

# Sample Negative Brief

## NEG: Don't Impose Global Magnitsky Act Sanctions on Turkey

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## Strategy Notes

The Affirmative team is trying to solve two problems: wrongful detainments of U.S. citizens in Turkey and Turkey's use of hostage diplomacy with those detainees. While this brief supplies evidence for a number of arguments, the big picture involves these main arguments:

1. **IS THERE A PROBLEM?** (Significance) This is not a significant harm, nor is solving it a significant reform. Affirmative evidence says only 2 U.S. citizens are being wrongfully detained. Targeting our ally Turkey with sanctions is not worth the slew of disadvantages this plan will bring.
2. **WILL THE PLAN FIX IT?** (Solvency) The plan is not likely to get those 2 U.S. citizens released, and even if it can, it can't guarantee any long-term change in behavior on Turkey's part. To get more specific:
  - a. GMA sanctions are difficult to enforce because sanctioned individuals can move their financial assets to other countries.
  - b. The release of Pastor Brunson had multiple other moving parts at play, including tariffs, behind-the-scenes action and diplomacy, and a particularly bad economic season for Turkey. Since the affirmative team isn't recreating these conditions, solving the problem is doubtful.
  - c. Other high-profile wrongful detainees in Turkey were released through other means. This means that GMA sanctions are not necessarily the best tool for the job.
  - d. The affirmative team can't solve the root of the problem with GMA sanctions. If wrongful detainments are still occurring even after the successful release of Brunson, that means the only success the affirmative team can hope for is the release of any current detainees without any long-term change in behavior from Turkey.
3. **IS IT WORTH IT?** (Disadvantages) The implementation of GMA Sanctions on Turkish officials in 2018 made US-Turkey relations very rocky. Turkey has repeatedly threatened to look for allies elsewhere, specifically with U.S. enemies like Russia, China, and Iran – and there's evidence that it's already doing so. Applying these sanctions yet again is likely to be received by Turkey even worse than the first time, which will only threaten U.S. national security and interests.

## Openers/Closers

### I. U.S. Should Slow Escalations, not Instigate

By Max Hoffman (associate director of National Security and International Policy at American Progress, focusing on Turkey and the Kurdish regions; U.S. defense policy; and the intersection of climate change, human migration, and security concerns. He has organized and undertaken repeated research trips to Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Germany, and India. Prior to joining American Progress, Hoffman worked on disarmament and security issues for the United Nations and the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee. Hoffman has been published in a range of academic and news outlets. He received his M.A. in history from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland). "Flashpoints in U.S.-Turkey Relations in 2021." Published by The Heinrich Böll Foundation (non-profit organization that is part of the global green movement. The foundation is based in Berlin, Germany, and has a network of over 30 offices around the world. It advances political and socioeconomic transformations through civic engagement and political dialogue. The Washington, DC office, in line with the foundation's guiding principles and values, works to strengthen civil liberties, human rights, and democratic institutions.) on February 1, 2021. Accessed 02/10/26  
<https://us.boell.org/en/2021/02/01/flashpoints-us-turkey-relations-2021>

"Beyond attempting deterrence, the United States should engage in firm transactionalism with Turkey, seeking to slow escalatory cycles that cannot be stopped, bureaucratize what have too often been emotional public disputes, and compartmentalize among the many discrete disagreements the countries face. Taken together, the goal should be to put the relationship with Turkey on ice—preserving institutional ties where possible—in the hope that relations can be more meaningfully revived in the future. While some aspects of current Turkish policy might continue under potential Turkish successor governments, most of the likely alternative domestic political coalitions point to a softened stance, and Erdoğan's particular brand of aggressive unilateralism could fade. American and European leaders should understand that there is every possibility this approach will fail to rein in Erdoğan; he is likely to escalate on multiple fronts in the run-up to his reelection campaign. The United States should prepare by building partnerships in Europe to multiply leverage, by drawing red lines, and by proactively establishing lines of communication and deconfliction so that this escalation does not come as a surprise."

**Impact:** According to an International Relations expert, the US should seek to avoid escalatory cycles to preserve institutional ties and patiently wait for an opportune time to revive relations. The Affirmative team's plan, however, would do the opposite of this recommendation.

## 2. Sanctions will harm U.S. Reputation in Turkey

By Max Hoffman (associate director of National Security and International Policy at American

Progress, focusing on Turkey and the Kurdish regions; U.S. defense policy; and the intersection of climate change, human migration, and security concerns. He has organized and undertaken repeated research trips to Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Germany, and India. Prior to joining American Progress, Hoffman worked on disarmament and security issues for the United Nations and the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee. Hoffman has been published in a range of academic and news outlets. He received his M.A. in history from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland). **“Flashpoints in U.S.-Turkey Relations in 2021.” Published by The Heinrich Böll Foundation** (non-profit organization that is part of the global green movement. The foundation is based in Berlin, Germany, and has a network of over 30 offices around the world. It advances political and socioeconomic transformations through civic engagement and political dialogue. The Washington, DC office, in line with the foundation’s guiding principles and values, works to strengthen civil liberties, human rights, and democratic institutions.) on February 1, 2021. Accessed 02/10/26 <https://us.boell.org/en/2021/02/01/flashpoints-us-turkey-relations-2021>

**“At a minimum, the West can be sure that Erdoğan will spin any punitive steps into a story of imperialist aggression and Turkish resistance,** as well as fodder to blame the West for Turkey’s self-inflicted economic woes. The political potency of this prickly sovereignty—hardly limited to Anatolia—has made many officials in the West wary of providing a tool for Erdoğan to rally nationalist support. **Neither the United States nor the European Union (EU) can save Turkey from Erdoğan; he has shown himself to be defiant in the face of all external criticism.** Turkey’s democracy is on life support because of Erdoğan, not the West—and only Turks can reinvigorate their democracy. Still, the Biden administration should revive U.S. rhetorical and material support for human rights and civil society activists in Turkey. President Erdoğan should not enjoy complete impunity for his domestic actions, and Western responses should at least enter his calculus, even if they do not change it. Given the constraints outlined above, **the United States should opt less for punitive tools, such as sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act, and focus more on constructive tools, such as support for civil society, reinvestment in public diplomacy, and a rhetorical shift to support for universal rights** from the narrower religious concerns of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and President Trump.”

**Impact:** Turkey can spin the affirmative team’s plan as US aggression and control over Turkey and simply remain defiant. Instead of using punitive tools like sanctions, the US should focus on tools to rebuild trust if it wants Turkey to change its behavior.

# Inherency (Defense of Status Quo)

## 3. New EO Already Authorizes Sanctions

According to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in a press statement issued September 5, 2025, (Marco Rubio is an American politician, attorney, and diplomat serving as the 72nd United States secretary of state since 2025. A member of the Republican Party, he represented Florida in the U.S. Senate from 2011 to 2025. Rubio is also the acting national security advisor.) “Executive Order – Strengthening Efforts to Protect U.S. Nationals from Wrongful Detention Abroad,” State.gov Press Release (Accessed February 9, 2026) <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/09/executive-order-strengthening-efforts-to-protect-u-s-nationals-from-wrongful-detention-abroad>

“Today, President Trump signed an Executive Order that takes unprecedented action to impose new consequences on those who wrongfully detain Americans abroad. Through this Executive Order, actors designated as State Sponsors of Wrongful Detention may face severe penalties including economic sanctions, visa restrictions, foreign assistance restrictions, and travel restrictions for U.S. passport holders. Like the State Sponsor of Terrorism determination, no nation should want to end up on this list.”

