



## President Biden and Turkish Counterpart Erdogan Meet in an Attempt to Reset U.S.-Turkey Ties

U.S. President Biden and Turkish counterpart Erdogan met this week in an effort to mend ties between the two countries, with both leaders seeking to improve relations. While the United States and Turkey have had some notable disagreements, Biden and Erdogan spoke about the benefits of cooperation and the importance of maintaining each other as allies. Turkey holds a strategic position in Europe that is invaluable to both the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). As such, the United States is keenly interested in preserving a friendly relationship because of this and the fact that Turkey serves as a critical security partner. In turn, Turkey has been faced with a struggling economy due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, a development which has demonstrated the significance of American and NATO support. Many of Turkey's trade partners are NATO members, and the country has been driven to uphold relations and reset ties with the United States, particularly as the Biden administration itself looks to restore America's place on the world stage in the aftermath of the Trump era.

The United States and Turkey have had their share of disagreements over the past three decades. Turkey was an extremely important U.S. ally during the Cold War, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, the United States pulled out a majority of its stationed troops and ended the funding that was provided. Soon after the departure of those troops, Turkey began to have more problems with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). This new wave of the PKK insurgency caused violence and human rights violations, which led the United States' government to withhold military funding until reports on the events were made. This was a landmark moment and ultimately paved the way for some of the hostility which has lingered over the years.

Furthermore, the United States aided Turkey against the PKK, but disagreed about whether the Syrian Kurdish group was synonymous with the PKK. The United States began to back the Syrian Kurds because of the assistance they would receive for their campaigns in the Middle East, and this was opposed by Turkey due to the link between the PKK and the Syrian Kurds. Problems were exacerbated when the United States refused to expedite a political party member that took part in a failed attempted coup against the Turkish government.

The issues between Turkey and the United States came to a climax when Turkey acquired a S-400 Russian rocket system. The United States and NATO viewed this as a threat to their security and the United States responded by removing Turkey from the F-35 program and eventually applying sanctions. Biden and Erdogan continued to have problems as each of them insulted the other publicly over their political decisions. President Biden also declared the Ottoman actions against the Armenians as a genocide, which offended Turkey. The action was opposed by President Erdogan and increased anti-American sentiment in Turkey, however at their summit this week both leaders expressed a desire to put these quarrels behind them and work together to combat the common issues facing the two nations today – with experts commending each for opening a channel of dialogue and showing a commitment to the improvement of relations.