

DECONSTRUCTING THE TURKEY, US, NATO, RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP: WHAT NOW?

Turkish-US Relations are in crisis over Turkey's acquisition of the Russian S-400 missile system. Even though the US Congress reacted harshly to the S-400 acquisition, and Turkey was terminated from the US F-35 program, the US President and NATO Secretary General have been conciliatory. The US has not imposed sanctions against Turkey, and NATO's Secretary General made clear that Turkey's position in NATO is secure. Turkey, bristling at its termination from the F-35 program, needs to decide whether to remain a US ally and NATO member or deepen its relations with Russia beyond procuring the S-400. For Turkey to remain a major regional and global player, it must remain a steadfast ally of the US and member of the NATO alliance.

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As of this writing, Turkey-US Relations are in a state of utter confusion. At least for the short term, while it did appear that Turkey had weathered the storm resulting from its acquisition of the S-400 air and missile defense system from Russia, the situation now appears to be muddy and perhaps even ominous. Turkey even seemed to remain a solid member of NATO despite the procurement of the S-400 missile defense system, which has been described as a “Russian intelligence collection platform,”¹ its termination from the American F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, and the fact that the S-400 system is not inter-operable with NATO ordnance.² Although statements from the US Congress condemning Turkey for acquiring the S-400 were very harsh,³ the reactions from President Trump and the NATO Secretary General were quite conciliatory. President Trump, in effect, supported Turkey’s contention that it had to acquire the S-400 because the US wouldn’t sell Patriot missiles to Turkey, even going so far as blaming President Obama for failing to sell the Patriots to Turkey.⁴ The NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, minimized the impact of the S-400 acquisition from Russia and Turkey’s termination from the F-35 program by observing that “[t]he role of Turkey is much broader than the F-35 or S-400.”⁵ Stoltenberg commended Turkey for its contributions to NATO in helping defeat Daesh, making reference to the contingents of Turkish troops provided to different NATO missions and operations, including Kosovo and Afghanistan.⁶

The US Acting Defense Secretary, Patrick Shanahan, stated in a letter of 6 June 2019 to Turkey’s Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar, that “[w]hile we seek to maintain our valued relationship, Turkey will not receive the F-35 if Turkey takes

¹Statement by Ellen Lord, US Department of Defense Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. Transcript, 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, 17 July 2019.

²Turkey previously sought to acquire weaponry that was not inter-operable with NATO from a Chinese company, CP-MIEC. After receiving a great deal of criticism of the deal from the US and elsewhere, Turkey decided not to proceed with the Chinese transaction in 2015.

³H. Res. 372 (10 June 2019) condemned “[Turkey’s] stated decision to acquire the Russian S-400...which would endanger the integrity of the United States-Turkey alliance and undermine NATO...” and called “for full implementation of sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 if Turkey acquires the Russian S-400...system.” Congressman Eliot Engel, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee stated that “Either Mr. Erdogan cancels the Russian deal, or he doesn’t. And there is no future for Turkey having both Russian weapons and American F-35’s. There’s no path for mitigation that will allow Turkey to have its cake and eat it, too.” Quoted in Henry Foy, Laura Pitel, and Aime Williams, “Turkey Faces US Wrath As Russia Vows to Deliver Missile System,” *Financial Times*, 11 June 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/6f5f1984-8c53-11e9-a1c1-51bf8f989972>

⁴“Trump Says US Will Not Sell Turkey F-35 Fighters, Blames Obama,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 7 July 2019, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/trump-says-us-will-not-sell-turkey-f-35-fighters-blames-obama-145019>

⁵Servet Gunerigok, “Turkey’s Role Is Much Broader Than F-35: NATO Chief,” 18 July 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/energy-diplomacy/turkeys-role-much-broader-than-f-35-nato-chief/26091>

⁶Servet Gunerigok (2019).

delivery of the S-400.”⁷ In point of fact, the F-35 program has been terminated and Turkish pilot trainees have been ordered to leave the United States. This approach was completely in line with bipartisan⁸ statements in the House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, that the S-400 and F-35 could not co-exist at the same time because of the threat the S-400 posed to the F-35 stealth fighter.⁹

