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Turkey (Türkiye): Possible U.S. Sale of F-16 Aircraft

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Turkey (Türkiye): Possible U.S. Sale of F-16 Aircraft

SUMMARY

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In February 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly confirmed that the Biden Administration supports a possible sale of F-16 fighter aircraft to Turkey (Türkiye), and has engaged Congress on the issue. According to January 2023 media reports citing unnamed U.S. officials, the Administration informally notified Congress of its intent to sell 40 new F-16s in the Block 70/72 Viper configuration (F-16Vs) and Viper upgrade packages for 79 existing fighters, along with 900 air-to-air missiles and 800 bombs, at an estimated total value of $20 billion. Since Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952, U.S.-Turkey cooperation on some issues and differences on others have shaped the two countries' relationship. Some Members of Congress who have input on a proposed F-16 sale to Turkey have indicated that they expect certain actions from Turkey before they will consider supporting the transaction.

Congressional legislation and oversight have shaped U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation for decades, and Turkey has relied consistently on U.S. imports for complex platforms such as aircraft and helicopters. A number of previously proposed U.S. arms transactions with Turkey (such as for armed drones, air defense systems, and F-16 information sharing and safety upgrades) either have stalled or faced reported congressional holds—perhaps stemming partly from bilateral differences on technology sharing, and partly from tensions over Russia and Syria. In April 2023, the Administration formally notified a possible sale of F-16 information sharing and safety upgrades.

Turkish air capabilities after S-400 controversy. A U.S. F-16 sale to Turkey would likely extend the service life of much of Turkey's fleet—and ensure its continued interoperability within NATO—while Turkey tries to acquire or design a stealth fighter. The United States was planning to sell up to 100 F-35s to Turkey until its 2019 acquisition of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system led to a U.S. cancellation of the F-35 transfers. The F-16V could be an interim solution for Turkey, though it lacks the stealth features of the F-35 and may be subject to production backlogs of three years or more.

NATO security considerations and the Swedish and Finnish accession process. After Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Turkey's potential to boost NATO militarily amid a European security crisis may have increased the Administration's interest in an F-16 transaction. Turkey's has NATO's second-largest military and the world's third-largest F-16 fleet, hosts important allied assets and personnel, and partners in other ways within the alliance, including by contributing to missions that aid Baltic and Mediterranean security. At the same time, several Members of Congress have argued that Turkish delays in approving NATO accession for Sweden and Finland have threatened alliance unity in countering Russia. Turkey's approval of both countries' accession may be necessary before many Members of Congress would consider backing an F-16 sale. While Turkey approved Finland's NATO membership in March 2023, it might not take action regarding Sweden's accession before closely contested Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for May 14, 2023.

Congressional review process and other key issues. The Administration may consider whether and when to move forward with a formal notification of a proposed F-16 sale to Turkey, possibly in the face of enduring congressional concerns. Within 15 days after formal notification, Congress could block the sale via a joint resolution of disapproval under the Arms Export Control Act. Congress also can take action at any time, up to the point of final delivery, via the regular legislative process. Some factors that could affect congressional review of a possible F-16 sale—beyond the NATO-related issues described above—include Turkey's rivalry with NATO ally Greece, Turkey's role in Syria, and the potential for questions about Turkish domestic governance to undermine NATO decisionmaking. Reportedly, the Administration informally notified a possible sale of up to 40 F-35s to Greece at the same time as the Turkey/F-16 informal notification. For the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act, the House voted to condition potential F-16 transfers to Turkey on steps discouraging overflights of Greek territory (Section 1271 of H.R. 7900), but the final version (P.L. 117-263) did not include the condition.

Turkish alternatives to F-16s? If unable to upgrade their F-16 fleet, Turkish officials might consider Western European alternatives such as Eurofighter Typhoons. However, Turkey may face the following challenges to a Typhoon sale: hesitancy from consortium partner Germany, higher per unit costs, difficulties in transitioning its air force away from its U.S.-origin fleet, and/or potential congressional notification requirements (if it includes U.S.-origin components). Obstacles to both U.S. and European options could lead Turkey to confront a capability gap in fighter aircraft. A 2022 State Department strategy document argued that "Turkey may be forced to turn to Russia or China" to fill such capability gaps in national defense.

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Overview of the Possible F-16 Sale

In February 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly confirmed that the Biden Administration supports a possible sale of F-16 fighter aircraft to Turkey (Türkiye), and has engaged Congress on the issue:

> the Biden administration strongly supports the package to both upgrade the existing F-16s and to provide new ones to Türkiye, because as a [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] NATO Ally and partner, it is in our national interest and the security interest of the Alliance that Türkiye continue to be able to operate at the higher standards of NATO to make sure that we have full interoperability.
>
> On this particular matter, I can't offer you an assessment or get into the process until after we formally notify our Congress, but it's something that we're working on and we've made very clear to Congress our strong support for the F-16 modernization. We have longstanding defense and security ties, and as the President has said – as President Biden has said – Turkish NATO interoperability remains a priority for us....
>
> With regard to the F-16s, I can't give you a timeline on formal notification. What I can tell you is I have already been actively engaged in speaking to Congress about the administration's strong support for the F-16 package, the upgrade, modernization package.[1]

Figure 1. F-16 Block 70/72 Viper

Source: Lockheed Martin.

According to January 2023 media reports citing unnamed U.S. officials, the Administration informally notified Congress (see "Congressional Review Process and Options" below) of its intent to sell 40 new F-16s of the advanced Block 70/72 Viper configuration (F-16Vs) and Viper upgrade packages for 79 existing F-16s (see **Figure 1**), along with 900 air-to-air missiles and 800 bombs, at an estimated total value of $20 billion.[2] Reportedly at the same time, the Administration also informally notified Congress of a possible sale of up to 40 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to Greece, another NATO ally and a historical Turkish rival (see "Greece and Cyprus" below).[3]

The F-16 proposal takes place within a context of complicated U.S.-Turkey relations, and at a time when a number of U.S. allies and traditional partners are evaluating their strategic options in an era of global great-power competition.[4] A March 2023 *Wall Street Journal* article identified Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and India as "midsize powers" seeking

[1] State Department, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu at a Joint Press Availability," February 20, 2023.

[2] Michael Crowley and Edward Wong, "Biden Administration Faces Resistance to Plan to Sell F-16s to Turkey," *New York Times*, January 13, 2023; Begun Donmez Ersoz, "US Weighs Turkey, Greece Jet Sales amid NATO Expansion," *Voice of America*, January 27, 2023; "Biden to ask US Congress to approve F-16 sale to Türkiye," *Daily Sabah*, January 13, 2023.

[3] "US working with Congress towards Turkey F-16 sale," *Al-Monitor*, January 13, 2023.

[4] See White House, *National Security Strategy*, October 2022, available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf.

"advantages as the U.S.-led world order is challenged" by China and Russia.[5] Since Turkey joined NATO in 1952, the United States and Turkey have cooperated closely on some issues and differed sharply on others.[6] U.S. and Turkish officials maintain that mutual cooperation on regional security matters remains important to both countries.[7]

After Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Turkey's strategic significance for NATO amid an evolving European security crisis may have increased the Administration's interest in moving forward with an F-16 transaction. In March 2022, an Administration official reportedly wrote to some Members of Congress to assert "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."[8]

Some Members of Congress have raised concerns about a possible F-16 sale since the reported informal notification. Their support for the sale might depend on Turkish approval of NATO accession for both Sweden and Finland, and perhaps other issues as well (see "Initial Congressional Views" below). From a process standpoint, after a period of informal, confidential Administration-Congress consultations, the Administration could submit formal notification to start a 15-day congressional review period (see "Congressional Review Process and Options" below).

Turkey had previously expected to acquire up to 100 F-35s during this decade, but U.S. officials removed Turkey from the F-35 program in 2019 after it acquired a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system (see "Turkish S-400 Acquisition and U.S. Responses" below).[9] The F-16V is marketed as an advanced fourth-generation fighter, and thus could present an interim solution for Turkey, though the aircraft lacks the stealth characteristics of the F-35 and may be subject to possible production backlogs (see text box below). Turkey reportedly requested the F-16V sale in October 2021,[10] and in March 2023 its embassy in Washington, DC reportedly told *Newsweek*:

> Türkiye's continued interoperability with NATO is of utmost importance, not only for Türkiye, but also for NATO's continued deterrence at its southern flank.... The U.S. has been Türkiye's number one partner in defense industry. We still count on our close cooperation with the U.S. defense industry in order to maintain our military capabilities. We expect members of Congress to look beyond short-term political aspirations and not put preconditions to the sale of military equipment to Türkiye.[11]

[5] Stephen Kalin and Summer Said, "Saudi Prince Tests Nonaligned Policy," *Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 2023.

[6] CRS In Focus IF10487, *Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

[7] 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.

[8] Then Acting [since confirmed] 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.

[9] CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas, and CRS Report RL30563, *F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program*, by John R. Hoehn.

[10] Grant Rumley and Soner Cagaptay, "Turkey's F-16 Request May Not Stave Off the Inevitable," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 28, 2021.

