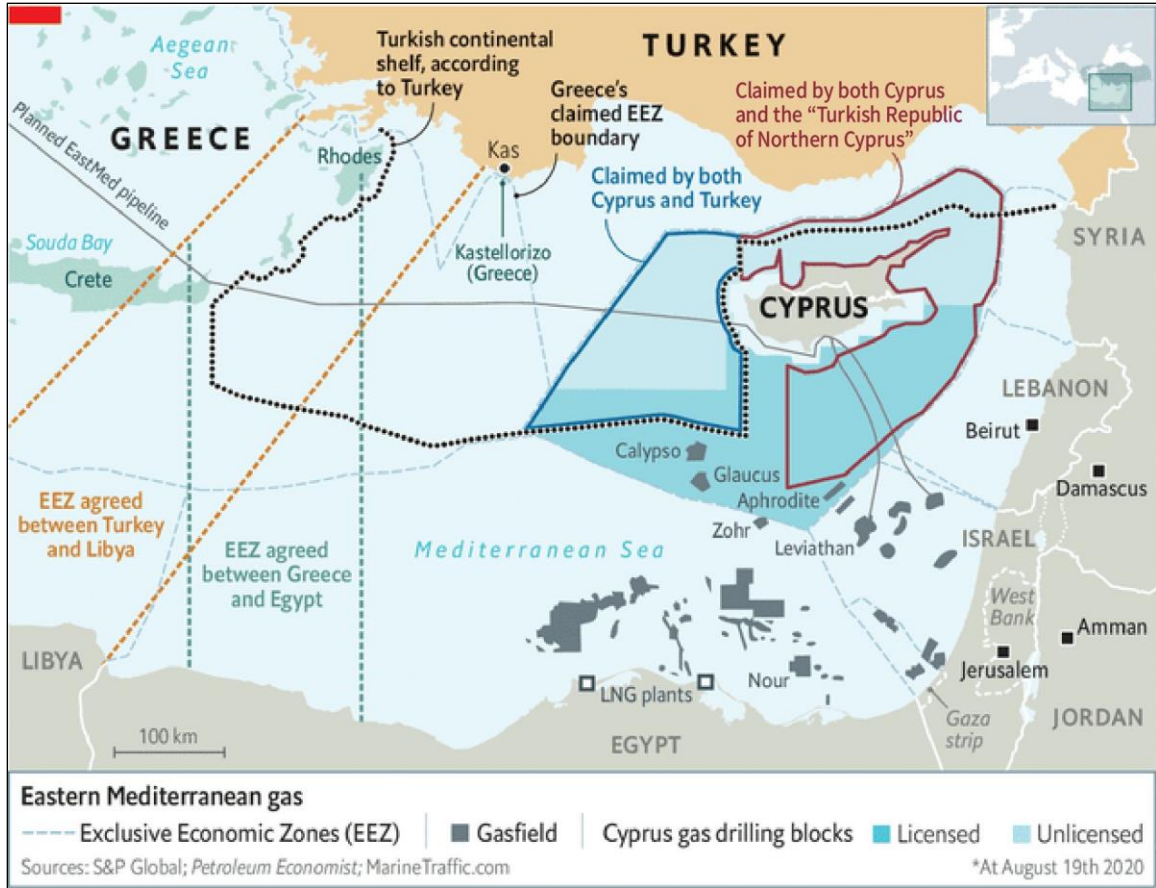


Figure A-7. Some Areas of Aegean Dispute



Source: *Greek Reporter*, June 2022, at <https://greekreporter.com/2022/06/09/turkey-challenge-greece-sovereignty-16-maps/>.

Figure A-8. Competing Claims in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Main map created by *The Economist*, with slight modifications by CRS.

Note: As stated elsewhere in this report, in 1983, Turkish Cypriots administering a portion of the island of Cyprus proclaimed that portion to be the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,” though no country other than Turkey recognizes it, and U.N. Security Council Resolution 541 (1983) considered the Turkish Cypriot claim to be legally invalid.

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