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The threat of sanctions by the United States also loomed large when Turkey acquired the S-400. Indeed, the US Acting Defense Secretary in his 6 June 2019 letter to Turkey’s Defense Minister Akar stated that “[t]here is strong bipartisan U.S. Congressional determination to see CAATSA sanctions imposed on Turkey if Turkey acquires the S-400.”¹⁰ The CAATSA statute, which provides the President to select five sanctions from a menu of twelve available sanctions, has provisions for waivers/postponements by the President for national security reasons. After much speculation as to whether the President would impose sanctions on a NATO ally, the issue appears to have been laid to rest, at least for the time being. The US State Department spokesperson at a press briefing stated as follows:

As it relates to CAATSA, there is no timetable in the legislation. We continue, of course, to talk to the Turks about this and to reiterate our concern. And so I don’t think that – we don’t have anything new to announce

⁷ C. Todd Lopez, “DOD Sets Date to Begin ‘Unwinding’ Turkey from F-35 Program,” *US Department of Defense*, 7 June 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/1870207/dod-sets-date-to-begin-unwinding-turkey-from-f-35-program/>

⁸ US House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, “Bipartisan House Leadership Calls on Turkey to Cancel Russian Weapons Purchase,” 15 May 2019; US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, “Bipartisan Leadership of Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees Condemn Turkey’s S-400 Acquisition,” 12 July 2019. The Senate statement included the following observation: “Turkey is an important NATO ally, and we hope that the strategic relationship between the United States and Turkey will overcome this setback.”

⁹ The Turkish leadership has argued that it urged “the formation of a commission to clarify any technical issues” related to the S-400 and F-35, but that the “U.S. failed to respond to this proposal;” “Turkish FM, US counterpart discuss F-35, S-400 by phone,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 20 July 2019, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-fm-us-counterpart-discuss-f-35-s-400-by-phone-145117>

¹⁰ C. Todd Lopez (2019). In particular, please note the sanctions under Section 231 of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanction’s Act (CAATSA) (P.L. 115-44).

today, but I would certainly point you to the President's comments last week about where we are in terms of the F-35 program. But nothing new to announce today on sanctions.¹¹

The spokesperson continued:

I think that, again, there is no timetable on the President making a decision with the consultation of the Secretary, and I want to give the President and the Secretary the space to do that. I think it's important to remember that Turkey is, of course, a NATO ally, and the actions that we've taken thus far are significant. And one of the things that we always do here at the State Department is we always try to preserve diplomacy; we always try to preserve relationships. Turkey has worked with us incredibly hard on the fight against ISIS in Syria, and they have many of their own accomplishments to point to there. So sanctioning a NATO ally is a very, very serious action, and when the President and the Secretary are ready to make a determination under CAATSA, I will be more than happy to tell you all of that.¹²

On 23 July 2019, Trump met with Republican senators at the White House to get their views on what the US should do in response to Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 system. It was reported that the President asked the Republican Senators for "flexibility" on the issue of sanctions against Turkey to allow the President "space to cut a deal with Erdogan instead of adopting sanctions."¹³ Thereafter, President Trump asked Senator Lindsay Graham to contact the Turkish Foreign Minister to ask Turkey not to activate the S-400 system. Senator Graham said that "I'm in the camp of, if they don't activate the S-400, the sanctions don't have to be applied... My pitch was, let's stand down on the S-400, let's start free trade agreement negotiations."¹⁴ In the same vein, Secretary of State Pompeo "urged Turkey not to make the S-400 missile defense system it purchased from Russia 'operational'" to avoid sanctions but warned that "[t]here could be more sanctions to follow but frankly we'd really like is for the S-400 not to become operational..."¹⁵

¹¹ Morgan Ortegus, "US Dept. of State, Press Briefing," 25 July 2019, <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-july-25-2019/>

¹² Morgan Ortegus (2019).