## 4. Link: The Secretary of State Can Impose Sanctions

According to the text of the Executive Order, titled “Strengthening Efforts to Protect U.S. Nationals from Wrongful Detention Abroad,” September 5, 2025, (WhiteHouse.gov is the official website of the White House, serving as a digital platform for the executive branch of the U.S. federal government. The site provides updates on the residence and history of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C., and has historically conveyed presidential messages.) “Strengthening Efforts to Protect U.S. Nationals from Wrongful Detention Abroad,” White House.gov (Accessed February 9, 2026) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/strengthening-efforts-to-protect-u-s-nationals-from-wrongful-detention-abroad/>

“Sec. 2. Designation. The Secretary of State may designate any foreign country the government of which directly engages in or provides support for the wrongful detention of a U.S. national as a State Sponsor of Wrongful Detention based on one or more of the following criteria: (a) the wrongful detention of a U.S. national occurs in the foreign country (b) the government of the foreign country has failed to release a wrongfully detained U.S. national after having been notified by the United States that the detention has been determined wrongful by the Secretary of State; or (c) actions taken by the government of the foreign country indicate, based on the totality of the circumstances: (i) that the government is responsible for, complicit in, or materially supports the wrongful detention of a U.S. national; or (ii) a pattern in which the government is responsible for, complicit in, or materially supports the unjust or unlawful detention of third country nationals in which cases the United States has a national interest, using criteria similar to those used by the Department of State in wrongful detention determinations. Sec. 3. Responses. Upon designation of a foreign country as a State Sponsor of Wrongful Detention under section 2 of this order, the Secretary of State shall review existing authorities to respond to and deter the actions of a government of a foreign country as outlined in section 2 of this order and take steps to implement the following actions, as appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, including the Levinson Act, including: (a) imposing sanctions available under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)”

**Impact:** The executive branch already has the power to impose sanctions on Turkey; the Secretary of State has been explicitly directed to look into cases of wrongful detention. This is already being handled. Moreover, if the Secretary of State hasn't put sanctions on Turkey yet; there is likely a good reason for that.

# Significance

## 5. Unknown Number of American Detainees in Turkey

Dan Gooding, reporting for Newsweek on June 2, 2025, explained that, (Newsweek is an American weekly news magazine based in New York City. Founded as a weekly print magazine in 1933, it was widely distributed during the 20th century and has had many notable editors-in-chief. Dan Gooding is a Newsweek reporter based in New York City. His focus is reporting on immigration and border security. He has covered immigration issues extensively, including the root causes of migration to the U.S., its impact on border communities and responses around the country. Dan joined Newsweek in 2024 from The Independent and previously worked at The Messenger, Business Insider and in U.K. local radio. He is a graduate of De Montfort University in Leicester, UK.) Newsweek, “Map Shows Where Americans Are Being Detained Overseas,” (Accessed January 27, 2026) <https://www.newsweek.com/american-citizens-wrongfully-detained-exit-bans-state-department-2079032>

“Now we know the U.S. government doesn't publicly put out any numbers, and when we say 43 Americans, we count exit bans in our numbers,' Richards said. 'Our understanding is the U.S. government currently doesn't count exit bans as wrongful detentions, though we think that might be evolving, and we would hope that the U.S. government would eventually treat exit bans as any other type of wrongful detention.' Exit bans stop people from leaving the country they are in, though they are not held in a prison or jail. The Foley Foundation estimated that around a quarter of Americans wrongfully held last year were subjected to such orders. A spokesperson for the State Department told Newsweek that the department does not provide specific numbers on wrongful detentions due to privacy, security and other reasons.”

## 6. Link: Only a “Small Number” Left Almost 10 Years Ago

Journalist Eli Okun, reporting for Politico, noted on December 29, 2018, (Politico is an American political digital newspaper company founded by American banker and media executive Robert Allbritton in 2007. It covers politics and policy in the United States and internationally, with publications dedicated to politics in the U.S., European Union, United Kingdom, and Canada, among others. Primarily providing distributed news, analysis and opinion online, it also produces printed newspapers, radio, and podcasts. Eli Okun is a Playbook reporter at POLITICO, contributing to the flagship morning newsletter and co-authoring Playbook PM. His newsletters encompass a wide range of politics and policy daily, from the White House to Congress to campaigns. He's also written articles about foreign policy. Before joining POLITICO in 2017 as a web producer and copy editor, he worked as a reporter for the New Hampshire Union Leader, covering local news and presidential politics. A Maryland native, he graduated from Brown University, where he studied international relations and was editor-in-chief of The Brown Daily Herald.) Politico, “He's still in prison: Trump lifts Turkey sanctions but Americans remain detained,” (Accessed January 16, 2026) <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/12/29/trump-lifts-turkey-sanctions-americans-detained-1076618>

“A State Department spokesperson, who confirmed that a ‘small number’ of U.S. citizens are still detained in Turkey, said, ‘We continue to raise these cases at the highest levels of our diplomatic conversations.’ But, the spokesperson added, ‘we will not forecast any possible future sanctions actions.’ The identities of the other U.S. citizens detained in Turkey have not been made public.”

**Impact:** Even almost a decade ago, this was a very small problem and since then, many of that “small number” have been released, making it even less significant.

## 7. Link: All Publicly-Known Cases Released

### 7a. Golge Released

The New York Times reported on June 30, 2020, (The New York Times is a newspaper based in Manhattan, New York City. The New York Times covers domestic, national, and international news, and publishes opinion pieces and reviews. As one of the longest-running newspapers in the United States, the Times serves as one of the country's newspapers of record.) **New York Times, "NASA Scientist, Detained in Turkey for Years, Returns to U.S.,"** (Accessed February 9, 2026) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/30/world/europe/turkey-golge-release-gulen.html>

"ISTANBUL – An American NASA scientist returned with his family to the United States early Tuesday morning after nearly four years of imprisonment and house arrest in Turkey, and more than seven months after President Trump said he had secured an agreement for his release. The scientist, Serkan Golge, arrived in Washington on a commercial flight shortly after midnight, ending a tortuous journey for him and his family, who had become caught up in increasingly fraught Turkish-American relations."

### 7b. All 3 Consulate Workers Released

According to Reuters on November 27, 2023, (Reuters is a British news agency owned by Thomson Reuters. It employs around 2,500 journalists and 600 photojournalists in about 200 locations worldwide writing in 16 languages. Reuters is one of the largest news agencies in the world.) **Reuters, "Turkey frees U.S. consulate employee whose jailing strained ties -Bloomberg,"** (Accessed February 9, 2026) <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-frees-us-consulate-employee-whose-jailing-strained-ties-bloomberg-2023-11-27/>

"ISTANBUL, Nov 27 (Reuters) - A Turkish former employee of the U.S. consulate in Istanbul was recently released from prison. Bloomberg News said on Monday, three years after he was convicted of aiding a terrorist organisation in a case that strained bilateral ties. A Turkish court sentenced the employee, Metin Topuz, to eight years and nine months in jail in June 2020. It was one of a series of developments that put the NATO allies at odds in recent years.

Later, the same article goes on to say:

"A Turkish court also sentenced another U.S. consulate employee in October 2020 to five years in jail for aiding the same network. A third U.S. consulate worker previously served two years in jail on terrorism charges."