[11] Tom O'Connor, "U.S.-Turkish Fighter Jet Feud Risks NATO Crisis at Crucial Time for Ukraine," *Newsweek*, March 7, 2023.

The Possible Sale and Turkey's Airpower Needs

A U.S. sale of F-16s to Turkey would likely modernize and extend the service life of much of Turkey's fighter fleet—and ensure its continued NATO interoperability—while Turkey tries to acquire or design a stealth fighter.[12] The F-16V is available for export in full-scale production or as an upgrade kit. It offers systems integration improvements that provide an increased capability and reliability for targeting potential enemy aircraft.[13] According to Lockheed Martin, the F-16V also includes modern systems like the APG-83 active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar, an improved electronic warfare suite, and new cockpit software and hardware to provide enhanced battlespace awareness to the pilot.[14] These systems allow a pilot to identify and engage more targets, an increase in lethality relative to previous F-16 variants.[15]

Should the U.S. and Turkish officials reach agreement on a sale, delivery of new F-16s could face a production backlog.[16] According to Lockheed Martin, the F-16 production rate at the Greenville, South Carolina plant is four aircraft per month, though it plans to increase this rate with a growing list of buyers.[17] Other countries receiving or possibly receiving new or upgraded F-16Vs include Greece, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Morocco, Bahrain, Jordan, Bulgaria, the Philippines, and Slovakia.[18] Assuming the parties finalize contracts for Jordan and Bulgaria, Lockheed anticipates having a backlog of 148 aircraft.[19] Based on current production rates, it could take three years or more for Turkey to start receiving new F-16Vs.

Turkey is apparently seeking to develop technology for an indigenous fifth-generation fighter aircraft in partnership with companies such as BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, and/or General Electric. The program is dubbed the National Combat Aircraft (Turkish acronym MMU, also known as TF-X), but the Turkish Air Force does not expect to integrate the aircraft into its regular operations until the early 2030s or later.[20]

Background

U.S.-Turkey Arms Sales and the Role of Congress

Overview

How Turkey procures key weapons systems is relevant to U.S. interests in part because it affects Turkey's partnerships with major powers as well as its role in NATO (see "Turkey's Role in NATO" below). Since the Cold War, Turkey has relied on certain U.S.-origin equipment such as aircraft, helicopters, missiles, and other munitions to maintain military strength and NATO interoperability.[21]

[12] Burak Ege Bekdil, "Russian invasion of Ukraine is reviving Euro-Turkish fighter efforts," *Defense News*, March 9, 2022.

[13] Staff Sgt. Sarah M. McClanahan, "AESA Radar Launches F-16 into Next Generation of Airpower," *United States Air Force*, June 23, 2022.

[14] F-16 Block 70/72 Product Card, Lockheed Martin, available at https://www.lockheedmartin.com/content/dam/lockheed-martin/aero/documents/F-16/Jan20_Product%20Card%20F-16%20Block%207072%20media.pdf.

[15] McClanahan, "AESA Radar Launches F-16 into Next Generation of Airpower."

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

[17] Lockheed Martin: F-16 Production Q&A, provided to CRS on February 23, 2023.

[18] Ibid.; Arda Mevlutoglu, "F-16Vs Instead of F-35s: What's behind Turkey's Request?" *Politics Today*, November 22, 2021.

[19] Lockheed Martin: F-16 Production Q&A.

[20] Gastón Dubois, "TF-X/MMU: Turkey's future fifth-generation fighter is taking shape," *Aviacionline*, January 8, 2023; Thomas Newdick, "Our First Look at Turkey's Stealthy New Fighter," *The War Zone*, November 23, 2022; Bekdil, "Russian invasion of Ukraine is reviving Euro-Turkish fighter efforts."

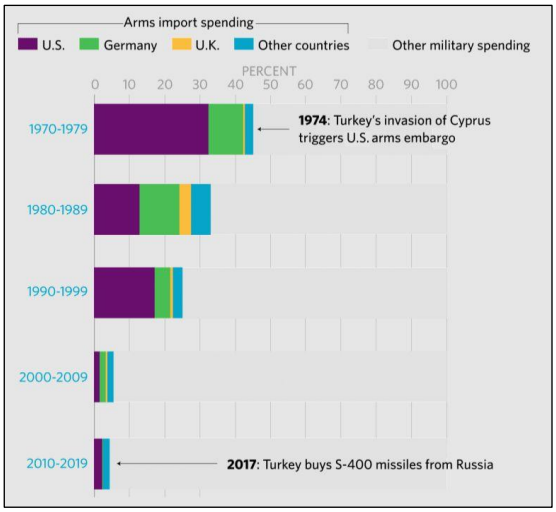
[21] See, for example, Appendix D of CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, version

Congressional legislation and oversight have shaped U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation for decades. Congress placed an arms embargo on Turkey from 1975 to 1978, following the 1974 Cyprus conflict in which Turkey used U.S.-origin weapons against Greek and Greek Cypriot forces. In those military operations, Turkey took control of slightly more than one-third of the island on behalf of Turkish Cypriots.[22] Since the embargo, Turkey has focused more on developing its defense industry (see **Figure 2**), and as part of that goal, one objective of Turkish arms purchases from the United States and other foreign suppliers has been to acquire technology for future indigenous defense production.[23]

Over the past 15 years, some arms transfers or export licenses Turkey has requested or otherwise sought from the United States either have been stalled, or reportedly faced congressional "holds" over tensions related to Russia and Syria.[24] Examples include

- **MQ-9 Reaper and MQ-1 Predator armed drones.** Turkey reportedly requested these drones in the late 2000s, but supposedly some Members of Congress opposed their transfer at a time when very few U.S. allies were receiving armed drones.[25] Turkey's inability to acquire U.S.-origin drones likely reinforced the motivation for Turkey's successful domestic development of the Bayraktar TB2 drone.[26]
- **Patriot surface-to-air defense system.** Turkey and the United States reportedly consulted frequently between 2009 and 2018 on a possible U.S. sale of Patriot systems to Turkey. Turkish officials apparently sought greater technology sharing than what U.S. officials were offering, and

Figure 2. Arms Imports as a Share of Turkish Military Spending



Sources: Stratfor, based on information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Traders Database, with some text modifications by CRS.

Note: Turkey signed the S-400 purchase agreement in 2017, and took delivery in 2019.

dated November 9, 2020, available at https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41368/72. 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).

[22] Jody Brumage, "The Turkish Arms Embargo – Part I" and "The Turkish Arms Embargo – Part II," Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education, December 1 and 15, 2015.

[23] Appendix B of CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*.

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

[25] Metin Gurcan, "Turkey goes all in on drones," *Al-Monitor*, December 28, 2015; Tolga Tanis, "US defense equipment transfer to Turkey still on hold amid discord on regional issues," *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 9, 2015; Burak Bekdil, "Turkey mulls unarmed Reaper drones from US," *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 4, 2014.

[26] Rich Outzen, *Deals, Drones, and National Will: The New Era in Turkish Power Projection*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 2021.

then made a preliminary choice of a Chinese system in 2013 before reversing course and later selecting the Russian S-400.[27]

- **F-16 modernization: information sharing and flight safety.** In February 2019, Turkey submitted a Letter of Request for Link 16 Multifunctional Information Distribution Systems (MIDS) and Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance Systems for 199 F-16 aircraft. According to a Turkish official, procuring Link 16 MIDS would be a main factor in enhancing Turkey's NATO interoperability.[28] In April 2023, the Administration formally notified Congress of a possible sale of avionics that would apparently include these systems.[29]

Turkish S-400 Acquisition and U.S. Responses

After Turkey acquired its S-400 system from Russia in July 2019, the Trump Administration removed Turkey from the F-35 program. In announcing the removal, Defense Department officials cited concerns about possible Russian use of the S-400 to collect intelligence on F-35 stealth capabilities.[30] In December 2020, the Trump Administration also imposed sanctions on Turkey's defense procurement agency (and associated individuals) under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, P.L. 115-44), which targets countries that make significant arms purchases from Russia.[31] In December 2019, Congress enacted the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA, P.L. 116-92), which includes a provision (Section 1245) prohibiting the Defense Department from transferring F-35s to Turkey unless Turkey no longer possesses the S-400. Turkish officials have reportedly placed the S-400 in a storage facility rather than activating it and risking additional U.S. retaliatory measures.[32]

Turkey's Role in NATO

Since Turkey joined NATO in 1952, its engagement with allies (including the United States) on a number of security challenges in its geographic vicinity has featured cooperation on many of them, and disagreement on others.[33] Moreover, some specific actions Turkey has taken within the alliance, as described below, have had implications for NATO's strength and cohesion.

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[27] Jim Townsend and Rachel Ellehuus, "The Tale of Turkey and the Patriots," *War on the Rocks*, July 22, 2019.

[28] The information in the first two sentences of this bullet comes from CRS correspondence with a Turkish official, March 1, 2023. Per this same correspondence, other requests or contracts that are lagging behind Turkey's delivery schedule include various air-to-surface (Joint Direct Attack Munitions), air-to-air (Sidewinder and Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles), and naval (Harpoon missiles, Phalanx, Sea Rolling Airframe Missile) weapons systems.