¹³ Carol Lee and Leigh Ann Caldwell et al., "Trump Asks GOP Senators For 'Flexibility' On Turkey Sanctions," *NBC News*, 24 July 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-asks-gop-senators-flexibility-turkey-sanctions-n1033571>

¹⁴ Katie Bo Williams, "Graham: I Told Turkey They Can Avoid Sanctions If They Don't Activate Russian Radar," *Defense One*, 25 July 2019, <https://www.defenseone.com/politics/2019/07/graham-trump-asked-me-call-turkey-s-400-deal/158706/>

¹⁵ Kevin Cirilli and Nick Waldhams, "Pompeo Urges Turkey Not to Make Russian S-400 Operational," *Bloomberg*, 25 July 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-07-25/pompeo-urges-turkey-not-to-make-russian-s-400-operational>

One might have thought that the situation had stabilized, and that Trump had kicked the ball down the road, but Turkey did not accept being terminated from the F-35 program, even though the American actions were intended to lower the temperature of the situation by separating the S-400 from the F-35. President Erdogan indicated that if Turkey did not get the US F-35's it would go elsewhere to meet its needs, stating: "Are you not going to give us the F-35's? Okay, then excuse us but we will once again have to take measures on that matter as well and we will turn elsewhere."¹⁶ President Erdogan even raised the possibility of cancelling Turkey's deal to buy 100 advanced US Boeing aircrafts,¹⁷ portending as a real possibility that Turkey's acquisition of Russian jets could substitute for the American F-35's.¹⁸

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Analysis

The following observations utilize a few well-known expressions and insights:

1. *“All Politics is Local.”*¹⁹ Let's assume that if Trump waives/postpones the imposition of sanctions until 2020, we will be arriving at the height of a US Presidential election. Trump will not be inclined to precipitate a conflict with Turkey, as the focus will be on domestic policy issues such as jobs and health care rather than foreign policy. Furthermore, the pressure from Congress for the imposition of sanctions against Turkey, even if Turkey makes the S-400 operational, will likely come from the Democratic Party-controlled House of Representatives which is seriously considering impeachment of the President (a road to nowhere, given that the Republican

¹⁶ Cem Oksuz, "Erdogan Says Turkey to Turn Elsewhere if U.S. will not sell F-35's," *Reuters*, 26 July 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa/erdogan-says-turkey-to-turn-elsewhere-if-u-s-will-not-sell-f-35s-idUSKCN1UL11H>

¹⁷ Cem Oksuz (2019).

¹⁸ Turkey's Foreign Minister was quoted as telling NTV that "If the F-35s don't work out, I will again have to procure the jets from elsewhere. There are (Russian) Su-34, Su-57 and others. I will absolutely meet my needs from somewhere until I can produce it myself;" Tuvan Gumrukcu, "Turkey Says It Will Look Elsewhere if US Won't Sell Patriots, F-35s," *Reuters*, 10 April 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa/turkey-says-it-will-look-elsewhere-if-u-s-wont-sell-patriots-f-35s-idUSKCN1RM0D2>; Aaron Stein, "The Day After S-400: The Turkish-American Relationship Will Get Worse," *War on the Rocks*, 23 May 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/05/the-day-after-s-400-the-turkish-american-relationship-will-get-worse/>

¹⁹ Tip O'Neill and Thomas O'Neill et al., *All Politics Is Local: And Other Rules of the Game* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993). Tip O'Neill was the Speaker of the US House of Representatives.

majority in the Senate will not convict the President in an election year even if the House impeaches; Speaker of the House Pelosi has opposed such an action by the House). It is doubtful that the President, who is in a mortal battle with the House of Representatives, will pay attention to the likely outcry from the Democrats in the House if the President does not issue harsh sanctions against Turkey. Finally, as far as CAATSA sanctions are concerned, when Trump signed the CAATSA sanctions bill into law, he also penned a signing statement in which he indicated his unhappiness with the law, stating that the CAATSA law “encroaches on the executive branch’s authority to negotiate” and “makes it harder for the United States to strike good deals for the American people...”²⁰ Add to that the fact that Turkey is a member of NATO, and it is questionable whether CAATSA was intended to sanction a NATO ally such as Turkey.