**Impact:** All of the publicly-known individuals arrested by Turkey in 2016 have already been released. Can the affirmative name a single American currently being held hostage?

## 8. Link: How Many Out of 33,000?

In 2026, the World Population Review estimated that there were 33,577 Americans living in

Turkey as of 2024, (Founded in 2011 by Shane Fulmer, World Population Review is a website dedicated to global population data and trends. According to their about page, they state “Most demographic data is hidden in spreadsheets, behind complex APIs, or inside cumbersome tools. World Population Review’s goal is to make this data more accessible through graphs, charts, analysis, and visualizations.” They further report, “World Population Review is an independent organization without any political affiliations.”) World Population Review, “American Expats by Country 2026,” (Accessed February 22, 2026) <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/american-expats-by-country>

2024 ▾

COUNTRY	TOTAL EXPATS 2024 ↓	FEMALE EXPATS 2024	MALE EXPATS 2024	% OF US EXPATS 2024
 South Korea	53,226	34,015	19,211	1.68%
 Thailand	52,400	12,932	39,468	1.65%
 Italy	50,957	28,652	22,305	1.6%
 Netherlands	43,208	22,936	20,272	1.36%
 Switzerland	42,809	22,138	20,671	1.35%
 Ireland	36,363	20,545	15,818	1.14%
 Turkey	33,577	16,689	16,888	1.06%
 New Zealand	32,863	17,611	15,252	1.03%
 Poland	29,646	14,660	14,986	0.93%
 Brazil	27,764	12,140	15,624	0.87%
 Singapore	26,705	12,486	14,219	0.84%
 Sweden	26,172	12,614	13,558	0.82%

**Impact:** Out of 33,577 Americans living in Turkey, the affirmative team’s evidence suggests that only 2 are being held hostage. That is a fraction of a fraction – hardly the significant problem that the affirmative team claims.

# Solvency

## GMA Sanctions Difficult to Enforce

### 9. Link: GMA Sanctions Known to Be Bypassed

On May 3, 2025, Connor Henderson, the Executive Editor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School's Regulatory Review, along with Associate Editors Matthew Spero and Gloria Lyu, wrote, (Affiliated with the Penn Program on Regulation and housed at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, The Regulatory Review is the online source of regulatory news, analysis, and opinion. Every weekday throughout the entire year, The Regulatory Review publishes incisive, timely, and original content running the complete gamut of regulatory issues. Staffed by students from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, The Regulatory Review features work contributed by staff members, scholars, judges, attorneys, and others interested in regulatory developments. Connor Henderson is an Executive Editor at the Regulatory Review and a JD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Connor completed his BSc degree at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, where he studied social inequality in the United States and around the world. After graduation, he was a counselor at a Title 1 neighborhood school in Hartford, Connecticut. Connor then completed his MEd degree as part of the Critical Studies of Race, Class, and Gender cluster at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focused on the role of culture in the reproduction of social inequities through education. Matthew Spero is an Associate Editor at the Regulatory Review and the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law. He is a JD candidate and Research Assistant at UPenn Law. He received his Masters of Science in Biomedical Engineering at Yale University in 2021. Gloria Lyu is the Executive Editor of the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law and Associate Editor at the Regulatory Review. In the summer of 2024, she interned at the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania. She has been a student at UPenn Law since transferring from Yale Law School in 2023. She is also the Vice President of the Information and Technology Society at UPenn Law.) The Regulatory Review, "Magnitsky Sanctions and Global Accountability," (Accessed February 19, 2026) <https://www.theregreview.org/2025/05/03/seminar-magnitsky-sanctions-and-global-accountability/>

"Magnitsky sanctions have also been applied to Taliban-linked figures in Afghanistan, corrupt high-level officials in Bulgaria and Paraguay, and individuals accused of extrajudicial killings in Haiti. In 2016, the U.S. Congress enacted the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, allowing sanctions against individuals worldwide for human rights abuses and corruption. Since then, numerous other countries and international bodies, such as the European Union, have adopted similar legal frameworks. Enforcement, however, remains a challenge. Some scholars have argued that sanctions may inadvertently exacerbate the violation of human rights. Sanctioned individuals have been known to use offshore accounts, shell companies, and alternative financial systems to bypass restrictions."

### 10. Link: GMA Sanctions Need Countries to Work Together

Article announcing a joint report on Magnitsky Sanctions, "Multilateral Magnitsky Sanctions at Five Years." The report was authored by Human Rights First (independent, non-profit, non-partisan human rights and advocacy organization founded in 1978), Open Society Foundations (one of the world's largest private grantmaking networks dedicated to promoting democracy, human rights, justice, and equality), Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (international consortium of parliamentarians, scholars, jurists, human rights defenders, NGOs, and students united in the pursuit of justice), and REDRESS. Online article published by REDRESS (an international human rights organization and one of the authors of the report, headquartered in London with offices in The Hague, that works to secure justice and reparation for torture survivors. Founded in 1992, it uses strategic litigation, legal advocacy, and partnerships to hold governments and perpetrators accountable, aiming to restore dignity to victims and prevent future torture) November 15, 2022. Accessed 02/25/26 <https://redress.org/news/new-report-details-gaps-in-multilateral-use-of-magnitsky-sanctions/>

"Rupert Skilbeck, Director at REDRESS, said: 'Targeted sanctions can play an important role in providing a measure of justice for victims of torture and other human rights violations. The key to effective sanctions regimes is for countries to work together, share information, and consistently impose co-ordinated sanctions. This report highlights where countries, including the UK, sometimes fall short in this coordination and where they can improve their use of Magnitsky Sanctions to provide accountability for human rights violations and corruption around the world."

Later, in the same context:

“The report recommends the U.S., Canada, UK, and EU work to strengthen the use of their respective Magnitsky-style sanctions programs and better coordinate their responses to human rights abuses and corruption:

- Improve multilateral use of these sanctions tools. Only 11% of Magnitsky targets have been sanctioned by more than one jurisdiction under a Magnitsky program. While some of this gap is covered by other sanctions programs, all jurisdictions are missing opportunities to align their human rights and anti-corruption sanctions to ensure the greatest impact on perpetrators.”

**Impact:** Without the coordination of multiple countries to enact the sanctions, the targeted officials can either move their US-based assets to other countries or simply continue to enjoy the fruits of their untargeted assets regardless of the GMA sanctions. GMA sanctions achieve the best results when there is multilateral coordination.

## **11. Tariffs Pressured Turkey to Release Brunson**

By Humeyra Pamuk (senior foreign policy correspondent based in Washington DC. She covers the U.S. State Department, regularly traveling with the U.S. Secretary of State. During her 20 years with Reuters, she has had postings in London, Dubai, Cairo and Turkey, covering everything from the Arab Spring and Syria's civil war to numerous Turkish elections and the Kurdish insurgency in the southeast. In 2017, she won the Knight-Bagehot fellowship program at Columbia University's School of Journalism. She holds a BA in International Relations and an MA in European Union studies.) and Eric Beech (US-based

correspondent for Reuters). “U.S. terminates Turkey's preferential trade agreement, reduces tariffs on steel.” Published by Reuters (Reuters is a British news agency owned by Thomson Reuters. It employs around 2,500 journalists and 600 photojournalists in about 200 locations worldwide writing in 16 languages. Reuters is one of the largest news agencies in the world.) on May 16, 2019. Accessed 02/15/26

<https://www.reuters.com/article/business/us-terminates-turkeys-preferential-trade-agreement-reduces-tariffs-on-steel-idUSKCN1S N01W/>

“During last year's spat, Trump had imposed higher tariffs on imports of Turkish steel and aluminum to put economic pressure on NATO member Turkey to force it to release Andrew Brunson, an American pastor who was detained there over terrorism charges. Brunson was released last October. Trump's move had sent the Turkish lira into a tailspin. Since then, the ties between the two countries have remained tense over disagreements ranging from Ankara's planned purchase of a Russian missile system to diverging interests in Syria. In a subsequent statement on Thursday, the White House said it was reducing the 50% tariff, doubled last August, to 25%. “Maintaining the existing 25% tariff on most countries is necessary and appropriate at this time to address the threatened impairment of the national security,” it said.”