[29] Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Türkiye – F-16 Avionics Upgrade," Transmittal No. 21-34, April 17, 2023; CRS correspondence with Turkish official, April 17, 2023.

[30] 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. For additional information on the S-400 issue, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*. Negotiations are reportedly ongoing between U.S. and Turkish officials on the status of F-35s technically owned by Turkey but based in the United States, and an initial $1.4 billion Turkish payment.

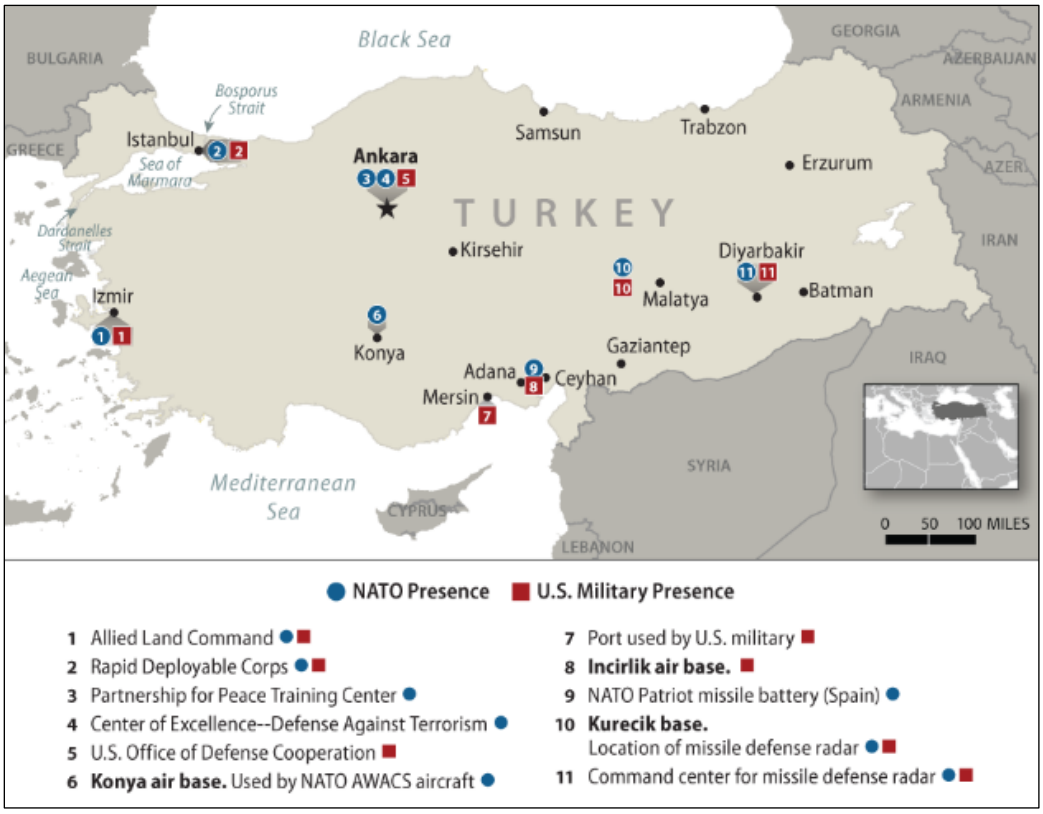
[31] Archived CRS Insight IN11557, *Turkey: U.S. Sanctions Under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas; State Department, "CAATSA Section 231 'Imposition of Sanctions on Turkish Presidency of Defense Industries,'" December 14, 2020. Sanctions were not imposed on other Turkish ministries or agencies that might independently conduct defense-related transactions.

[32] Abdullah Bozkurt, "Turkey put Russian S-400 missiles in a storage facility to avoid further clashes with the US," *Nordic Monitor*, December 8, 2022.

[33] See CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, and CRS In Focus IF10487, *Turkey*

Certain tangible benefits flow to Turkey's NATO allies due to its membership in the organization and its defense capabilities. According to the State Department's *Integrated Country Strategy* (ICS) for Turkey, its sizable military and its geographic location at the southeastern flank of the alliance gives it a critical role in regional security.[34] Turkey has NATO's second-largest military and the world's third-largest F-16 fleet,[35] hosts allied military assets and personnel (see **Figure 3**) in a location near several conflict areas in the Middle East and elsewhere, and partners in other ways with the United States and other allies—including in a number of NATO missions.[36]

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



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

Note: All locations are approximate.

(Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas. Also, Can Kasapoglu, "Turkey," The Nations of NATO: Shaping the Alliance's Relevance and Cohesion, Thierry Tardy, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 92-101.

[34] State Department, *Integrated Country Strategy: Turkey*, May 13, 2022.

[35] "Turkey and NATO," *Strategic Comments*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Vol. 25, Comment 36, December 2019; Paul Iddon, "Turkey Questions the Wisdom of Having an All-American Air Force," *Forbes*, February 6, 2023.

[36] State Department, *Integrated Country Strategy: Turkey*; "U.S. Relations with Turkey (Türkiye)," Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet, January 9, 2023; Kasapoglu, "Turkey," *The Nations of NATO*, pp. 103-105. Kalev Stoicescu and Hille Hanso, *Turkey's Future Role in NATO: An Indispensable and Difficult Ally*, International Centre for Defence and Security (Estonia), January 2022; Nicholas Fiorenza and Dylan Lehrke, "Turkey leads NATO VJTF in 2021," *Janes Defence Weekly*, January 6, 2021.

For example, Turkish F-16s have occasionally participated in NATO Baltic Air Policing missions,[37] and in April 2022 a Turkish E-7T early warning aircraft "acted as the airborne command and control post for fighter activities above the Baltic Sea Region during NATO's multinational exercise Ramstein Alloy," which included Sweden and Finland as partner nations.[38] Turkey also regularly contributes aircraft and naval vessels to NATO's Operation Sea Guardian, an ongoing maritime security mission in the Mediterranean Sea.[39]

Nevertheless, some of Turkey's actions under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's (pronounced *air-doe-wan*) rule have arguably undermined NATO's strength and unity. In a few cases, Turkish stances have delayed the alliance from achieving the unanimity needed to act. For example, in 2020 Turkey prolonged the approval of a new NATO defense plan for Poland and the Baltic states because it was trying to get other alliance members to designate its Syrian Kurdish adversaries (known as the People's Protection Units, or the Kurdish acronym YPG) as a terrorist group.[40] Turkey ultimately gave up on these efforts and agreed to the new plan.[41] Similar concerns state by Turkish officials regarding Kurdish militant groups have played a major role in Turkish delays in approving NATO membership for Sweden and Finland (an issue discussed further below). President Erdogan said in May 2022, "The expansion of NATO is meaningful for us, in proportion to the respect that is shown to our sensitivities."[42]

Additionally, Erdogan has consolidated substantial domestic control over Turkey during his time as prime minister and president.[43] This heightened degree of control has prompted some observers to express concern that a Turkey more accountable to a leader's personal agenda or ideology than its democratic institutions could weaken NATO decisionmaking and contributions to regional stability.[44]

Congressional Review Process and Options

For a possible Foreign Military Sale (FMS) or Direct Commercial Sale (DCS) of major defense equipment, articles, and/or services meeting certain value thresholds, the executive branch takes a

[37] Gareth Jennings, "Turkey joins NATO Baltic Air Policing for first time since 2006," *Janes Defence Weekly*, July 7, 2021.

[38] NATO Allied Air Command, "Turkish E-7T Provides Airborne Command and Control for Exercise Ramstein Alloy," April 14, 2022.

[39] NATO, "Operation Sea Guardian," May 17, 2021; "NATO's operation Sea Guardian conducts first patrols in Eastern Mediterranean for 2023," February 28, 2023. Infographics showing specific deployments over time available at https://mc.nato.int/media-centre/infographics.

[40] "NATO puts defence plan for Poland, Baltics into action, officials say," *Reuters*, July 2, 2020. The YPG, which has partnered with the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition in Syria under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), has links with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Kurdish acronym PKK, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization that has fought an on-and-off insurgency with Turkish government forces since the 1980s). Sources citing links between the PKK and YPG (or PKK affiliates in Syria) include State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2021*, Syria; Berkay Mandiraci, "Turkey's PKK Conflict: A Regional Battleground in Flux," International Crisis Group, February 18, 2022; Barak Barfi, *Ascent of the PYD and the SDF*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2016.

[41] "NATO puts defence plan for Poland, Baltics into action, officials say," *Reuters*.

[42] Emily Rauhala et al., "Turkey blocks start of NATO talks on Finland, Sweden," *Washington Post*, May 19, 2022. See also "Recep Tayyip Erdogan on NATO expansion," *Economist*, May 30, 2022.

[43] CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*.