2. “*We must always look forward, but we have to understand our history in order to not repeat the mistakes of the past.*”²¹ Even if there have been bumps in the Turkish-US relationship, the alliance has been beneficial to both parties. It would behoove Turkey to recall the historical events that have shaped the Turkey of today, including the Truman Doctrine, in which the US saved Turkey from Soviet aggression, and the fact that Turkey has excelled as a regional and world player principally as a result of its alliance with the US and active participation in NATO, playing a key role in significant NATO actions and initiatives. Also, a candid reflection on history would show that the Turkish-Russian interaction has for the most part been injurious to Turkey, including Russian pressure on the Bosphorus Strait, which resulted in the Montreux Convention,²² and the fact that Russia and Turkey have fought 17 major wars in their history.²³ Indeed, “Turkey’s decision to enter NATO in the 20th century was driven by its fear of Russia. In 1946, Stalin demanded territory from Ankara. Seeing this as the return of historic Russian aggression, Turkey pivoted to the United States, entering NATO in 1952. In addition, as recently as 2015, Turkey shot down a Russian jet in connection with the civil war in Syria, where Ankara and Moscow have backed opposing forces.”²⁴ We must, however, recognize

²⁰ Statement by President Donald J. Trump when signing the Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, Issued 2 August 2017.

²¹ Winston Churchill

²² A possible flashpoint which will impact Turkish-Russian relations and the region in general is the Istanbul Canal Project which would bypass the Bosphorus and not be covered by the Montreux Convention. See “Canal Project to Bypass Bosphorus May Trigger Arms Race,” *Ahval News*, 4 June 2018, <https://ahvalnews.com/canal-istanbul/canal-project-bypass-bosphorus-may-trigger-arms-race>

²³ Soner Cagaptay and Andy Taylor, “Turkey and Russia Are Not Friends Despite Appearances,” *The Hill*, 6 June 2019, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/448485-turkey-and-russia-are-not-friends-despite-appearances>; “Between the 17th and 20th Centuries, the Ottoman and Russian empires were deadly rivals. Until the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, Turks and Russians fought 17 major wars, which the Turks overall lost.” Cagaptay and Taylor (2019).

²⁴ Cagaptay and Taylor (2019). Also note that when Turkey shot down the Russian jet, Putin described this action by Turkey as “a stab in the back delivered by the accomplices of terrorists;” Pavel Baev and Kemal Kirisci, “An Ambiguous Partnership. The Serpentine Trajectory of Turkish-Russian Relations in the Era of Erdogan and Putin,” *Brookings*, Turkey Project Policy Paper, Number 13, September 2017.

Turkey's vulnerabilities to Russia in terms of energy dependence²⁵ and the need to have Russia's support to work on a solution to the Syria crisis. Commentators observed that "[i]n Syria, where Erdogan has backed rebels to oust the Moscow-allied Assad regime, Putin can deal the Turks their 18th defeat by Russia. A Russian-led onslaught against rebel-held Idlib province, home to three million people, would trigger a massive wave of refugees towards Turkey overwhelming Ankara ... Putin can halt Russian tourism ... [and] threaten energy supplies to Turkey ... So, no, Turkey and Russia are not allies or friends."²⁶

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3. *Be Careful What You Wish For (Chinese Proverb)*. Turkey, is proceeding down a very slippery slope by asserting its independence from the US and NATO and obtaining weaponry from Russia. At the present time, the situation concerning the S-400 appears to be stabilizing to some extent. Turkey risks a precipitous break with the US and NATO if it operates the S-400, and/or acquires the S-500 system, and/or acquires Russian jets to substitute for the F-35. Turkey is effectively getting a pass on the S-400 for the time being because of the non-conflictual positions taken by President Trump and the NATO Secretary General. However, going to the next step to advanced Russian weaponry may lead to a break with NATO and the United States and possibly to the imposition of harsh sanctions, which could lead to counter-sanctions by Turkey, including the exclusion of the US and NATO from Incirlik.

4. *“Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose” (The more things change the more they remain the same)*. We've been down this road before following the Turkish incursion into Cyprus in 1974 to assist the Turkish Cypriots. The US Congress implemented an arms embargo and Turkey retaliated by not allowing the US to use various Turkish military bases. The irony of all this is that in 1974 (as in the present), the domestic political atmosphere in the US was impeachment; Nixon had resigned after having been threatened with impeachment, and Ford succeeded to the Presidency. The arms embargo lasted from 1975 to 1978. President Carter

