



Turkey Should Not Receive the U.S. F-35 Fighter Aircraft

Turkey purchased 100 F-35 jets from the U.S. global security and aerospace company, Lockheed Martin. The F-35 is our most sophisticated stealth jet fighter.

The first batch of jets was delivered to the Turkish Air Force in a ceremony held in Texas on June 21st, 2018. Turkish pilots will be trained on the aircraft in Arizona, a one to two-year process.

This is not a good deal for the U.S. Turkey is no longer the loyal NATO ally of the 1990's, but a radical Islamist quasi-dictatorship that is often acting dangerously against U.S. national interests. It is time for the United States to modify its policy towards Turkey, as Turkey has clearly adjusted its policy towards the West and the United States.

Problematic Facts About Turkey and its' President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan:

- Turkey [purchased](#) an S-400 surface-to-air missile system from Russia, even though the system cannot be integrated into NATO's military architecture as is required. This is set to be delivered in July of 2019. Operating this system alongside the F-35s would expose the jet's secrets to the Russian manufacturers and supply them with crucial information on how to intercept them.
- Erdogan has [proposed](#) that Turkey and Russia work together on producing an S-500 missile system.
- Turkey [has been refusing](#) to coordinate its military strategy with NATO. Never before has a member state refused to coordinate its military strategy to the degree that Turkey is doing now.
- As noted by the former U.S. National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, Turkey [has taken](#) on a "new role" as a main sponsor of funding for radical Islamist ideology. Turkey [assisted](#) Iran in evading Western sanctions, [using](#) a 'gas-for-gold' sanctions-busting scheme. Turkey aided ISIS by [allowing](#) men and supplies to move across its borders, and also [played](#) a key role in facilitating its' expansion through black market oil sales - over \$1 billion worth. Further, Turkey is a [leading](#) financier of Hamas, a U.S. designated terrorist organization, providing \$250 million a year, and has allowed leaders of Hamas to operate in the country.
- Turkey continues to pursue its own agenda in Syria, which is dangerous to the U.S. Turkey has been [fighting alongside radical Islamist groups in Syria](#) and attacking the moderate Syrian Kurds organized under the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who are the main allies of the U.S. Turkey has even [threatened](#) to attack U.S. forces in Syria for their willingness to work with the Kurds. The Turkish conquest of Afrin, Syria, delayed the U.S. campaign against ISIS, and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Kurds, and ethnic cleansing in the area, as Kurds, Christians, and Yazidis [fled](#) and were [replaced](#) by Sunni Arabs from Syria that had been refugees in Turkey. In Idlib, the last remaining rebel-held province, Turkey

“[has](#) gained a major say” over the extremist organizations, including al-Qaeda, which control the province.