[44] Jason Blessing et al., editors, *NATO 2030: Towards a New Strategic Concept and Beyond*. Washington, DC: Foreign Policy Institute/Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins University SAIS, 2021.

number of customary and official steps to facilitate congressional review.[45] First, the State Department usually provides informal notification of the proposed FMS or DCS to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) and House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC). Then, a proposed FMS or DCS requires formal notification to Congress before it can proceed. In most cases, the State Department submits the formal notification 20 to 40 days after informal notification. This time period gives the committees opportunity to raise concerns in a confidential "tiered review" process. If a Member of Congress places a hold on the proposed transaction, formal notification usually does not proceed, though holds are not legally binding.[46]

Under Section 36 of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA, P.L. 90-629, 82 Stat. 1320, as amended), the executive branch can proceed with a notified FMS or DCS to NATO countries (such as Turkey and Greece) 15 days after formal notification,[47] subject to possible congressional action as described below.

Joint resolution of disapproval. During the 15-day period after formal notification, Congress may enact a joint resolution prohibiting the proposed transaction; the AECA contains procedures for expedited congressional consideration of a joint resolution of disapproval. The President can veto a resolution of disapproval, subject to congressional override by two-thirds majorities of both houses.[48]

To date, Congress has not successfully blocked any proposed arms sales via joint resolutions of disapproval. However, in some cases substantial congressional opposition has led the executive branch to withdraw or alter sales.[49]

Other legislation. The process for any given arms sale can last for months or years. After the prescribed AECA review period has passed, Congress can also use the regular legislative process to act at any time—up to the point of final delivery—to block, condition, or otherwise influence a sale.[50] One example of legislation to block an arms transfer was the FY2020 NDAA provision (mentioned above) restricting F-35 transfers to Turkey while it possesses the S-400.

Emergency Arms Sales Authorities Available to the President

Other provisions in Section 36 of the AECA allow the President to waive congressional review requirements and immediately sell arms if the President certifies to Congress that "an emergency exists which requires such sale in the national security interests of the United States."[51] In 2019, the Trump Administration cited those authorities in notifying Congress of immediate FMSs and DCSs to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan because of stated security

[45] CRS Report RL31675, *Arms Sales: Congressional Review Process*, by Paul K. Kerr. The thresholds for NATO allies (and Japan, Australia, South Korea, Israel, and New Zealand) are $25 million for the sale, enhancement, or upgrading of major defense equipment; $100 million for the sale, enhancement, or upgrading of defense articles and defense services; and $300 million for the sale, enhancement, or upgrading of design and construction services. For all other countries, the thresholds are $14 million, $50 million, and $200 million, respectively.

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

[47] For most non-NATO countries (other than Japan, Australia, South Korea, Israel, and New Zealand, for which the duration is also 15 days), the duration is 30 days after formal notification.

[48] CRS Report RL31675, *Arms Sales: Congressional Review Process*.

[49] For case studies of situations in which congressional action (via the AECA expedited process or other legislative channels) resulted in changes to proposed arms sales, see Archived CRS Report R46580, *Israel's Qualitative Military Edge and Possible U.S. Arms Sales to the United Arab Emirates*, coordinated by Jeremy M. Sharp and Jim Zanotti.

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

[51] For more information, including past invocations of the emergency authorities, see CRS Report R44984, *Arms Sales in the Middle East: Trends and Analytical Perspectives for U.S. Policy*, coordinated by Clayton Thomas.

concerns for U.S. partners relating to Iran and Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen.[52] At a hearing to examine the sales, testimony from a State Department official suggested that Senator Menendez (then serving as SFRC Ranking Member) had placed a hold on the sales some months prior to the Administration's invocation of emergency authority.[53] Although the sales proceeded, the Senate and House later passed three joint resolutions of disapproval (S.J.Res. 36, S.J.Res. 37, and S.J.Res. 38); President Trump vetoed them all.[54] To date, Biden Administration officials have not publicly indicated whether they might consider invoking emergency authorities in an F-16 case for Turkey.

Initial Congressional Views

Some Members of Congress with input in approving the possible F-16 sale to Turkey have indicated that they expect certain actions or policy changes from Turkey before they will consider supporting the transaction (see "Key Issues for Congress" below). Within a context of strong congressional support for Swedish and Finnish NATO accession,[55] a bipartisan group of 29 Senators argued in a February 2023 letter to President Biden that Turkish delay on the issue has threatened alliance unity in countering Russia. The group, led by Senate NATO Observer Group Co-Chairs Jeanne Shaheen and Thom Tillis, suggested that they might consider supporting the F-16 sale only if Turkey approves accession for both Sweden and Finland.[56] Following a March 2023 meeting in Washington, DC with high-level Turkish officials and U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Jeff Flake, Senators Shaheen and Tillis reiterated the "serious global security implications" of expeditious Turkish approval of Swedish and Finnish accession.[57] After President Erdogan stated his support for Finland's accession later in March, Turkey's parliament approved it.[58] Finland formally joined NATO in April.

SFRC Chairman Bob Menendez and Ranking Member Jim Risch, and HFAC Chairman Michael McCaul and Ranking Member Gregory Meeks, comprise the four committee leaders or "four corners" who can reportedly place holds (though, as mentioned earlier, the holds are not legally binding) on arms sales during the informal notification process.[59]

Chairman Menendez was cited in January 2023 as supporting the F-35 sale to Greece.[60] At the same time, he was quoted as saying the following in strong opposition to the F-16 sale to Turkey:

> 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

[52] Arms Sales Notification; Congressional Record Vol. 165, No. 93 (Senate – June 4, 2019), Pages S3203-S3209.

[53] CQ Congressional Transcripts, "House Foreign Affairs Committee Holds Hearing on Emergency Arms Sales," June 12, 2019.

[54] United States Senate, Vetoes by President Donald J. Trump, available at https://www.senate.gov/legislative/vetoes/TrumpDJ.htm.

[55] CRS Insight IN11949, *NATO: Finland Joins as Sweden's Accession Faces Delay*, by Kristin Archick, Paul Belkin, and Andrew S. Bowen. Senate Treaty Document 117-3 approved ratifying the accession protocols in August 2022 by a 95-1 vote.

[56] February 2, 2023 letter from 29 Senators to President Biden, text available at https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/turkiye_f16s3.pdf.

[57] Senator Jeanne Shaheen, "Shaheen, Tillis Issue Joint Statement Following Meeting with Turkish Officials & U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye," March 15, 2023.

[58] Ezgi Akin, "Turkey ratifies Finland's NATO membership," *Al-Monitor*, March 30, 2023.

[59] Insinna et al., "Congress has secretly blocked US arms sales to Turkey for nearly two years."

[60] Crowley and Wong, "U.S. Plan to Sell Fighter Jets to Turkey Is Met with Opposition."

> 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.[61]

In statements to *Newsweek* in early March, Menendez reiterated these points, called on Turkey to change course on its policies regarding airspace tensions with Greece and the Sweden/Finland NATO accession issue, and warned Turkey against any further Russian arms purchases—urging it to fully reject military cooperation with Russia.[62] Later, in a March SFRC hearing featuring Secretary Blinken, Chairman Menendez elaborated on objections he has against various Turkish foreign and domestic policies, and opined that Turkey does not deserve to receive F-16s unless it addresses some of the issues he mentioned.[63] Despite apparent congressional acquiescence to the Administration's plan (mentioned above) to move forward on a proposed F-16 avionics sale to Turkey that would enhance its NATO interoperability, SFRC Chairman Menendez said—after formal notification to Congress of the sale—that he continues to oppose the sale of F-16s to Turkey.[64]

Ranking Member Risch has said that Turkey has made a "better case" for receiving the F-16 than the F-35 because they use F-16s "to guard the eastern flank of NATO." He also warned that "if they're not playing ball with the rest of NATO on Sweden and Finland, why in the world do we want them as part of the club?"[65]

Ranking Member (then-Chairman) Meeks said in May 2022 that the United States should "talk and work with Turkey and others that are working with us against Russia," but mentioned later that month that he had problems with Turkey on other things, including the Sweden/Finland accession issue.[66]

Chairman (then-Ranking Member) McCaul also was cited in May 2022 as expressing some similar views. He said that if the Administration sought congressional authorization for an F-16 sale to Turkey, he expected Turkey to continue playing a constructive role in the Russia-Ukraine war and to address concerns about its role in other global conflicts. McCaul also stated that a lack of Turkish support for Sweden and Finland being in NATO would be "problematic" for a proposed F-16 sale to Turkey.[67]

Other Members of Congress have expressed varying views on a possible F-16 sale to Turkey. In 2022, at least two indicated support or openness to a sale and suggested that U.S. national interests were connected to maintaining bilateral defense cooperation with Turkey.[68] In contrast, 34 Representatives sent a letter to President Biden on July 8, 2022, strongly opposing a sale and noting that it could potentially reward President Erdogan for "ignoring Turkey's alliance

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[61] Ibid.

[62] O'Connor, "U.S.-Turkish Fighter Jet Feud Risks NATO Crisis at Crucial Time for Ukraine."

[63] SFRC Hearing, March 22, 2023, transcript available at https://plus.cq.com/alertmatch/558656174?0&deliveryId=105309916&uid=congressionaltranscripts-7694906.

[64] "Menendez reiterates opposition to sale of F-16 fighters to Turkey," *Kathimerini,* April 22, 2023.

[65] Marc Rod, "Turkey risks 'serious consequences' if it blocks Sweden, Finland NATO accession, Risch warns," *Jewish Insider*, February 6, 2023.