**Impact:** The Affirmative team can't hope to reproduce 2018's successes without a similar combination of pressures. Magnitsky sanctions alone won't do the trick.

## 12. Link: Tariffs and Sanctions Together Helped Release Brunson

By Carlotta Gall (senior correspondent for The New York Times). "Turkey Frees Pastor Andrew Brunson, Easing Tensions With U.S." Published by The New York Times (renowned daily newspaper, covers domestic, national, and international news and publishes opinion pieces and reviews, founded and continuously published in New York City since September 18, 1851) on October 12, 2018. Accessed 02/05/26

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/12/world/europe/turkey-us-pastor-andrew-brunson.html>.

"Faced with Turkey's continuing refusal to free the pastor, Washington imposed financial sanctions on the Turkish interior minister and justice minister. Days later, Mr. Trump announced that the United States was doubling its tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Turkey, just as the Turkish currency, the lira, began a precipitous fall against the dollar. Mr. Erdogan vowed that he would not succumb to threats, and announced retaliatory measures, including increased tariffs on imported American cars, alcohol and leaf tobacco. The lira, which has lost nearly 40 percent of its value since the beginning of the year, plunged to a record low, shaking international markets and raising concerns about Ankara's ability to service its ballooning foreign debt. International credit rating agencies have repeatedly downgraded Turkey's standing this year."

Later, in the same context:

"The day before Mr. Brunson was released, a small group of Republican and Democratic United States senators issued a statement offering improved ties between the countries as an incentive. "It is our greatest hope that the pastor will finally be allowed to return home to his family in the United States after his hearing tomorrow," they wrote. "The United States and Turkey are NATO allies and have a number of mutual concerns regarding regional security and stability. It is time that we close this ugly chapter in our relations." As speculation rose that a deal was near, analysts suggested that Turkey's economic woes had forced Mr. Erdogan to yield. "The economic pressure is working," said Asli Aydintasbas, a senior fellow for the European Council on Foreign Relations."

**Impact:** There were multiple moving parts operating around the release of pastor Brunson, including the sanctions, tariffs, diplomacy, and Turkey's financial situation in 2018. AFF can't reproduce the success of Brunson's release with just one of those many elements.

## 13. Past Turkish Officials Reportedly Had No U.S. Assets

By Gonul Tol (Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute). "US sanctions on Turkish ministers require recalibration." Published by the Middle East Institute (an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit, educational organization. It does not engage in advocacy and its scholars' opinions are their own) on August 8, 2018. Accessed 02/04/26

<https://mei.edu/publication/us-sanctions-turkish-ministers-require-recalibration/>

"Washington designated Turkish officials under the Global Magnitsky Act, a 2016 law that allows the government to punish foreign individuals for corruption and human rights abuses. The sanctions against them block any of their property that rests within American jurisdiction and prohibit U.S. citizens from doing business with them. The August 1 designations of Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gul and Minister of Interior Suleyman Soylu are the first-ever sanctions against a NATO ally. The ministers are also the highest profile officials targeted under Global Magnitsky authorities since Washington's very first designations in December 2017. Gul and Soylu do not appear to have any assets or business interests in the United States. The sanctions, nevertheless, rattled Turkey's political establishment. It was no good news for its faltering economy, with the currency plunging to a historical low, beyond 5 liras to the dollar and interest rates jumping to record highs."

**Impact:** The Affirmative team hasn't shared whether the current ministers have any U.S. assets to freeze. The ministers targeted in 2018 reportedly did not have any, so there's some reason to doubt that the current ministers will have U.S. assets. Without U.S. assets, the effects of the GMA sanctions will not be felt and thus be much less likely to spark change.

# Sanctions Don't Stop Hostage Diplomacy

## 14. Link: Sanctions Only Released Brunson, Not Other Detainees

By Eli Okun (Playbook reporter at POLITICO. His newsletters encompass a wide range of politics and policy daily, from the White House to Congress to campaigns. He's also written articles about foreign policy. Graduated from Brown University, where he studied international relations and was editor-in-chief of The Brown Daily Herald.) Published by POLITICO (POLITICO is a global news and information company at the intersection of politics and policy. With publications based in Washington, D.C., New York and Brussels - and continued expansion into various state capitals in the United States - POLITICO has one of the most robust and rapidly expanding rosters of journalists covering politics and policy in the world.) on December 29, 2018. "He's still in prison': Trump lifts Turkey sanctions but Americans remain detained." Accessed 02/06/26  
<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/12/29/trump-lifts-turkey-sanctions-americans-detained-1076618>

"When the United States celebrated the release of American pastor Andrew Brunson in October, Kubra Golge was hurt. Like Brunson, her husband, former NASA scientist Serkan Golge, was detained in Turkey on what the U.S. government considers trumped-up charges, locked up during a family vacation. "I was really disappointed," she told POLITICO. "He's still in prison." In fact, Golge is one of several Americans still being held in Turkey, some for dubious reasons. Several U.S. Consulate workers are also detained. So human rights activists were struck when, a month after Brunson's release, the Treasury Department lifted sanctions on senior Turkish officials. In exchange, Turkey also agreed to roll back its own penalties on two U.S. Cabinet heads. The move baffled those who say the U.S. has otherwise been working hard behind the scenes to free those still detained in Turkey."

Later, in the same context:

"A State Department spokesperson, who confirmed that a 'small number' of U.S. citizens are still detained in Turkey, said, 'We continue to raise these cases at the highest levels of our diplomatic conversations.' But, the spokesperson added, 'we will not forecast any possible future sanctions actions.' The identities of the other U.S. citizens detained in Turkey have not been made public."

**Impact:** Since we now know the others were eventually released, that means the U.S. was able to free all the rest of the detainees without the use of sanctions. There's no reason to believe the U.S. isn't also working hard behind the scenes to release any current wrongful detainees. The best course of action is to continue to let the US deal privately with Turkey so as not to further harm public relations by imposing more sanctions.

## 15. Link: Turkey Can Detain More People Once Sanctions are Dropped

According to the Affirmative team, Turkey went back to arbitrarily detaining US citizens after the release of Pastor Brunson. This means that the 2018 GMA sanctions led to no long-term changes in Turkey's policy of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. Even if Turkey releases the U.S. citizens it currently has as a result of the Affirmative team's plan, the U.S. will have to lift the GMA sanctions in response, and Turkey can go right back to business as usual violating U.S. citizens' rights.