²⁵ Attention should also be paid to the Turk Stream project which will transport Russian gas to Turkey. Russian gas will be carried via a pipeline under the Black Sea bypassing Ukraine and onward through Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary; Emre Gurkan Abay, “Putin Praises Turkey-Russia Cooperation on TurkStream,” *Anadolu Agency*, 8 June 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/putin-praises-turkey-russia-cooperation-on-turkstream/1498714>

²⁶ Cagaptay and Taylor (2019).

committed to ending the arms embargo and Congress lifted it in 1979. Thereafter, Turkey and the US negotiated the US Turkish Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA). All this time Turkey was a NATO member. The current irony is that the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, while moving to block Turkey's acquisition of the F-35, has recently authorized arms sales to the Republic of Cyprus.²⁷ Paradoxically, Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are now in conflict with Greece, Israel, Egypt, and the Republic of Cyprus over drilling for energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean²⁸ (with the EU threatening sanctions against Turkey – another irony – Turkey has for years sought to become an EU member without success, yet the Republic of Cyprus succeeded in becoming member of the EU).

5. “*Zararın neresinden dönülse kardır*” (*Turkish Proverb- It is a profit at whatever point you reverse your loss*). The proverb is used to point out that best action is to reverse course of action, if one is going down the wrong path.²⁹ At some point, Turkey needs to take a holistic perspective and recognize the volatility of the situation. We are at a point of some homeostasis, but this will not last long if Turkey opts to put its fate in the hands of Russia. Another irony is that while it is true that:

[B]y loosening the bonds between Turkey and its allies, Russia has struck a blow against the Western alliance, opened the door to more lucrative deals (Russia is building a nuclear power plant for Turkey) and raised its profile in the Middle East...[y]et Turkey's comfort working with Russia also reflects the diminution of Russian power. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Russia helped drive the Turks from southern Ukraine and Russia as well as the Caucasus and the Balkans. Stalin's threats to Turkey after World War II pushed the country into NATO. If Turkey can now cooperate with Russia, that is because it is much less dangerous than imperial Russia or the Soviet Union. This reflects NATO's success in the Cold War.³⁰

Turkey needs to understand that jumping on the Russian bandwagon is a risky undertaking and would likely diminish Turkey's regional and global standing. While

²⁷ Aaron Mehta, “Senate Moves to Allow Weapon Sales to Cyprus, block F-35 to Turkey,” *Defense News*, 26 June 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/06/26/senate-takes-step-to-allow-weapon-sales-to-cyprus-block-f-35-to-turkey/>

²⁸ Khaled Kesseba and Konstantinos Lagos, “Five Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Are Shaking Up Europe's Energy Map,” *The Conversation*, 18 July 2019, <http://theconversation.com/five-countries-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-are-shaking-up-europes-energy-map-119619>; Yoruk Isik, “Turkey To Send Fourth Ship to Eastern Mediterranean: Energy Minister,” *Reuters*, 16 July 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-turkey-ship/turkey-to-send-fourth-ship-to-eastern-mediterranean-energy-minister-idUSKCN1UB1G2>

²⁹ Turkish Cultural Foundation, “Turkish Proverbs,” <http://www.turkishculture.org/literature/literature/turkish-proverbs-133.htm?type=1>

³⁰ Walter Russell Mead, “Don't Let Turkey Defect to Russia,” *Wall Street Journal Opinion*, 15 July 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/dont-let-turkey-defect-to-russia-11563232042>

it is probably true that “the world is bigger than five,”³¹ the key players for Turkey are the US and Russia, and the fact remains that the United States is still the steadfast ally of Turkey, while a Russian alliance remains risky and uncertain. It is also worth considering that Turkey’s “pivot to Russia has not prevented Moscow from helping Bashar Assad tighten his grip on the last rebel-controlled province in Syria; another million refugees could flow into Turkey at any time.”³² At the end of the day, “Turkey and the West do best when they work together.”³³ Further, “Turkey and Russia Are Not Friends Despite Appearances.”³⁴

6. *“Two Roads Diverged In a Yellow Wood, And Sorry I Could Not Travel Both...”*³⁵ Here lies the existential choice that Turkey must make – to repudiate its relationship with the US and NATO or become an ally of Russia, which is working hard to undermine the US and its NATO allies. We don’t want to be in the position of having to evaluate ‘Who Lost Turkey?’³⁶ Before it is too late, Turkey needs to take a few steps back and consider what its next decisions will be. Turkey’s problems are redoubtable to be sure, but the Russian connection is not a panacea and is more likely a threat to Turkey’s regional position and stability. The US and NATO have been making great efforts to work with Turkey, as evidenced by the response of President Trump and the NATO³⁷ Secretary General to Turkey’s acquisition of the S-400.