[66] Bryant Harris, "Congress signals openness to Turkey F-16 sale amid Ukraine cooperation," *Defense News*, May 4, 2022; and "Greece seeks to join F-35 program as it lobbies against Turkey F-16 sale," *Defense News*, May 17, 2022.

[67] Ibid.

[68] House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member (then Chairman) Adam Smith, quoted in Harris, "Congress signals openness to Turkey F-16 sale amid Ukraine cooperation"; Senator Lindsey Graham, quoted in Olafimihan Oshin, "Graham visits Turkey, says he will 'do all in my power' to close F-16s sale," *The Hill*, July 3, 2022.

commitments to the United States and NATO and the vast human rights abuses his regime continues to commit at home and abroad."[69]

In July 2022, the House passed a version of the FY2023 NDAA (H.R. 7900) with a provision (Section 1271) that would have conditioned F-16-related transfers on a presidential certification sharing U.S. steps taken to prevent "repeated unauthorized territorial overflights of Greece." Before passing the bill, the House voted 244-179 to add Section 1271, with then-HFAC Chairman Meeks voting in favor and then-Ranking Member McCaul against.[70] The final James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (P.L. 117-263, enacted in December 2022) excluded this condition. The joint explanatory statement accompanying the act said, "We believe that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies should not conduct unauthorized territorial overflights of another NATO ally's airspace."[71]

Important Dates and Potential Decision Points

The following events in 2023 may factor into congressional views or actions on the proposed sale, as well as the nature and timing of Members' consultations with the Administration:

- **Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections.** Scheduled for May 14 (with a presidential runoff on May 28 between the top two vote-getting candidates if neither exceeds 50% in the first round).[72]
- **Greek parliamentary elections.** Reportedly expected to occur on May 21, with a probable second round on July 2.[73]
- **NATO's summit in Lithuania.** Scheduled for July 11-12.

Although Turkey's parliament has approved Finland's NATO membership, it is less likely to address Sweden's case before the closely contested Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for May (see "Sweden and Finland: NATO Accession" and "Turkish Elections and Other Domestic Issues" below).[74] As of early May, Hungary also has not approved Swedish accession. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg have both stated hopes for Turkey to approve Sweden's NATO membership—and thus place both Sweden and Finland within NATO—by the time of the alliance's July 11-12 summit in Lithuania.[75] If the tiered review process for the possible F-16 sale persists after the

[69] Text of letter available at https://pallone.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/pallone-evo.house.gov/files/20220705%20Letter%20on%20Turkey%20F-16%20Sales%20Final.pdf.

[70] Roll call for Amendment No. 399 to H.R. 7900, available at https://clerk.house.gov/evs/2022/roll339.xml.

[71] Explanatory Material Statement Submitted by Mr. Smith of Washington, Chair of the House Committee on Armed Services, on H.Res. 1512, James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023; Congressional Record Vol. 168, No. 191 (House – December 8, 2022), Page H9499.

[72] "President Erdoğan sets elections for May 14," *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 10, 2023.

[73] Alexander Gale, "Greece Election Dates Allegedly Postponed," *Greek Reporter*, March 6, 2023. Election outcomes or the end of the election cycle in Greece could influence its leaders' statements and actions in relation to various issues potentially relevant to an F-16 sale. For more information on those issues, see "Greece and Cyprus" below.

[74] A. Wess Mitchell, Keep Urging Turkey to Admit Sweden, Finland as Allies," U.S. Institute of Peace, February 24, 2023.

[75] Department of Defense, "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Joint Press Conference with Swedish Defense Minister Pal Jonson in Stockholm, Sweden," April 19, 2023; Reuters, "Stoltenberg sees progress in Sweden's NATO bid, talks to resume in March," February 23, 2023.

events highlighted above amid congressional committee leaders' concerns, the Administration may consider whether, when, and how (1) to address any continuing concerns, and/or (2) to move forward with a formal notification of the sale.

Key Issues for Congress

Several additional issues could have implications for the congressional review process on the possible sale, and vice versa. Brief summaries of each issue and its relevance for the process are set forth below; for more detailed discussion, see, CRS Report R44000, *Turkey (Türkiye): Major Issues, May 2023 Elections, and U.S. Relations*; and CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*, both by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Russia-Ukraine War

Background. While Turkey's cooperation with Russia on some issues has presented challenges for U.S.-Turkey relations, Turkey's support for Ukraine's defense has helped address those challenges to some extent.[76] Regarding the effect of the Russia-Ukraine war on Turkey's strategic calculations, one analyst has written:

> Russian geopolitical revisionism is set to drive Turkey closer to the geopolitical West, but it is doubtful that this process will make the geopolitical West as indispensable for Turkey as it was during the Cold War, or function as a geo-political anchor in the way it did then.[77]

U.S. officials have voiced appreciation for many Turkish actions. These include denouncing Russia's invasion, supplying Ukraine with military equipment, closing the Bosphorus (alt. Bosporus) and Dardanelles Straits to belligerent warships, helping broker a Black Sea corridor for Ukrainian grain exports, and serving as a transit hub for natural gas to Europe.[78]

At the same time, Turkey's policies regarding economic and energy cooperation with Russia have apparently generated some U.S. concerns. Instead of imposing sanctions on Russia like the United States, other NATO allies, and the European Union (EU), Turkey has instead boosted trade with Russia in some areas.[79] In early 2023, U.S. officials warned counterparts in Turkey (and some non-NATO countries) about possible penalties for businesses that supply Russia's defense industry in contravention of U.S. sanctions or export controls.[80] Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has denied that Turkish businesses are exporting electronic or technological products with potential defense applications to Russia, but has publicly welcomed information sharing with U.S. and EU counterparts to ensure that businesses do not use Turkey to bypass

[76] February 2, 2023 letter from 29 Senators to President Biden, text available at https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/turkiye_f16s3.pdf; O'Connor, "U.S.-Turkish Fighter Jet Feud Risks NATO Crisis at Crucial Time for Ukraine."

[77] Galip Dalay, "Deciphering Turkey's Geopolitical Balancing and Anti-Westernism in Its Relations with Russia," *SWP Comment* (German Institute for International and Security Affairs), May 20, 2022.

[78] State Department, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu at a Joint Press Availability." For open source reporting about possible Turkish military supplies to Ukraine, see Stijn Mitzer and Joost Oliemans, "The Stalwart Ally: Türkiye's Arms Deliveries to Ukraine," *Oryx*, November 21, 2022.

[79] Soner Cagaptay, "Unpacking Turkey's Non-Binary Ukraine War Policy," Hoover Institution, March 7, 2023.

[80] 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; Jared Malsin, "Russia's Ukraine War Effort Fueled by Turkish Exports," *Wall Street Journal*, February 3, 2023; Ben Hubbard, "U.S. Presses Partners to Weed Out Illicit Trade with Russia," *New York Times*, February 4, 2023.

Western sanctions.[81] Reportedly, Turkey began in March 2023 to enforce curbs on sanctioned goods from transiting its territory to Russia.[82] In April 2023, the Treasury Department placed sanctions on two Turkey-based companies and associated persons for assisting Russia or Russian entities.[83]

Relevance for congressional review process. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, Turkey's potential to boost NATO in countering Russia may partly explain the Administration's support for an F-16 transaction and Congress could possibly consider it in assessing a proposed sale. Turkey's procurement decisions and future plans for the S-400, along with its mediation efforts and other interactions with Russia and Ukraine, may affect how U.S. officials and lawmakers gauge Turkey's Western alignment and pursue options to encourage it—including with regard to F-16s.

Sweden and Finland: NATO Accession

Background. As noted above, some Members of Congress have expressed strong support for Swedish and Finnish NATO accession, and some Members argue that Turkish delays on the issue have threatened alliance unity in countering Russia.[84] Turkish officials do not appear fully satisfied with the steps Sweden has taken to date—per a June 2022 trilateral memorandum—to strengthen legal measures and policies (including extradition) against Kurdish militants and others that Turkey deems terrorists.[85] With Turkey's ratification of the accession protocols for Finland, Finland appears poised to join NATO ahead of Sweden.[86]

Relevance for congressional review process. Congressional leaders have signaled reluctance to consider approving an F-16 sale to Turkey unless its parliament ratifies the NATO accession protocols for both Sweden and Finland, though Turkish officials oppose any U.S. resort to the accession issue as a precondition.[87] Sweden's parliament passed new anti-terrorism legislation in May 2023, which will take effect in early June.[88] Anticipating the legislation's likely passage, Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin said that when it comes into effect, Sweden could start taking "more decisive, concrete, and fruitful steps to address our security concerns," adding, "we'll see how fast they can move."[89] It is unclear (1) whether and when Turkish ratification for Sweden might proceed after that, (2) if Turkey's leadership after its elections

[81] State Department, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu at a Joint Press Availability."

[82] "Turkey Blocks Transit of Goods Sanctioned by EU, US to Russia," *Bloomberg*, March 10, 2023.

[83] Department of the Treasury, "Treasury Targets Russian Financial Facilitators and Sanctions Evaders Around the World," April 12, 2023.

[84] See footnote 56 and footnote 57.