## 16. Link: Difficult to Determine Whether a Case is Hostage Diplomacy

By Kylie Moore-Gilbert (Australian-British academic in Middle Eastern political science. Former lecturer at the University of Melbourne) and Dara Conduit (Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Political Science

in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne). “Hostage taking or hostage making? the case for prioritising outcomes in identifying and modelling hostage diplomacy.” Published in the *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 1–17, on January 20, 2026. Accessed 02/16/26  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/18335330.2026.2615152>

“Although there is loose consensus as to what constitutes hostage diplomacy, few conceptual tools exist to enable scholars to confidently identify cases of the phenomenon or understand the significance of the considerable inter-case diversity that exists within it. By introducing the concept of ‘hostage-making,’ we unsettle the view that hostage diplomacy is necessarily pre-meditated or evident in the early stages of an arrest. Hostage diplomacy as a phenomenon is far more complex and fluid. It can emerge from a variety of points of origin, and importantly, may only transform into hostage diplomacy as a case progresses. This means that while hostage diplomacy could be reasonably suspected from the outset in rare cases, such as that of the ‘Two Michaels,’ the opaque nature of the circumstances of arrest, the presence of a visible (even if flawed) legal process and the secrecy surrounding cases means that most are almost impossible to definitively identify while they are in progress. Attempting to do so raises serious issues about data integrity and risks scholars and observers drawing false conclusions as to the prevalence, significance and impacts of hostage diplomacy.”

**Impact:** Because it can be difficult to determine if any of the current detainees are being used for hostage diplomacy, it’s doubtful that the affirmative team can actually claim to solve the harm of hostage diplomacy.

# Disadvantages

## 17. Sanctions Strain U.S.–Turkey Alliance

By Euan McKirdy (journalist). “Turkey’s Erdogan defiant in the face of US tariffs, sanction threats.” Published by CNN (American multinational news media company and the flagship property of CNN Worldwide, a division of Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD). Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, it was the first 24-hour cable news channel in the United States. Its website, CNN.com, launched in 1995. It covers worldwide new reporting and opinion pieces) on August 13, 2018. Accessed 02/19/26. Ellipses in original.

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/13/europe/erdogan-us-sanctions-brunson-intl>

“In the speech to supporters in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that his country would not acquiesce to US pressure, and that the Trump administration’s actions were threatening the two countries’ longstanding alliance. “I want them to know that we will not surrender. We will keep producing and we will keep increasing exports,” he said. “We will not give in... if you come at us with your dollars then we will find other ways to do business...The US is sacrificing its 81-million-strong ally Turkey for a pastor with links with terrorists.” [ellipses in original]

Later, in the same context:

“In a New York Times opinion piece Friday, Erdogan said the decision to impose further sanctions ‘was unacceptable, irrational and ultimately detrimental to our longstanding friendship.’”

**Impact:** When we applied GMA sanctions in 2018, Turkey was upset. Even if the measure “worked” back then, it’s also true that it damaged the relationship as we see expressed here.

## **18. Link: 2018 GMA Sanctions “Severely” Damaged U.S.-Turkey Relations**

**By Murat Yetkin (Reporter, author, editor-in-chief of Hurriyet Daily News, August 3, 2018.** With more than 30 years of experience working in the Turkish media, Murat Yetkin is one of Bosnia Herzegovina’s most influential journalists. Mr. Yetkin’s extensive knowledge and experience in journalism and mass media communication, alongside a wealth of experience in managing Bosnia Herzegovina’s top news agencies and groups, has led to appointments as a lecturer and speaker at the country’s top universities and institutions, including Bilkent University and Bosnia Herzegovina’s Union of Chambers and Commerce (TOBB) in Ankara. Additionally, Mr. Yetkin is the author of five best-selling non-fiction books. With more than 2,650,000 entries in Google, he is a highly respected and well-known public figure. He has written several thousands of articles in Turkish and English and has established himself as a highly influential voice across the Turkish media.) **“US sanctions on Turkey are wrong and can backfire.” Published by Hurriyet Daily News** (Turkey’s oldest current English-language daily newspaper, established in 1961. Based in Istanbul and owned by the Demirören Holding since 2018, it provides coverage of Turkish politics, foreign policy, business, and culture). Accessed 02/10/26 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/murat-yetkin/us-sanctions-on-turkey-are-wrong-and-can-backfire-135354>

“The U.S. Treasury’s move to put Turkish Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gül and Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu on its sanctions list on Aug. 1, saying that it was because of their role in the arrest of American evangelical pastor Andrew Brunson, caused outrage in Turkey. **The Turkish Foreign Ministry strongly condemned it, asking for its cancellation while also vowing to take reciprocal action. Four parties in the Turkish Parliament released a joint declaration against the American move. The Turkish-American Business Council was the first institution to protest the move as ‘unacceptable’ and called on the two sides’ presidents, Donald Trump and Tayyip Erdoğan, to give diplomacy a chance in order to put the two allies’ relations back on track. In a nutshell, the U.S. sanctions worked as a ‘rally ‘round the flag effect’ factor in Turkey.** And not only in Turkey. The move instigated by Vice President Mike Pence is likely to endorse Erdoğan’s “hero against the imperialist hegemony” image among Muslims, not at a governmental level, but among the general public. **This is the first time the U.S. is imposing sanctions, and in a very heavy way, on a NATO ally.** The sanctions are issued under the Global Magnitsky Act of 2012, which had been issued for 18 Russian officials and businessmen before. On Aug. 2, the U.S. moved to sanction some more Russian figures under the same act. By coincidence or not, General Curtis Scaparrotti, head of U.S. European Command and NATO’s supreme allied commander, was in Ankara on Aug. 1 to talk about NATO operations and Syria with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and Chief of Staff General Yaşar Güler. Scaparrotti visited Turkey’s strategic İncirlik air base, which is used for NATO operations, on Aug. 2 before going to the Aegean province of İzmir, where the NATO Land Command headquarters are and where Brunson has been living for many years and is currently under arrest. **Some commentators have been saying that the sanctions plunged relations into a point of no return and Turkish-U.S. relations were now broken. They are severely damaged, but not broken yet.** There are a few indicators for that.”

**Impact:** Implementing GMA sanctions on Turkey for the second time in less than a decade would likely be received even worse than the first time, making it less likely that U.S.-Turkey relations can recover. This would be a great loss as Turkey is an important NATO and U.S. ally.

## **19. Link: Sanctions Produce Retaliatory Penalties**

According to the Congressional Research Service on August 31, 2018, (The Congressional Research Service (CRS) works exclusively for the United States Congress, providing policy and legal analysis to committees and Members of both the House and Senate, regardless of party affiliation. As a legislative branch agency within the Library of Congress, CRS has been a valued and respected resource on Capitol Hill for more than a century. CRS is well-known for analysis that is authoritative, confidential, objective and nonpartisan. Its highest priority is to ensure that Congress has 24/7 access to the nation's best thinking.) **Congressional Research Service, "Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations,"** (Accessed February 9, 2026) [https://www.congress.gov/crs\\_external\\_products/R/PDF/R41368/R41368.68.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R41368/R41368.68.pdf)

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

**Impact:** If placing GMA sanctions on Turkish officials had a retaliatory effect the first time, Turkey's response is likely to be similar the second. This will only serve to further escalate negative tension between the U.S. and Turkey.

