



By: TA | AP Brief

# Trump is moving closer to resolving Turkey's F-35 ban



The close relationship between U.S. President Donald Trump and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has brought the countries closer to resolving issues that led to Turkey being kicked off the **F-35 fighter jet program**, the United States ambassador to Ankara said Wednesday.

“The positive relationship between President Trump and President Erdogan has created a new atmosphere of cooperation, which has led to the most fruitful conversations we have had on this topic in nearly a decade,” Ambassador Tom Barrack wrote in a social media post.

During Trump’s first term, the U.S. removed NATO ally Turkey from the next-generation fighter program after Turkey purchased an air defense system from Russia.

U.S. officials worried that Turkey’s use of **Russia’s S-400** missile system could be used to gather data on the capabilities of the F-35 and that the information could end up in Russian hands.

Ankara has long sought to be readmitted to the project, which was developed by the U.S. and other NATO members. Erdogan has said Turkey invested \$1.4 billion before it was suspended from the program in 2019.

The U.S. also imposed sanctions on Turkey under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act the following year.

Barrack, who is also Trump’s special envoy for Syria, said there were “ongoing discussions with Türkiye regarding their desire to rejoin the F-35 program and their possession of the Russian-made S-400 air defense system.”

Using the Turkish government’s preferred spelling for Turkey, he said the “positive relationship” between **Trump and Erdogan** had “created a new atmosphere of cooperation, which has led to the most fruitful conversations we have had on this topic in nearly a decade.

“Our hope is that these talks will yield a breakthrough in the coming months that

meets both the security requirements of the United States and Türkiye.”

## Tensions between Turkey and Israel

While it has been excluded from receiving F-35s, Turkey has been looking elsewhere to bolster its air force, including **Eurofighter Typhoons** and U.S.-made F-16s. It is developing its own fifth-generation KAAN fighter jet, which is expected to enter service in 2028.

In a meeting with Erdogan at the White House in September, Trump signaled that the U.S. might soon lift the ban on sales of F-35s to Ankara.

The two leaders forged what Trump has described as a “very good relationship” during his first White House term.

### Trump sees Erdogan as an intermediary in his efforts to find ends to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza

The Obama and Biden administrations kept Erdogan, who has ruled Turkey for 22 years, at arm’s length. U.S. officials cited concerns about Turkey’s human rights record and the country’s ties with Russia.

Tensions between Turkey and Israel, another important American ally, have made relations difficult with Turkey at times.

Trump sees Erdogan as an intermediary in his efforts to find ends to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. U.S. and European leaders have followed Erdogan in embracing **Syria’s new interim government**.