[85] Rich Outzen, "What Turkey really wants from Sweden," *Atlantic Council*, January 27, 2023. Text of Trilateral Memorandum available at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220628-trilat-memo.pdf.

[86] Akin, "Turkey ratifies Finland's NATO membership." Finnish officials maintain that it is important to them for Sweden to join NATO as soon as possible, and that they will continue to support Sweden's accession. Trine Jonasson, "The Finnish President in Turkey for Announcement of NATO Decision," *High North News*, March 17, 2023.

[87] State Department, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu at a Joint Press Availability"; "Türkiye leaves door open to Sweden's NATO bid: Kalin," *TRT World*, March 26, 2023.

[88] "Swedes tighten terror laws, likely to help NATO membership," *Associated Press*, May 3, 2023.

[89] "Türkiye leaves door open to Sweden's NATO bid: Kalin."

might demand further Swedish actions, and (3) whether a potential future Turkish parliament would act in line with the Turkish president's wishes.[90]

Greece and Cyprus

Background. Congress also could consider long-standing bilateral tensions between Turkey and Greece in assessing a potential arms sale. Specific considerations might include how a potential sale could affect the balance of military power between Turkey and Greece (see text box), as well as Turkey's role in various bilateral disputes—including over the ethnically divided island of Cyprus.

Turkish and Greek Defense Capabilities and the U.S. Role

Historically, the United States has frequently linked military assistance provided to Turkey and Greece in a way that maintains a careful balance between its two NATO allies.[91] Airpower plays a role in this balance, as do additional factors like the countries' respective naval and land-based military capabilities, manpower and population resources, economic and social capital, defense industries, and international relationships.[92]

Turkey's air force has approximately 232 F-16s in service in Block 30, Block 40, Block 50, and Block 50+ configuration, which account for the majority of its 262 in-service fighter aircraft.[93] First acquired in 1987, most of Turkey's F-16s have undergone several upgrades since initial procurement.[94] The most recent upgrade, completed in 2009, gave Turkey's F-16s capabilities similar to current U.S. F-16s.

Greece has approximately 154 F-16s in service in Block 30, Block 50, and Block 52+ configuration, which account for the majority of its 221 in-service fighter aircraft.[95] In 2017, the Trump Administration formally notified Congress of the possible sale of up to 123 Viper upgrade kits to Greece,[96] with the United States and Greece eventually agreeing to a reported total of 83—enabling upgrades to the majority of Greece's aging F-16 fleet at a cost of roughly $1.5 billion. The first two F-16Vs were delivered in September 2022, with all upgrades scheduled to be complete by late 2027.[97] Additionally, Greece has begun accepting delivery from France of 24 Rafale F-3R fighters, the last of which are due to be delivered in 2024.[98]

While airpower comparisons between Turkey and Greece involve many factors (e.g., training, sustainment, logistics), one journalist has written that a potential Greek acquisition of F-35s—coupled with the ongoing procurement of Rafales and the F-16 upgrades—"will give the Hellenic [Greek] Air Force a technological edge over its much larger Turkish counterpart. That will remain the case even if Turkey secures this F-16 deal."[99]

[90] Article 87 of Turkey's constitution gives the Turkish parliament (or Grand National Assembly) the authority to ratify international treaties. Unofficial English translation available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Turkey_2017.pdf?lang=en.

[91] Kasapoglu, "Turkey," *The Nations of NATO*, p. 99. For background, CRS Report 90-29, *Greece and Turkey: The Seven-Ten Ratio in Military Aid*, by Ellen Laipson, revised December 26, 1989, is available to Members and staff upon request.

[92] Alexander Gale, "Greece vs Turkey: The Military Balance in the Aegean," *Greek Reporter*, November 26, 2022.

[93] "Turkey – Air Force," *Janes World Air Forces*, June 23, 2021 (posted November 7, 2022); "Turkey" at https://www.f-16.net/f-16_users_article21.html.

[94] Gareth Jennings, "Turkey Unveils Domestic AESA Radar for Manned, Unmanned Combat Aircraft," *Janes Defence Weekly*, November 10, 2022.

[95] "Greece – Air Force," *Janes World Air Forces*, February 4, 2022 (posted March 3, 2023); "Greece" at https://www.f-16.net/f-16_users_article5.html.

[96] 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.

[97] Nicholas Paphitis, "Greece gets first 2 upgraded F-16s out of a total 83," *Associated Press*, September 12, 2022.

[98] Paul Iddon, "Even if Turkey Gets Modernized F-16s, Greece Will Still Have a Technological Edge in Airpower," *Forbes*, July 2, 2022.

[99] Paul Iddon, "Balance of Power: Why the Biden Administration Wants to Sell Turkey F-16s and Greece F-35s," *Forbes*, January 16, 2023.

In May 2022, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis appeared to imply concern about U.S.-Turkey arms transactions—such as a potential F-16 sale—while addressing a May 2022 joint session of Congress;[100] subsequently President Erdogan temporarily suspended contact with him. While longstanding Turkey-Greece disputes persist,[101] tensions have somewhat subsided in early 2023. Erdogan and Mitsotakis have renewed contacts in the context of positive diplomatic momentum from Greek disaster relief assistance to Turkey after Turkey experienced major earthquakes on February 6, 2023.[102]

Amid these potential airpower developments and ongoing Turkey-Greece disputes, various other aspects of U.S.-Greece military cooperation (including basing, materiel transshipment, and defense transactions) have expanded.[103] In this context, and following the United States's removal of a decades-long arms embargo that it had imposed on the Republic of Cyprus,[104] Turkish officials have claimed that the U.S. approach to the region appears imbalanced.[105] U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Jeff Flake has denied any shift in U.S. security posture, explaining that collective efforts are focused on ending Russia's war in Ukraine.[106]

Relevance for congressional review process. After Greek officials voiced concerns about Turkish actions in the Aegean Sea region, some Members of Congress supported the provision during the FY2023 NDAA process that sought to place conditions on F-16 transactions with Turkey (as discussed above).[107] This issue could affect congressional deliberations going forward, depending on the tenor of future U.S.-Turkey-Greece interactions and the respective outcomes of upcoming scheduled elections in Turkey and Greece. At a March 2023 HFAC hearing, Secretary Blinken responded to a question about potential threats to Greece from Turkey by reiterating his view that an F-16 sale to Turkey is important for NATO. He then said that the Administration is working to defuse any tensions between NATO allies like Turkey and Greece so that "they do not engage in either actions or rhetoric that would inflame the situation."[108]

Syria

Background. Another factor for Congress could be Turkey's policies and military operations in northern Syria. Amid the compartmentalized disputes arising during the Syrian civil war among external actors, a major U.S.-Turkey point of contention has been U.S. support for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), led by the Kurdish YPG. The SDF helped end the Islamic State's territorial control over parts of northeast Syria, but the YPG has links to the Kurdistan Workers'

[100] Greek Prime Minister's website, "Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis' address to the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress," May 17, 2022.

[101] CRS Report R41368, *Turkey (Türkiye): Background and U.S. Relations*.

[102] "Turkey, Greece take strides in Ankara meeting as aid diplomacy continues," *Al-Monitor*, March 22, 2023.

[103] State Department, "U.S. Security Cooperation with Greece," October 31, 2022.

[104] State Department, "Lifting of Defense Trade Restrictions on the Republic of Cyprus for Fiscal Year 2023," September 16, 2022.

[105] Andrew Wilks, "Turkish FM travels to Washington seeking to seal deal for F-16 fighter jets," *Al-Monitor*, January 17, 2023; "Cavusoglu says US siding against Turkey in the Aegean, East Med," *Kathimerini*, October 21, 2022.

[106] Twitter, U.S. Embassy Türkiye, October 18, 2022 – 3:32 AM, at https://twitter.com/USEmbassyTurkey/status/1582273449145212928.

[107] See, for example, the November 14, 2022 letter from 22 Representatives to leadership of the Senate Armed Services Committee and House Armed Services Committee, text available at https://pappas.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/pappas.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/11.14.22-rep.-pappas-fy23-ndaa-conference-letter-on-turkey-f-16-sale-provision.pdf.

[108] HFAC Hearing, March 23, 2023, transcript available at https://plus.cq.com/alertmatch/558913042?0&deliveryId=105435727&uid=congressionaltranscripts-7696303.