## **20. Link: Sanctions Viewed as Violations of State Sovereignty**

Commentary on the Guiding Principles on Sanctions, Business and Human Rights. Published by The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2025 (The Guiding Principles aim to reveal the scope of the problems resulting from the implementation of UN Security Council sanctions by states and regional organizations, the use of unilateral sanctions, means of their enforcement and overcompliance, and to explain how the existing international legal standards shall be applied in the sanctions' environment, to remind decision-makers to abide by international human rights standards by respecting, promoting, and protecting these standards, and to provide businesses applying the decisions with a solid basis for avoiding risks without or minimizing human rights violations..) Mandate of Alena Douhan (Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights of the UN).. Accessed 02/20/26 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ucm/commentary-gpssbhr-2025.pdf>

“The extraterritorial enforcement of unilateral sanctions is widely deemed as infringing on the sovereignty of other States by violating the legal principles of jurisdiction and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. In view of the multiplicity of sanctions regimes, sanctions enforcement and overcompliance, the lists of targets are very broad and include directly designated individuals and companies, the population of the country under sanctions as a whole, inhabitants of neighboring countries due to the spillover effect on the region, trade partners of companies under sanctions or from the countries under sanctions, third country and even sanctioning states nationals and companies and lawyers, subject to secondary sanctions, civil, criminal or other penalties<sup>34</sup>. The most vulnerable groups (elderly, persons with disabilities, people suffering from rare and severe diseases, children, marginalized groups, women) are affected the most as reflected in the country visit reports to Zimbabwe <sup>35</sup> , Iran <sup>36</sup> , Syria <sup>37</sup> , Venezuela <sup>38</sup> , and communications of the mandate on the most urgent and calling cases<sup>39</sup> . The consequences for all targeted can be very serious. Those subject to primary sanctions can have their liberty curtailed by travel bans, their bank accounts blocked and their assets seized. Foreign companies can be subjected to secondary sanctions for doing business with people or entities under primary sanctions. They can be blocked from doing any business in or with or through the sanctioning State. They can be banned from using its financial markets and excluded from transactions involving its currency, or be subjected to the seizure of goods by customs or other officials or face travel bans and have their assets frozen or expropriated. In tandem with this expansion of unilateral coercive measures, there has been a huge growth in the assertion of extra-territorial jurisdiction to impose civil and criminal penalties for breach, including against third country nationals.”

**Impact:** Nations targeted with GMA Sanctions are especially likely to view them as attacks on their sovereignty. This can bolster claims of Western meddling in sovereign states' affairs, and may increase tensions between the U.S. and Turkey.

# Increased Tensions Push Turkey Closer to Russia and China

## 21. President Erdogan: “Turkey Has Alternatives”

By Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey. “Erdogan: How Turkey Sees the Crisis With the U.S.” Published by the New York Times (renowned daily newspaper, covers domestic, national, and international news, publishes opinion pieces and reviews, founded and continuously published in New York City since September 18, 1851) on August 10, 2018. Accessed 02/19/26

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/opinion/turkey-erdogan-trump-crisis-sanctions.html>

“In recent weeks, the United States has taken a series of steps to escalate tensions with Turkey, citing the arrest by the Turkish police of an American citizen, Andrew Brunson, on charges of aiding a terrorist organization. Instead of respecting the judicial process, as I urged President Trump to do in our many meetings and conversations, the United States issued blatant threats against a friendly nation and proceeded to impose sanctions on several members of my cabinet. This decision was unacceptable, irrational and ultimately detrimental to our longstanding friendship. To convey that Turkey does not respond to threats, we retaliated by sanctioning multiple American officials. Moving forward, we will abide by the same principle: Attempting to force my government to intervene in the judicial process is not in line with our Constitution or our shared democratic values. Turkey has established time and again that it will take care of its own business if the United States refuses to listen. In the 1970s, the Turkish government stepped in to prevent massacres of ethnic Turks by the Greek Cypriots despite Washington’s objections. More recently, Washington’s failure to grasp the seriousness of our concerns regarding national security threats emanating from Northern Syria resulted in two military incursions that cut off the so-called Islamic State’s access to NATO’s borders and removed the Y.P.G. militants from the city of Afrin. As in those cases, we will take necessary steps to protect our national interests. At a time when evil continues to lurk around the world, unilateral actions against Turkey by the United States, our ally of decades, will only serve to undermine American interests and security. Before it is too late, Washington must give up the misguided notion that our relationship can be asymmetrical and come to terms with the fact that Turkey has alternatives. Failure to reverse this trend of unilateralism and disrespect will require us to start looking for new friends and allies.”

**Impact:** President Erdogan has personally threatened, many times according to him, that actions like GMA sanctions will result in Turkey looking for allies elsewhere. This will only work against U.S. interests and national security because Turkey is an important U.S. ally, and because Turkey is likely to look to U.S. enemies like Russia and China.

## 22. Turkey May Seek Other Allies

By Jim Zanotti (Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs) and Clayton Thomas (Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs) for the Congressional Research Service (CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress). “**Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations In Brief**” Updated August 31, 2018. Accessed 02/18/26 [https://www.congress.gov/crs\\_external\\_products/R/PDF/R44000/R44000.35.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R44000/R44000.35.pdf)

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

**Impact:** Turkey forming stronger relationships with countries other than the U.S. will only work against U.S. interests and national security because Turkey is likely to look to U.S. enemies like Russia and China.

## 23. Link: Turkey Looking to Join Non-Western Forums with Russia and China

By Jeffrey Mankoff (senior associate with the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program. His areas of expertise include international security, Russian foreign policy, regional security in the Caucasus and Central Asia, ethnic conflict, and energy security.) and Max Bergmann (the director of the Europe, Russia, and Eurasia Program and the Stuart Center in Euro-Atlantic and Northern European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)). “Strategic Ambiguity: Erdoğan’s Turkey in a Multipolar World.” Published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS is a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to advancing practical ideas to address the world’s greatest challenges) on December 2, 2025. Accessed 02/18/26 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/strategic-ambiguity-erdogans-turkey-multipolar-world>

“Turkey maintains an ambivalent position with respect to the global order. It remains committed to the legacy institutions it is a member of—including NATO, the Council of Europe, and the IMF. Its closer alignment with Russia and China, however, has encouraged the nation to seek admission to a host of new non-Western forums like the G20, BRICS, and the SCO. Erdoğan argues that legacy institutions fail to provide countries from the Global South adequate representation and that “the world is bigger than five” (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council). It prioritizes regional ownership of disputes in ways that require working with powers like Russia and Iran while marginalizing allies. Turkey uses the 1936 Montreux Convention to limit the presence of allied naval forces in the Black Sea and promoted Russia-Turkey-Iran regional mechanisms for Syria (the Astana Format) and the South Caucasus (the so-called 3+3).”

## **24. Link: Turkey's Stated Goal is to Strengthen its Russia and China Relations**

Published by Al Mayadeen Media Network (an independent Arab satellite news channel, launched on June 11, 2012, and based in the Lebanese capital Beirut. Despite being a rather newly established channel, Al-Mayadeen has become one of the most widespread and influential Arab channels. Indeed, it has become the top news channel in more than one Arab country because of its commitment to professionalism and balance in work, which made it a public space for social encounter and interaction. The channel broadcasts 24/24 hours, introducing more than ten news bulletins and about 17 various programs. Our reporters are spread in major decision-making capitals and many countries around the world, from Moscow to Washington, London, Tehran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Europe and all Arab countries.) "Turkey to enhance ties with Russia, China, Western partners: Erdogan" on July 16, 2024. Accessed 02/12/26  
<https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/turkey-to-enhance-ties-with-russia--china--western-partners>

"In an address to the nation on Tuesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that Turkey intends to strengthen its relations with Russia and China across various sectors, including trade and tourism while maintaining a balanced approach between the East and the West. "We have had a very busy schedule of meetings and visits in the foreign policy area. First, we visited Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, as the guest of honor at the 24th Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit. There we held crucial meetings that will yield extremely beneficial results. We are determined to bolster our cooperation with Russia and China in all areas, from trade and transport to investment," Erdogan said. Ankara aims to achieve a more balanced and sustainable level of bilateral trade with its investment partners, President Erdogan stated after chairing a cabinet meeting. "Our doors are wide open for all types of investment that will add value to our country's economy, provided that investment is not used for political leverage," he said."