- Turkey is [holding](#) two Americans on dubious charges, one of which, a pastor, Erdogan aims to trade to the U.S. for the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish Islamist whose Gulen Movement was originally allied with Erdogan. Erdogan had a falling out with Gulen in 2013. Erdogan has blamed the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016 on Gulen.
- Turkey [has routinely threatened](#) its fellow NATO allies in Europe with Middle East migrants.
- Turkey continues to specifically foment trouble with fellow NATO member Greece. In 2017, [there was a](#) record 3,317 airspace and 1,998 territorial water violations by Turkey in the Aegean Sea, where Turkey claims additional islands, and Erdogan has publicly called for a revision of the treaty that defines the borders of the modern Turkish state. Turkey also continues to occupy northern Cyprus since 1974 and [has threatened](#) Greece over that as well.
- Turkey’s human rights record has been increasingly poor. Women’s rights have [declined](#) under Erdogan, who has been [quoted](#) as saying that: “You cannot bring women and men into equal positions; that is against nature because their nature is different...” Erdogan has [called](#) homosexuality “contrary” to Islam.
- Turkey never had a strong record of protecting free speech, and things [have gotten](#) worse under Erdogan. The government uses vague, broadly worded laws, such as bringing charges under Article 299 of the [Turkish penal code](#), which says that anyone who [insults the president](#) can face four or more years in prison; replaces the management of opposition media outlets and fires their staff; and routinely imposes bans on the reporting of sensitive stories. Turkish citizens can face imprisonment, fines, job losses, and/or other punishments for their speech. Turkey [made news](#) after one Turk lost his government job and [another](#) Turk lost custody of his children for Facebook posts comparing President Erdogan to the character of Gollum from *The Lord of the Rings*. Even children [have been](#) prosecuted and/or imprisoned for their criticism of Erdogan. And Turkey has sought to jail Knicks basketball star Enes Kanter, a green card holder, [for 48 months for insulting Erdogan’s regime](#).
- Erdogan and Turkish leaders continue to deny the [Armenian](#) and [other Christian](#) genocides. Erdogan is an [avowed](#) anti-Semite; a 2015 ADL [survey](#) has shown that 71% of the population harbor anti-Semitic attitudes.
- On July 15-17, 2016, elements of the Turkish military attempted a coup against Erdogan. This coup failed, with [about](#) 250 Turks killed and another 2000 plus wounded. Since then, “[nearly](#) 160,000 people arrested during an 18-month state of emergency; 152,000 civil servants dismissed, many totally arbitrarily; teachers, judges and lawyers dismissed or prosecuted; journalists arrested, media outlets shut down and websites blocked – clearly the successive states of emergency declared in Turkey have been used to severely and arbitrarily curtail the human rights of a very large number of people.” Some people [have been tortured, including children](#). Almost 4000 members of the judiciary [have been](#) sacked. [More than 11,000 Kurdish teachers](#) were suspended for suspected links with the Kurdish armed group, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). More than 2,250 social, educational or health-care institutions and facilities [have been](#) seized. Turkey has [issued](#) a ban on professional travel for all academics and has [closed down 150 media organizations](#), including tv & radio stations, news agencies, magazines and newspapers. 4,262 business companies [have been shut](#).
- Erdogan [claimed](#) that “his people” believe the U.S. was behind the failed coup, and has [accused](#) the U.S. of standing by the plotters for its refusal to extradite Gulen. Turkish officials have [filed](#) a criminal complaint against 3 U.S. military officials for conspiring with the plotters. Erdogan also blamed two American critics of his, whom Turkish prosecutors [have issued](#) arrest warrants for, and placed bounties on.
- Erdogan [declared](#) a 3 month state of emergency and suspended the European Convention on Human Rights. This has since been made [permanent](#). The state of emergency grants the

president powers such as the ability to bypass parliament in enacting new laws and allows them to limit or suspend rights and freedoms. The [state of emergency](#) has been renewed six times since the failed coup.

- The U.S. has an air base at Incirlik, where NATO has nuclear weapons. After initial hesitancy, in 2015 Turkey [allowed](#) the U.S. to use it against ISIS, although [it has threatened](#) to kick the U.S. out for backing the Syrian Kurds. Post-2016 coup, to [pressure](#) the U.S., power was cut off for 6 days. Later, Turkish troops [surrounded](#) the base. Turkey [has given](#) Russia the go-ahead to use Incirlik for operations in Syria. While Germany, a NATO member ended its presence in Incirlik due to difficulties with Erdogan's government.
- Turkey is a problematic ally of the West. Anti-American sentiment [runs high](#), with a 2014 [Pew Center](#) poll showing only 19% of Turks have a favorable view of the U.S., and 73% of Turks dislike NATO. Both the government and the population often see the U.S. [behind](#) every crisis. Turkey [has arrested or threatened](#) Turks working in the U.S. Embassy. An Erdogan ally has [put a bounty](#) on American critics.
- During Erdogan's visits to the U.S., Turkish guards [attacked](#) Americans who were peacefully protesting him. In [one case](#), in DC, eight people were injured, and in reaction, several U.S. Congressmen denounced the attack. Reports suggested that Erdogan may have personally ordered the attacks and then watched the violence. The [State Department officially summoned Turkey's ambassador](#) in Washington to protest, and in turn Turkey's government summoned the U.S. ambassador to the Foreign Ministry to protest the "aggressive" action taken against the guards. Eventually, the Turkish guards [were charged](#) with their assaults.
- Turkey [has divulged](#) the locations of 10 U.S. military bases and outposts in Syria.
- Erdogan has jailed pro-Kurdish opposition presidential candidate [Selahattin Demirtas](#) accusing him of aiding "terrorists" and is currently running for president behind bars.

Updates:

- August 13, 2018- President Trump signs into law National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2019, which includes the halt of F-35 transfer to Turkey.
 - Department of Defense, under Secretary Jim Mattis will now have 90 days to generate a report on US-Turkish relations. Congress will decide on the transfer based on the report.

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