Party (Kurdish acronym PKK), a U.S.-designated terrorist organization that has clashed with Turkish authorities for decades.[109]

Relevance for congressional review process. If Turkey were to launch a new military ground operation in Syria or use F-16s against the SDF/YPG or civilians in Syria or Iraq, such a development—perhaps unlikely in the near term given the February earthquakes—could affect Administration and congressional sentiment toward Turkey and the proposed F-16 sale.[110] A previous Turkish-led incursion into northern Syria in 2019 generated negative congressional responses. In June 2022, the four SFRC-HFAC leaders (Menendez, Risch, McCaul, and Meeks) urged the Turkish government and its allied Syrian militias to refrain from any military operation so that the focus could remain on ensuring the "enduring defeat" of the Islamic State and avoiding "further humanitarian disaster."[111] HFAC's McCaul and Meeks issued a similar joint statement in December after a November bombing in Istanbul triggered some Turkish military responses in Syria and public discussion of a possible ground operation.[112]

Turkish Elections and Other Domestic Issues

Background. Domestic developments in Turkey are another consideration for Congress. Many U.S. lawmakers have alleged that "gross violation of human rights and democratic backsliding" have occurred under Erdogan's rule.[113]

Closely contested Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled for May 14 (as mentioned above).[114] In March 2023, a "table of six" parties nominated Kemal Kilicdaroglu (*kuhl-utch-dahr-oh-loo*), the main opposition leader since 2010, as their presidential candidate to face Erdogan. The campaign platform of Kilicdaroglu's coalition says that if elected, it would "take initiatives to return Turkey to the F-35 project."[115]

Relevance for congressional review process. Various Turkish election scenarios could factor into congressional assessments, along with how Turkish leadership changes or an end to the election cycle might influence Turkish policies relevant to the F-16 issue—including on Sweden's NATO accession.[116]

[109] See footnote 40.

[110] Bryant Harris, "Senators want to block Turkey F-16 sale until NATO expansion succeeds," *Defense News*, February 2, 2023; Ersoz, "F-16 Deal Contingent on Turkey's Support for NATO Expansion, Syria."

[111] House Foreign Affairs Committee, "McCaul, Meeks, Risch, Menendez Statement on Threatened Turkish Incursion into Northern Syria," June 15, 2022.

[112] House Foreign Affairs Committee, "McCaul, Meeks Statement on Situation in Northern Syria," December 3, 2022.

[113] See, for example, February 26, 2021 letter from 177 Representatives to Secretary of State Blinken, text available at https://moulton.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Turkey%20Letter%20-%20FINAL.pdf.

[114] For more information, see CRS Report R44000, *Turkey (Türkiye): Major Issues, May 2023 Elections, and U.S. Relations*.

[115] Republican People's Party (Turkish acronym CHP), "Memorandum of Understanding on Common Policies (January 30, 2023)," available at https://en.chp.org.tr/haberler/memorandum-of-understanding-on-common-policies-january-30-2023.

[116] Ersoz, "F-16 Deal Contingent on Turkey's Support for NATO Expansion, Syria"; CRS Report R44000, *Turkey (Türkiye): Major Issues, May 2023 Elections, and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Alternatives to F-16s?

Turkish officials have hinted that if they are unable to upgrade their F-16 fleet, Turkish officials have hinted that they might consider using Western European alternatives, following the example of several U.S. partners in the Middle East.[117] One member of Turkey's presidential commission on national security and foreign policy has stated, "Diversification both in brands and supplier sources is the only method to avoid future political noise of interest groups. Defense dependency to a single country often makes a country vulnerable to foreign political pressure."[118]

Turkey is reportedly exploring Eurofighter Typhoons as a potential alternative to F-16s.[119] The following issues could complicate such acquisitions:

- **Uncertainty of approval from Germany or other consortium partners.** Germany, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom—the Typhoon consortium partners—would need to agree on selling the aircraft to Turkey, and Germany has reportedly blocked the export of some materials to the Turkish arms industry.[120]
- **Cost and logistical issues.** Open sources estimate that Typhoon per unit costs could be approximately twice those of F-16Vs,[121] and one consortium executive has hinted at potential production delays "because the industry has adapted to the very low demand signal that was there for many years."[122]
- **Transition challenges.** Turkey's air force could face difficulties and a lengthy transition period adjusting to a non-F-16 platform.[123]
- **Possible congressional notification requirement.** European weapons transfers to Turkey would be subject to the congressional review process described above if such weapons were to include U.S.-origin defense articles meeting the specified notification threshold.[124] Previously, Congress received notification in connection with some non-NATO countries' proposed purchases of U.S. equipment for Typhoons, namely Link 16 MIDS and various munitions (Saudi Arabia),[125] and SNIPER Advanced Targeting Pods (Kuwait and Qatar).[126]

[117] Iddon, "Turkey Questions the Wisdom of Having an All-American Air Force."

[118] Cagri Erhan, quoted in O'Connor, "U.S.-Turkish Fighter Jet Feud Risks NATO Crisis at Crucial Time for Ukraine."

[119] Ragip Soylu, "Turkey exploring massive UK arms deal involving planes, ships and tank engines," *Middle East Eye*, January 20, 2023.

[120] 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.

[121] Valius Venckunas, "Top 10 most expensive fighter jets in 2021," *Aerotime Hub*, March 29, 2021.

[122] Sakshi Tiwari, "Airbus Stares at 'Death' of Eurofighter Typhoons While Lockheed Martin Walks Away with Monstrous European Deals," *EurAsian Times*, February 21, 2023.

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

[124] See footnote 45.

[125] Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) Transmittal 08-101, September 26, 2008 (73 *Federal Register* 61399, October 16, 2008); State Department Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC) Transmittal 17-079, May 24, 2019 (84 *Federal Register* 65608, November 27, 2019); DSCA Transmittal 20-11, November 4, 2021.

[126] DDTC Transmittal 18-014, November 2, 2018 (84 *Federal Register* 65608, November 27, 2019); DDTC Transmittal 20-074, September 2, 2021 (86 *Federal Register* 73075, December 23, 2021).

If Turkey cannot procure F-16s and encounters obstacles to procuring European alternatives, its next steps toward preserving its military aviation capabilities and NATO interoperability would be unclear. The State Department's ICS for Turkey states:

> If NATO and the West continue to not support Turkey's pursuit of defense modernization, Turkey may be forced to turn to Russia or China to fulfil those defense capability gaps in areas where its indigenous defense industry cannot produce the required capability.[127]

Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin has said that if the United States does not sell F-16s to Turkey, Turkey will follow a similar pathway with fighter aircraft that it took in developing key domestic components for its globally recognized drone industry, "and the US defense companies will be on the losing end in all of this."[128] However, a prominent Turkish defense analyst has written that Turkey's defense industry "cannot extend its performance in drone warfare to each and every aspect of military planning," and still relies on NATO allies for complex systems and platforms such as fifth-generation aircraft.[129]

Some Arguments for and Against Approving a Possible F-16 Sale

CRS has surveyed arguments and potential arguments by proponents and opponents of a possible F-16 sale to Turkey, and has summarized them below. The arguments presented are illustrative, not exhaustive. CRS neither endorses nor opposes any of these arguments nor does CRS support or oppose any other position regarding the issues discussed in the report.

In Favor of a Sale	Against a Sale
Weighing the importance of bolstering NATO against U.S.-Turkey policy differences	
Turkey's ability to help NATO and other countries—including Ukraine—counter Russian threats and geopolitical ambitions makes an F-16 sale important to keep Turkey firmly aligned with NATO allies on this priority.	An F-16 sale to Turkey will not change its demonstrated inclination to hedge between NATO allies and Russia, or to counter Russia in Ukraine and other places important to Turkey's own security interests.
U.S.-Turkey divergences on Russia and other issues should not disrupt efforts to strengthen NATO defense capabilities and deterrence via Turkey's air fleet. Other major U.S. arms purchasers near Turkey (such as Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar) also have some notable divergences with U.S. policy on Russia. Having Turkey as a partner might still remain important to U.S. interests even if Turkey is not fully aligned with U.S. priorities.	NATO allies should be held to a higher standard in preserving alliance strength and unity. Thus, Turkey's current or recent differences with U.S. policy on Russia, Sweden/Finland NATO membership, and Greece/Cyprus should be less tolerable to the United States than its tensions with non-NATO partners. Moreover, the downside from any potential Turkish use of F-16Vs to harm other U.S. partners (e.g., Greece, the Republic of Cyprus, or the SDF/YPG) arguably outweighs any advantage Turkey might provide to NATO with an upgraded F-16 fleet.

[127] State Department, *Integrated Country Strategy: Turkey*.

[128] Seda Sevencan, "US defense companies on 'losing end' if F-16 sale to Türkiye blocked," *Anadolu Agency*, February 2, 2023. For background on the establishment of Turkey's drone industry, see Outzen, *Deals, Drones, and National Will: The New Era in Turkish Power Projection*. For discussion of possible Turkish domestic efforts to upgrade some of its F-16s, see Boyko Nikolov, "Here's how Turkey will upgrade F-16 Block 30, 40, and 50 to Block 70," *BulgarianMilitary.com*, March 27, 2023; Burak Ege Bekdil, "Locally made AESA radar to extend life of Turkish F-16 jets," *Defense News*, November 17, 2022; Gastón Dubois, "Project ÖZGÜR: Turkey starts modernizing its F-16 with indigenous technology," *Aviacionline*, June 3, 2022.

[129] Kasapoglu, "Turkey," *The Nations of NATO*, p. 96.