## **25. Link: Upsurge in Turkey-China Relations and Investment**

By Soner Cagaptay (the Beyer Family Senior Fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute. He has written extensively on U.S.-Turkish relations, Turkish domestic politics, and Turkish nationalism, publishing in scholarly journals and major international print media, including the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, New York Times, Foreign Affairs, and The Atlantic.) and Ela Peterson (research assistant in The Washington Institute's Turkish Research Program). "Throwing Water on Turkey's Warming Ties with China." Published by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (The mission of The Washington Institute is to advance a balanced and realistic understanding of American interests in the Middle East and to promote the policies that secure them. The Washington Institute is led by distinguished Americans who serve on our Board of Directors, advised by a team of veteran American policymakers from across the political spectrum, and managed by experienced scholars and policy practitioners who've served in administrations of both parties.) on February 5, 2026. Accessed 02/12/26  
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/throwing-water-turkeys-warming-ties-china>

"The gradual upsurge in both high-level Turkish visits to China and Chinese investments in Turkey points to a potential deepening of their bilateral relations. What is driving these developments, and how likely is it that they signal a major upgrade in ties? Answering these questions in full and assessing their implications for U.S. policy on great power competition and Turkey requires a closer look at the previously cold relationship, as well as the outcome of more recent efforts to warm it up."

# Increased Tensions Jeopardize Turkey–NATO and Turkey–U.S. Activities

## 26. *Link: List of Turkey's Involvements in NATO*

Published by the Turkish Atlantic Council (began in 1957 as the Turkish branch of the Atlantic Treaty Association, which was founded in 1954 upon the recommendation of the NATO Public Diplomacy Department. Our non-profit, private, and independent association has accomplished meaningful works in a short period as Turkey's geopolitical position has increased in the cold and hot war periods; It has become a prestigious institution in matters such as foreign policy and international security. Our association continues its studies on the importance of Transatlantic unity. ATA Turkey carries out studies on understanding the importance of NATO in Turkey and emphasizing the importance of Atlanticist values through summits, conferences, seminars, roundtables, workshops, and competitions. Our association aims to strengthen Turkey's place in NATO and a better understanding of Turkey's theses by NATO members and partner countries. The Turkish Atlantic Council mainly operates in Turkey but also exhibits its activities abroad, in cooperation with foreign partners, to achieve its goals and strengthen Turkey's security, prosperity, and democratic development. Our association is funded and supported by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Turkish Ministry of Defense.) Last updated 2023. Accessed 02/25/26. <https://www.tak.org.tr/en/turkiye-and-nato/>

“• With an amount nearly \$100 million, which makes 5% of NATO's budget, Turkey's among the top eight contributors of the Alliance.

• Turkey is also among the top five allies who gives sustainable support to the alliance mission through 1100 personnel.

• Around 570 Turkish personnel carry out duties under NATO's mission in Afghanistan, which makes Turkey one of the “framework nations” of the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

• As for NATO operations in Iraq, Turkey's the second top contributor after Canada within the Alliance.

• With 280 personnel deployed, Turkey takes part in NATO's peacekeeping force KFOR in Kosovo.

• Turkey established in 2012 an early warning radar station against ballistic missile attacks in its eastern province Malatya, namely Kürecik Radar Station.

• Turkey established a Forward Operating Base in Konya for AWACS planes in 1983, which carried out its commitments during Gulf Crisis, Operation Crescent Guard, Operations Active Endeavour and the International Security Assistance Force Operation Afghan Assist as well as during peacetime. FOB Konya also took part in several comprehensive exercises.

• Turkey is also home to NATO's patriot mission from 2013 onward, which reinforces Turkish air defence capabilities and secures NATO's south eastern borders.

• Turkey supports the activities of Standing NATO Maritime Groups in the Black Sea, and provides permanent naval assistance to NATO missions in the Aegean Sea as well as Operation Sea Guardian in Mediterranean Sea.

• Turkey hosts LANDCOM, NATO's Land Command in Izmir.

• One of the nine High Readiness Force Headquarters of ARRC (Allied Rapid Reaction Corps) is in Istanbul, NRDC-T.”

## **27. Link: U.S.–Turkey Relations Marked by Turkey’s Influence in Multiple Regions**

By Rich Outzen (geopolitical consultant and nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Turkey Program with thirty-two years of government service both in uniform and as a civilian) and Grady Wilson (deputy director at the Atlantic Council Turkey Program, where he manages digital communications, coordinates events, and supports the program’s programming on US-Turkey bilateral relations). “Experts react: What’s next for US-Turkey ties after Erdoğan’s White House visit?” Published by The Atlantic Council (nonpartisan think tank that promotes leadership and engagement in international affairs based on the Atlantic Community’s central role in meeting global challenges. The Council provides a forum for navigating the economic and political changes defining the twenty-first century by informing and galvanizing its network of global leaders. The Atlantic Council—through the papers it publishes, the ideas it generates, the future leaders it develops, and the communities it builds—shapes policy choices and strategies to create a more free, secure, and prosperous world) on September 25, 2025. Accessed 02/25/26  
<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/experts-react-whats-next-for-us-turkey-ties-after-erdogans-white-house-visit/>

“The meeting between Trump and Erdoğan was a success on three levels. First, the fact that the trip occurred at all is significant, as it ended a six-year period of arms-length distance between the countries’ leaders, despite their shared interests and strategic matters requiring top-level coordination. This marks a positive if partial shift of tone in the bilateral relationship. That should play out in tighter cooperation on defense, energy, trade, and regional matters for the rest of the current US administration’s term. Second, the optics of the joint press conference were overwhelmingly positive. The two men praised one another, avoided embarrassment, and ticked off a list of areas of shared concern and general policy overlap: Syria, Ukraine, ending the war in Gaza, and resolving the F-35 and US sanctions issues to resume broader defense industrial cooperation.”

Later, in the same context:

“Given the current geopolitical landscape, there is good reason to believe this is more than just talk. Turkey has strengthened its influence and position in all the regions that it has intervened in directly in recent years, most dramatically in Syria, but also in Libya and the South Caucasus. And as Trump noted in the press conference, few other heads of state can claim the respect of both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The details of where and how Turkey and the United States will work together going forward, as well as what US defense technology will make its way to Turkey, still need to be hashed out behind closed doors and executed over months and years. Nevertheless, today’s meeting should generate optimism for the future of US-Turkey relations, as Trump and Erdoğan demonstrated a common understanding that acting in coordination is to the benefit of both NATO allies.”

**Impact:** Turkey is a valuable and heavily involved NATO member and US partner. It is of key importance in multiple important policy areas the US is also involved in, like Ukraine, Syria, Israel, and others. Maintaining the recent improvement in relations after years of coldness is crucial for US interests and strategy. The Affirmative team’s plan, by threatening the US-Turkey relationship, could threaten the high-level coordination required in these matters.