In the long-term, there has to be a better way to manage the Turkey-US bilateral relationship, rather than jolting from crisis to crisis. At the present time however, it is incumbent on the US, Turkey and NATO, to reach a rapprochement and

³¹ President Erdogan has used this expression on a number of occasions including in a speech at the United Nations. “Our Motto ‘The World is Bigger Than Five,’ is the Biggest-Ever Rise Against Global Injustice,” *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 1 October 2018, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/89052/our-motto-the-world-is-bigger-than-five-is-the-biggest-ever-rise-against-global-injustice>

³² Mead (2019).

³³ Mead (2019).

³⁴ Cagaptay and Taylor (2019). In Cagaptay and Taylor’s article in *The Hill*, it is pointed out that: “Frequent meetings between Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Turkey’s growing defense ties with Russia, leave the impression that Ankara is becoming a Moscow ally. The truth is that Ankara feels threatened by its massive neighbor to the north.”

³⁵ Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken,” *Mountain Interval*, 1916.

³⁶ An expression used in foreign policy analysis in the same vein as the great debate over ‘Who Lost China?’ the “attempt to assign responsibility for the fall of the Nationalist regime to the Communists;” Gary Alan Fine and Bin Xu, “Honest Brokers: The Politics of Expertise in the ‘Who Lost China?’ Debate,” November 2011, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259732850_Honest_Brokers_The_Politics_of_Expertise_in_the_Who_Lost_China_Debate; Keith Johnson and Robbie Gramer, “Who Lost Turkey?” July 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/19/who-lost-turkey-middle-east-s-400-missile-deal-russia-syria-iraq-kurdish-united-states-nato-alliance-partners-allies-adversaries/>.

³⁷ Turkey’s membership in NATO could be indispensable to Turkey’s future security. Turkey previously invoked Article 4, demanding emergency consultations, in connection with the downing of a Turkish warplane related to the civil war in Syria. The collective security provision of the NATO alliance, Article 5, has been invoked only once, in connection with 9/11 attack on the United States. Could there conceivably be a situation where Turkey might wish to invoke Article 5 and rely on the collective security apparatus of NATO? See Michael Moran, “Turkey’s Article 5 Argument Finds No Takers,” 24 February 2016, <https://www.camegie.org/news/articles/turkeys-article-5-argument-finds-no-takers/>

understanding on the immediate issues to avoid a cataclysm.³⁸ The future of the region and the world depend on this.

³⁸ In addition to the issues related to S-400 and F-35 discussed here, the situation in Syria appears to be at a crisis point, with the US military openly working with the Syrian Kurdish YPG. Turkey's view is that the YPG is affiliated with the PKK, an organization on the US State Department's terrorist list. The Turkish leadership is frustrated that the US does not seem to grasp the connection between the YPG and PKK. In the Turkish press it was noted that (now outgoing) Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats indicated in a report that the People's Protection Units (YPG) are "the Syrian militia" of the PKK. "YPG 'Syrian Militia' of PKK, likely to seek autonomy in Syria, US Intel Chief Says," *Daily Sabah*, 14 February 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/02/14/ypg-syrian-militia-of-pkk-likely-to-seek-autonomy-in-syria-us-intel-chief-says>. Immediate action must be taken by the United States to resolve this situation. It was also highlighted in the Turkish press that US General Kenneth McKenzie met with a top YPG commander in Syria. "US CENTCOM General, Envoy Meet with Top YPG Terrorist In Syria." Much to the consternation of Turkish observers, these meetings between the US military and the YPG occurred almost simultaneously with US Special Envoy for Syria Engagement James Jeffrey's negotiations with the Turkish Government in Ankara. We are on the brink of disaster if this issue is not resolved. Further, "to encourage Turkey to remain a reliable NATO ally, the U.S. leadership needs to demonstrate that it takes Turkey's security interests seriously, particularly in Syria." Baev and Kirisci (2017).