In Favor of a Sale	Against a Sale
Relationship of an F-16 sale to the Sweden/Finland NATO accession issue	
Approving a sale now could induce Turkey to support NATO membership for Sweden, a key U.S. policy goal. Turkish parliamentary approval of NATO accession for both Sweden and Finland would signal its support for alliance strength and unity, and thus should remove any remaining reservations to a sale in Congress and the Administration.	Approving a sale before Turkish approval of both Sweden and Finland joining NATO could cede U.S. leverage on the issue. Approving a sale after Turkey agrees to Swedish and Finnish accession would encourage NATO countries to extract concessions in the service of their own agendas by temporarily delaying important, otherwise unanimously or near-unanimously supported actions.
Balance of power between Turkey and Greece	
With Greece receiving upgrades to its F-16 fleet and potentially receiving F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, upgrading Turkey's F-16 fleet is important. It would show U.S. sensitivity to maintaining a reasonable balance of power, and thus reduce the potential for (1) Turkey-Greece conflict or (2) the alienation of a Turkish ally that arguably provides unique strategic advantages to NATO in terms of its manpower, overall military capabilities, influence with Muslim-majority countries, and control of the straits between the Mediterranean and Black Seas.	Because Turkey's military, population, and economy are significantly larger than Greece, and Turkey maintains various military advantages over Greece, some Greek airpower advantages arguably help maintain regional balance, and thus should not compel an upgrade to Turkey's F-16 fleet. The United States should reward Greece for the level of cooperation it has shown by inviting additional NATO use of its bases and territory—including to bolster Ukraine and Eastern Europe.
Weighing security interests and democratic values	
Turkey's geopolitical importance gives it outsized value for advancing critical U.S. interests in the surrounding region. Advancing those interests sometimes necessitates close U.S. ties with countries struggling to maintain the rule of law. The United States would have more influence—including on democratic values—by bolstering ties with Turkey via an F-16 sale than by reducing those ties.	Under President Erdogan, Turkey has become increasingly authoritarian, making it a less stable and reliable partner. Until Turkey takes steps to strengthen its democratic institutions and civil liberties, the United States should not sell advanced weaponry to a country whose leadership falls short in embodying ideals found in NATO's founding treaty.
Impact of continued U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation	
Selling and upgrading F-16s would preserve an important node of U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation. Extending Turkey's reliance on the United States for airpower decades into the future could be beneficial in encouraging broader ties and establishing U.S. leverage with Turkey. Selling F-16s would reinforce to Turkey that the U.S. executive branch and Congress remain open to major defense industrial cooperation, thus deterring Turkey from pursuing Russian or Chinese alternatives. Selling F-16s to Turkey could contribute billions of dollars to the military industrial base and extend the life of the Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 70/72 production line in South Carolina.	Upgrading Turkey's fleet of F-16s deepens U.S. commitments to Turkey, giving leverage to a partner whose interests increasingly diverge from America's. Turkey's existing F-16s did not prevent it from purchasing significant Russian military materiel (the S-400), deepening economic ties with Russia, and previously exploring Chinese arms purchases. Lockheed already anticipates orders to build 148 new F-16 Block 70/72 aircraft. Thus, a Turkish sale is not critical for either the production line or the U.S. military industrial base.
Urgency of bolstering interoperability and safety/deconfliction measures	
Turkey's current F-16s are aging and require upgrades to increase interoperability with NATO allies and boost safety/deconfliction measures for training and operations (both among its domestic aircraft and with	Turkey was on track to upgrade its air force's interoperability and safety/deconfliction measures with the F-35 program, and U.S. officials and lawmakers warned that a Russian S-400 acquisition would lead to

In Favor of a Sale	Against a Sale
its NATO partners—such as Greece—in multilateral contexts). Now that Turkey is no longer in line to receive F-35s, it should at least receive modernized F-16s with an extended service life.	removal from the program and U.S. sanctions. To justify U.S. help in bolstering its air capabilities, Turkey should reduce friction with U.S. policies, including by reversing course on the S-400.
Other potential Turkish fighter aircraft options (including from Russia or China)	
Quick U.S. approval of a sale should take place because Turkey has a number of options for purchasing fighter aircraft. U.S. unwillingness to sell F-16s to Turkey, or a prolonged review process, could motivate Turkey to consider deals with foreign suppliers, possibly including Russia or China.	Any pressure Turkey perceives regarding actions affecting a sale or its timing stems from Turkey's past actions, which have limited its options. Turkish pursuit of Russian or Chinese fighters would conflict with Turkey's declared priority to maintain NATO interoperability. Pre-election politics may influence Turkish statements on potential diversification.
Viability of a Western alternative to the F-16	
The Eurofighter Typhoon is not a realistic alternative for Turkey, given that it would still be subject to the approval of European countries like Germany—and perhaps Congress—as well as the significant financial and logistical challenges of switching to a new airframe.	The United States does not need to sell additional F-16s or upgrade kits to Turkey, as Turkey is reportedly in discussions to purchase Typhoons. Typhoons have been viable fleet supplements for several countries that also fly U.S. fighters, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.
Relationship of an F-16 sale to Turkish elections	
Swiftly approving a sale to Turkey without waiting for its expected May elections could help build Turkish public confidence in maintaining close Turkey relations. In contrast, broadcasting the message that the United States is waiting on election results before deciding on the sale could generate negative perceptions that Congress and/or the Administration favors specific domestic political outcomes in Turkey. Furthermore, voter decisions are much likelier to pivot on domestic issues like the economy and earthquake recovery than an F-16 sale.	The United States should refrain from approving a sale before Turkish elections to avoid a prominent policy decision that could affect election outcomes or trigger perceptions that Congress and/or the Administration is trying to sway voters. Basing a U.S. sales decision on Turkish presidential and parliamentary policies after elections and a peaceful transfer of power may be prudent because (1) it could be less politically loaded, and (2) a more muted domestic political atmosphere could provide greater clarity on Turkey's NATO alignment, whether under Erdogan or Kilicdaroglu.
Perspectives on congressional action	
New F-16s might not be delivered for at least three years, based on the current production rate and backlog. In that light, Congress should not shrink from approving a sale in 2023 when there is sufficient reason to do so. Approving the sale would not prevent a future Congress or Administration from stopping or altering the sale in response to Turkish actions against U.S. interests.	Tiered review and the AECA process are designed to empower Congress, and it should not shrink from blocking or disapproving this potential sale in 2023 when there is sufficient reason to do so. Blocking the sale would not prevent a future Administration from initiating a similar sale if Turkey aligns itself more closely with U.S. priorities.

Possible Questions for Biden Administration

As Members of Congress evaluate their stances on a possible F-16 sale to Turkey, they could seek further information from the Administration by posing questions such as those set forth below.

- What are the most compelling reasons for and against an F-16 sale to Turkey?

- How would a sale advance U.S. interests, including with respect to the Russia-Ukraine war? How would it strengthen Turkey's capacity to bolster NATO's capabilities and deterrence?
- What are the likely consequences if the United States decides not to sell F-16s to Turkey, in terms of Turkey's fleet safety and NATO interoperability, defense procurement options, and broader strategic and foreign policy alignment with the United States and NATO or Russia?
- What actions by the Administration—or other developments—might encourage or discourage Turkey to approve NATO membership for Sweden, and what is the likelihood of both Sweden and Finland joining the alliance by the July 11-12 NATO summit?
- If Turkey's parliament agrees to have Sweden join NATO alongside Finland, would that affect the Administration's timing on formally notifying a possible sale to Turkey?
- How do other NATO allies view a potential F-16 sale to Turkey? How might a potential sale, or decision not to sell, impact alliance unity and cohesion?
- What criteria would the Administration use when deciding whether to proceed with a proposed F-16 sale despite a congressional hold?
- How might Turkey use F-16s in opposition to U.S. interests? What kind of safeguards or commitments are in place or could be taken to prevent Turkey from using F-16s against other U.S. allies or partners such as Greece, the Republic of Cyprus, and the SDF/YPG?
- What are the most important considerations for U.S. officials in assessing the Turkey-Greece balance of power and taking actions that might affect it? How should these considerations affect the timing of next steps—including formal congressional notification—for possible F-16 and F-35 sales, respectively, for Turkey and Greece?
- How might the outcome of Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections affect the conditions and timing of a possible sale? What actions (if any) would the Administration plan to take under various election scenarios?
- What can the Administration and other actors do to encourage Turkey to move closer to the West and further from Russia, including on energy and economic cooperation, and on compliance with U.S. sanctions and export controls?
- Are there any circumstances, short of Turkey returning or transferring its Russian S-400 system, under which an Administration might seek to work with Congress to sell F-35s to Turkey and lift or waive CAATSA sanctions?
- Does the Administration plan to require Turkish leaders to take any actions regarding domestic governance or human rights—and if so, what type—as conditions of an F-16 sale?
- What geopolitical implications would result from one or more countries—either within or outside of NATO—supplanting the United States as Turkey's primary fighter aircraft supplier?
- Would a Turkish purchase of Eurofighter Typhoons include U.S.-origin equipment? If so, what kind, and would it be subject to AECA-mandated congressional notification?

- Is Turkey capable of partnering with other countries to expedite the indigenous development of an advanced fighter, given that it developed its own armed drone capability over the past decade? If so, what other countries would be Turkey's most likely industrial partners?
- If an F-16 sale proceeds, what is the delivery timeline—both for new F-16Vs and for upgrades? What developments, including those involving foreign customers, could potentially hasten or slow expected deliveries?
- Might Turkish domestic contractors be involved in any aspects of co-production, installation, or sustainment, and if so, under what circumstances and to what extent?

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