## 28. Use of GMA Sanctions on Turkey Sent Wrong Message on Human Rights

By Rob Berschinski (the Senior Vice President for Policy at Human Rights First). Berschinski previously served in the Obama Administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. He also served under Ambassador Samantha Power as Deputy Director of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations' office in Washington, D.C.; worked as special assistant to then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter; and spent three years as Director for Security and Human Rights Policy at the White House National Security Council. Berschinski began his career as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Air Force, and is an Iraq War veteran.) **"U.S. Sanctions against Turkey Undercut a Key Human Rights Tool."** Published by JUST SECURITY (Just Security is an editorially independent, non-partisan, daily digital law and policy journal on national security, democracy and the rule of law, and rights. It publishes rigorous, expert analysis and informational resources.) on August 6, 2018. Accessed 02/16/26 <https://www.justsecurity.org/60039/u-s-sanctions-turkey-undercut-key-human-rights-tool/>

"The press release describes Brunson's prolonged detention as unjust and unsupported by evidence, a view shared by most independent analysts. What it does not say, however, is that the administration based its sanctions on any other aspect of Turkey's atrocious human rights record, which the State Department itself documented in its latest annual human rights report, issued in April. To briefly recap that record, Erdoğan, in response to a failed coup attempt in July 2016, initiated a far-reaching crackdown on virtually all facets of Turkish society. His government harnessed loosely worded terrorism laws and emergency powers to arrest tens of thousands of Turkish citizens, many of whom are reported to have been tortured in custody. Tens of thousands more civil servants, academics, and teachers have been purged from their jobs. More than 180 news outlets have been shuttered, and the Turkish government has been particularly aggressive in criminally prosecuting journalists on highly dubious grounds. Based on these and other factors, Freedom House labeled Turkey "not free" in its most recent global analysis of civil and political rights. If the administration arrives at a deal to effect Brunson's release in exchange for lifting sanctions on the two Turkish officials, the implicit message will be that the Turkish ministries of justice and the interior have in some way improved their human rights records. Conversely, if the administration continues to impose Global Magnitsky sanctions after Brunson's release, the U.S.-Turkey relationship may erode further, since the administration's only public justification for its actions concerned Brunson's detention."

**Impact:** The 2018 sanctions on Turkey only sent the message that the US doesn't care about the Turkish government's atrocious human rights record. The Affirmative team's plan, as a repeat of 2018, will do the same.

## 29. Details on Turkey's "Atrocious Human Rights Record"

By Rob Berschinski (the Senior Vice President for Policy at Human Rights First). Berschinski previously served in the Obama Administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. He also served under Ambassador Samantha Power as Deputy Director of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations' office in Washington, D.C.; worked as special assistant to then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter; and spent three years as Director for Security and Human Rights Policy at the White House National Security Council.) "U.S. Sanctions against Turkey Undercut a Key Human Rights Tool." Published by JUST SECURITY (Just Security is an editorially independent, non-partisan, daily digital law and policy journal on national security, democracy and the rule of law, and rights. It publishes rigorous, expert analysis and informational resources.) on August 6, 2018. Accessed 02/16/26 <https://www.justsecurity.org/60039/u-s-sanctions-turkey-undercut-key-human-rights-tool/>

"The press release describes Brunson's prolonged detention as unjust and unsupported by evidence, a view shared by most independent analysts. What it does not say, however, is that the administration based its sanctions on any other aspect of Turkey's atrocious human rights record, which the State Department itself documented in its latest annual human rights report, issued in April. To briefly recap that record, Erdoğan, in response to a failed coup attempt in July 2016, initiated a far-reaching crackdown on virtually all facets of Turkish society. His government harnessed loosely worded terrorism laws and emergency powers to arrest tens of thousands of Turkish citizens, many of whom are reported to have been tortured in custody. Tens of thousands more civil servants, academics, and teachers have been purged from their jobs. More than 180 news outlets have been shuttered, and the Turkish government has been particularly aggressive in criminally prosecuting journalists on highly dubious grounds. Based on these and other factors, Freedom House labeled Turkey "not free" in its most recent global analysis of civil and political rights. If the administration arrives at a deal to effect Brunson's release in exchange for lifting sanctions on the two Turkish officials, the implicit message will be that the Turkish ministries of justice and the interior have in some way improved their human rights records. Conversely, if the administration continues to impose Global Magnitsky sanctions after Brunson's release, the U.S.-Turkey relationship may erode further, since the administration's only public justification for its actions concerned Brunson's detention."

## 30. Link: GMA Sanctions On Turkey Undercut Goals of the Original Act

By Michael A. Weber (Congressional Research Service Analyst in Foreign Affairs). "The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act: Scope, Implementation, and Considerations for Congress." Published on Congress.gov on December 3, 2021. Accessed 02/06/26 <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46981>

"Relatedly, analysts have argued that some decisions to impose Global Magnitsky sanctions appear to have been motivated by the pursuit of other U.S. geopolitical interests or other goals that may not align with the Global Magnitsky Act's statutory intent. For instance, some human rights advocates criticized the Trump Administration's use of Global Magnitsky sanctions against two senior Turkish officials in relation to the detention of Pastor Andrew Brunson. These critics argued that the sanctions did not directly address Turkey's widespread and broader human rights problems, and that the use of Global Magnitsky for purposes of securing the release of an American hostage undercut its international legitimacy as a human rights and anticorruption tool.

Other observers, however, drew connections between Brunson's plight and broader international religious freedom challenges in Turkey. Brunson was released in October 2018, and the Global Magnitsky sanctions against the two officials were subsequently removed. In another example, an analyst criticized September 2020 corruption sanctions against a Chinese-owned business entity operating in Cambodia for allegedly selectively punishing a company with Chinese ties while ignoring many other companies engaged in corrupt acts in Cambodia, thereby fueling a "narrative that the sanctions are being used to blunt China's strategic gains in the region."

**Impact:** GMA sanctions are supposed to be used to hold human rights abusers accountable. In 2018, applying them on Turkish officials just for holding one man hostage while the rest of Turkey's atrocious human rights record went unaddressed inadvertently communicated that Turkey could continue oppressing its people. The affirmative team's plan could continue to lend itself toward normalizing the abuses done by the Turkish government.

## 31. GMA Sanctions Themselves Pose Human Rights Concerns

Press Release from The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN (the leading United Nations entity in the field of human rights, with a unique mandate to promote and protect all human rights for all people).

Quoting Ms Alena Douhan (Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights). “United States: Efforts to use sanctions to expand jurisdiction abroad violate human rights says UN expert.” March 9, 2023. Accessed 2/19/26

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/united-states-efforts-use-sanctions-expand-jurisdiction-abroad-violate-human>

“The United States is using extraterritorial jurisdiction to impose sanctions on foreign individuals, UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan said today, raising concerns about human rights violations, including the right to due process. “The United States has for years been imposing sanctions on individuals and entities without national criminal jurisdiction and in the absence of universal jurisdiction,” said Douhan who is the UN expert on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. “This is a clear violation of due process rights, including the presumption of innocence and fair trial,” Douhan said, highlighting that these rights are guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – which the United States has ratified and must fully implement. “Unilateral sanctions target individuals abroad for alleged activities outside the United States, including activities that are legal where they occur,” she said. Douhan indicated that secondary sanctions target foreign individuals and companies for alleged interaction with sanctioned parties or for evading sanction regimes.”